

Street Harassment: A Conceptual Analysis Through Social Psychology

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ABSTRACT – This work aimed to carry out a literature review on Street Harassment, to defend the use of this term and propose its definition, while considering its limits, possibilities, and understanding through Social Psychology. A narrative review of the literature was performed, with non-systematic searches of national and international scientific productions that addressed street harassment. It was noted that there was no consensus in the literature regarding a universal term to name it. We emphasize that it is crucial to define a term and propose an inclusive definition for a phenomenon that is violent towards women, to properly frame the concept, and to promote scientific analyses and public policies that can confront this violence.

KEYWORDS: Harassment, street harassment, public spaces, Social Psychology, Brazil

Assédio de Rua: Uma Análise Conceitual a partir da Psicologia Social

RESUMO – Este trabalho teve como objetivo realizar uma revisão de literatura sobre o Assédio de Rua, defender o uso deste termo e propor sua definição, sem deixar de considerar seus limites, possibilidades e compreensão por meio da Psicologia Social. Foi realizada uma revisão narrativa da literatura, com buscas não sistemáticas em produções científicas nacionais e internacionais que abordavam o assédio de rua. Observou-se que não houve consenso na literatura quanto a um termo universal para nomeá-lo. Ressaltamos que é fundamental definir um termo e propor uma definição inclusiva para um fenômeno que é violento contra as mulheres, para enquadrar adequadamente o conceito e promover análises científicas e políticas públicas que possam enfrentar essa violência.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Assédio, assédio de rua, espaços públicos, Psicologia Social, Brasil

Violence against women is considered a violation of any form of integrity of the victim, be it physical, psychological, sexual moral, and/or patrimony related to gender (Saffioti, 2015). Therefore, there are different types of violence against women: physical violence, psychological violence, moral violence, patrimonial violence, and sexual violence (Brazil, 2006).

Without disregarding the direct or indirect consequences of the different forms of violence against women, it is important, for this study, to highlight a particular form of sexual violence. However, before highlighting this form, we believe it is important to define what sexual violence is. Sexual violence can be defined as acts that are performed for the sexual gratification of the aggressor without the victim's

consent and include touching, practices of sexual acts with or without penetration, and manipulation of intimate regions. Therefore, sexual violence includes rape, attempted rape, sexual abuse, harassment, and sexual exploitation, among others (Pereira et al., 2018). In other words, sexual violence is considered as any behavior of a coercive sexual nature, being contemplated either by the attempt to have sexual relations or to satisfy the lust of another person, for example, comments and non-consensual approaches about the body and sexuality of another person (Brazil, 2006).

With this understanding of sexual violence, we chose to specifically analyze herein intrusive experiences based on comments, gestures, and sounds of a sexual nature, and abusive and embarrassing looks, practiced by men who

are strangers to the women in public spaces in a way that objectifies them. With this case in point, a question arises: But, after all, how do you name these experiences?

In the literature, there is no consensus on an exact definition for these experiences (Davidson et al., 2015; Kearl, 2010; Spaccatini et al., 2019; Saunders et al., 2017). Nevertheless, after an extensive literature review and mainly taking as reference the works of di Leonardo (1981), Bowman (1993), and Kearl (2010), in this work, we defend the use of the term street harassment. Here, the term “street” emphasizes that this phenomenon always happens in public spaces.

To understand what we call a street, it is first necessary to understand what a house is. A house is housing, a home, and presents itself as a privileged environment for enabling privacy and protection from the external environment (Albuquerque & Günther, 2019). Thus, being on the “street” is being outside of this place of privacy and away from the subject’s control, where the context is unpredictable, i.e., a place where the subject has no control over what will happen. This interpretation helps us to understand what we mean by public spaces, in that they are the places outside the person’s home, being the spaces that the street passes through. So, from this, we understand that Street Harassment can occur in the streets, in stores, on public transport, in parks, on beaches, and at parties (Kearl, 2010).

Concerning the legal issue, we show that this phenomenon is already recognized as a crime provided for in law n° 13.718/18 (Sexual Harassment Law), although presented with another name, called Sexual Harassment. This law defines sexual harassment as committing a libidinous act against someone without their consent to satisfy one’s lust or that of others (Brazil, 2018). This law amends the Brazilian penal code and the law of criminal misdemeanors, with sexual harassment now being considered criminal conduct, as before it was considered a mere criminal misdemeanor. This means that it was punished mildly, with the maximum punishment being simple imprisonment, that is, a crime that is stripped of penitentiary rigor, according to Decree 3,688/1941 (criminal misdemeanor law). Although the legal definitions of Sexual Harassment, here called Street Harassment, do not establish distinctions between the treatment of the sexes, this article deals with the phenomenon of violence by men towards women in public spaces, from a historical and social perspective.

Even though there is already a law that criminalizes this phenomenon, which represents a step forward in the struggle to guarantee women’s rights, for Vera-Gray (2016), street harassment is often trivialized, normalized, made invisible, and, sometimes, not identified as violence by some people. But why is a phenomenon that is harmful to women, seen by the law as a crime, trivialized, made invisible, and, many times, normalized by people?

We can begin to understand when we reflect on the efforts to control women’s bodies, which range from overt

interpersonal tactics (hostile and blatant), such as violence and sexual assault, to implicit (subtle) methods of control sanctioned by society, such as sexual objectification (Connor et al., 2016). As an example of these two, there is Street Harassment. This phenomenon can be better understood in the light of social psychology, through the Theory of Ambivalent Sexism (TAS) (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Before talking about the TAS, it is first necessary to understand the phenomenon of prejudice. Prejudice is an attitude towards groups and their members, which produces or preserves hierarchical status relationships between groups (Dovidio et al., 2008). Lima (2020) points out that prejudice: 1) has “individual” aspects, some of them with physiological and neural repercussions, and, at the same time, social, ideological, and political aspects; 2) is an attitude, as it is linked, in a complex and non-linear way, to beliefs (stereotypes), affects (positive, neutral or negative) and behavioral dispositions (discrimination); and 3) is a social norm held in groups” (p. 27). Thus, when discussing prejudice, it is important to assess the type of interest involved in the relationship and the minority that is the target of the process (Lima, 2020).

Sexism, therefore, corresponds to a form of prejudice based on gender and permeates relationships between men and women, being one of the main obstacles encountered in the fight against gender inequality. For Glick and Fiske (1996) sexism should be considered a type of prejudice marked by a great ambivalence, rather than “only” an antipathy towards women. Thus, this phenomenon is considered multifaceted, being reinforced through discourses and practices (Glick & Fiske, 1996). That said, we analyze street harassment as a form of violence against women and is thus a manifestation of sexism. In this sense, according to Glick and Fiske (1996), ambivalent sexism justifies various forms of violence against women, to explain how the control and policing of female bodies work in gender relations.

Ambivalent sexism presents gender relations from two perspectives: Hostile and Benevolent (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Hostile sexism (HS) presents itself more aggressively to women, in a way that converges with Allport’s (1954) classic concept of prejudice. HS concerning street harassment can be manifested and perceived through the flagrant forms of this violence, as in statements like: “Hey gorgeous, I’m coming to get you”. Benevolent sexism (BS) is expressed subtly and fits women into stereotypes, for example, that of delicacy, fragility, and beauty, submitting to male dominance, guaranteeing women their protection, admiration, and affection. The BS concerning Street Harassment can be seen in subtle situations, in which men think that their intention to “praise” women on the street is something positive. In addition, BS is also read and presented in non-verbal expressions, such as passing the tongue over the lips, referring to sexual connotations. It is noteworthy that both HS and BS refer to issues of social power, gender identity, and sexuality (Connor et al., 2016).

Given what has been exposed so far about street harassment, we believe that to recognize, identify, and combat this phenomenon, it is necessary to be clear about what it is and, thus, define it. After all, violence without an adequate definition tends to remain hidden and treated improperly, given that without denunciation there is no fight.

In this sense, the objective of this work was to carry out a literature review on street harassment, to defend the use of this term, and to propose a definition for it, considering its limits, possibilities, and understanding through social psychology. To achieve this objective, a narrative review of the literature was carried out, with a non-systematic search for national and international articles, books, and academic productions in general, which addressed the subject of street harassment. Thus, different databases were used for this search, which included: PsycINFO, SciELO, and PubMed.

After the selection of the materials found, they were read and evaluated for their inclusion or exclusion, depending on the scope and objective of this research. After separating the texts, all material was read in full and analyzed.

Therefore, we begin by presenting the phenomenon we call Street Harassment, through the review of research and legal frameworks related to the subject. Next, we differentiate Street Harassment from some concepts that are often used synonymously, for example, sexual harassment and flirting. After conceptualizing and differentiating Street Harassment from other concepts, we present how these sexist experiences have negative consequences for women, to have implications for women's full participation in the public and social sphere. We hope to advance the conceptual understanding of this phenomenon, by indicating and overcoming some of the theoretical and practical impasses presented.

CONCEPTUALIZING STREET HARASSMENT

Harassment can be understood as a broad set of behaviors of an offensive nature that may or may not have sexual content. This can happen in different spaces, such as at work, on the academic campus, in gyms, on the street, on the telephone and internet, in malls, at parties, and on public transport (Birman, 2005). Without disregarding the importance of the different types of harassment, here we will focus on a specific type of harassment that we call Street Harassment.

Street harassment has existed since the advent of the street (Kearl, 2010), given that in addition to being public, it also occurs in different public spaces. Although this is an old, constant phenomenon, that has several consequences for women (Sánchez-Díaz, 2019, Saunders et al., 2017), it has become a forgotten and little-discussed problem (Vera-Gray, 2016), as it is difficult to perceive, evidence, and, consequently, denounce. This may help us to understand why street harassment is a phenomenon that still does not have a single term to define it (Kearl, 2010).

Because of this, we emphasize that different terms can be found in the literature that defines this phenomenon, for example, street sexual harassment (Brunsdon, 2018; Chafai, 2017; Garrido et al., 2017; Lea et al., 2017), harassment by strangers (Spaccatini et al., 2019), street harassment (Bowman 1993; Kearl, 2010; Sánchez-Díaz, 2019), sexual harassment in public spaces (Lahsaeizadeh & Yousefinejad, 2012), and cat-calling, wolf-whistles, and pick-up lines (Saunders et al., 2017). But what does each term define and describe about the phenomenon?

For Bowman (1993), when one or more unknown men approach one or more women in a place other than their workplace, through looks, words, or gestures, defining her as a sexual object, this becomes Street Harassment. On the other hand, Gardner (1995), described the abuses, harassment, and annoyances characteristic of public spaces, as public

harassment. Later, Tuerkheimer (1997) recognized that unwanted interactions with comments of a sexual nature that take place in public spaces were Street Harassment.

Further on, Kearl (2010) indicated that street harassment is any type of unwanted sexual interaction that takes place in public spaces. This can happen to anyone, but it disproportionately punishes women, girls, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and other marginalized groups. To support the author above, an organization from the United States, Stop Street Harassment (2014), for its part, understands such a phenomenon as unwanted interactions in public spaces between strangers motivated by a person's real or perceived gender, sexual orientation, or gender expression, and which make the victim feel upset, angry, humiliated, afraid, or embarrassed.

Nevertheless, Fairchild and Rudman (2008), Davidson et al. (2015) and Spaccatini et al. (2019) point out that experiences of sexual objectification of women in public spaces by strangers are defined as harassment by strangers. In addition to these, Garrido et al. (2017), Chafai (2017), Brunsdon (2018), and Lea et al. (2017) define harassment in public places as street sexual harassment, arguing that such a definition is made from the sexual connotation plus the space where the harassment occurs. Herrera (2021) names the experiences of sexual objectification that women suffer in a public environment as sexual harassment in public spaces.

Leaving the more academic context of the literature, it is also interesting to see how street harassment is understood and defined in digital social networks, as it is a means of communication that is widely used by people today. For the group Hollaback¹ (an activist group from the USA), street harassment is a type of sexual harassment, based on gender and motivated by prejudice, which occurs in public spaces

¹ Hollaback! (now Right to Be) <https://www.ihollaback.org>

such as the street, supermarket, and bus, among others. At its core is a power dynamic that is based on historically subordinated groups in which their vulnerabilities to attacks in public spaces are present. The group Think Olga² (an activist group from Brazil) defines the phenomenon discussed as sexual harassment in public spaces, understanding that street harassment is a type of sexual harassment.

From what has been presented, we observed that there are different terms, but when the definitions are analyzed, it is evident that they are all talking about the same phenomenon and presenting it as violence. These definitions expose the same aspects of the phenomenon, that it is harassment made by a strange man to a woman in a public space, to objectify her sexually, assuming a power relationship. But after all, what is the term to adopt?

Therefore, based on the analysis of the aforementioned authors and the understanding of the writings of the anthropologist Micaela di Leonardo (1981, p. 52), who writes that “street harassment occurs when one or more strange men approach one or more women in a public place other than the woman’s workplace. Through looks, words or gestures, defining her as a sexual object”, we gather different definitions, contemplate new aspects, and understand and defend a term and its conceptualization.

Given this, in this work, we defend the use of the term Street Harassment and define it as unwanted intrusive practices with sexual connotations, which happen unpredictably and inevitably, whether verbally or non-verbally (for example, comments, gestures and sounds, abusive and embarrassing stares), practiced by men against women in public spaces, in a way that sexually objectifies them.

Because of this definition, we can highlight some aspects: 1) it is invasive behavior, of a sexual nature, carried out by one man or more; 2) these behaviors are always intended to sexually objectify the woman; 3) they always take place in public spaces, that is, on the street; 4) these behaviors are always unpredictable and unavoidable; 5) they present themselves either verbally or non-verbally; 6) they embarrass the victim so that he or she may feel embarrassed, afraid, or anxious; 7) the victim is a woman, whether she is cisgender and/or transgender; and 8) it is a phenomenon that affects all women, regardless of social belonging, that is, regardless of age, social class, skin color and ethnicity.

We warn, however, that both the choice of using the term street harassment and the way we define it arise beyond the interaction and understanding of the definitions presented in the literature, it also arises from the understandings of the authors about the phenomenon from their analysis as social psychologists. Therefore, below we present the elements of the definition that are added from this review, bearing in mind those not included in other definitions.

² Think Olga. <http://thinkolga.com>

First, we point out that the choice of the term proposed in this study also comes from its direct translation into English. Second, we understand that street harassment is the best nomination because the street is configured as being away from home, where the people are unknown, as well as there being access to different places, and in this way, we understand the street as a public space. Therefore, we consider that this term encompasses the unknown man and public spaces.

Third, in a situation of street harassment, there is no interaction, contrary to what the studies propose (Kearl, 2010; Tuerkheimer, 1997), but insolent and abusive practices of the man toward the woman. This is because interaction refers to a reciprocal or shared action between two or more individuals, however, in street harassment, this does not happen, and the woman feels different negative feelings, such as discomfort, fear, anguish, etc.

And, finally, we interpret that Street Harassment implies a power relationship between the genders, of the man to the detriment of the woman, in which the man asserts his right to be intrusive with the woman’s body, treating her as an object and he as a subject with power over her (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). This can be understood as part of a larger system of social control, in other words, patriarchy. This system maintains gender inequality, undermining women externally, treating them as objects, and internally, through self-objectification (Connor et al., 2016). In this way, we realize that street harassment does not happen to anyone, for example, to men, but only to women, whether they are cisgender and/or transgender, of different ages, social classes, skin color, and education.

Thus, we agree and conclude that street harassment is a form of violence against women (Ahmad et al., 2020; Farmer & Jordan, 2017; Ramadan, 2018). To better understand this, we propose to think of a scale. So, at one end are examples of staring, whistling, following, and commenting on the woman’s appearance or identity. As you move up the scale, you notice more serious forms of harassment, such as public exposure. These are common behaviors in women’s lives, and rarely reported to the authorities, even if they are illegal, but are framed as a crime of sexual harassment (Brazil, 2018).

However, even after defining Street Harassment and exemplifying it, some confusion may still arise because this is a phenomenon that is very close to other types of harassment, such as, for example, sexual harassment. This statement arises from the understanding that, in the studies, the conceptualizations presented about the phenomenon discussed here, somehow, include in their scope a similarity between sexual harassment and street harassment. That said, in the next topic, we present and describe street harassment and sexual harassment to make some distancing possible, allowing for the demarcation of each term.

STREET HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT: SIMILARITIES, DIFFERENCES, AND LIMITS

It is possible to observe in the literature an approximation between the terms “street harassment” and “sexual harassment”, regarding the search for the definition of the intrusive practices mentioned above. We emphasize that the boundaries between sexual harassment and street harassment are not easily defined, however, each of them includes certain behaviors that specifically characterize them (Fileborn, 2013). Although these two terms have similarities to each other insofar as they involve both unwanted verbal (comments and whistling) and non-verbal (staring) forms of contact as well as sexual attention (Davidson et al., 2015; McCarty et al., 2014; Saunders et al., 2017), there are significant differences between these two.

Sexual harassment tends to be used more consistently to refer to experiences of gender violence that occur in the work or academic context, in which the hierarchical superior, in a position of power, seeks to take advantage of their subordinates or students, to make proposals and assertions with some objective to be achieved (Gutek, 2015). However, for some authors, this conceptualization and interpretation is quite restricted, both about its incidence and the space in which it occurs, (Pereira et al., 2018), to be considered any sensual or sexual demonstration, against the will of the person to whom it is addressed (Think Olga, 2014), regardless of where it occurs.

Thus, Farmer and Jordan (2017) state that sexual harassment of women has occurred and occurred in various ways and in different places throughout history. For these authors, there are common forms of sexual harassment that women constantly experience, for example, at work by a boss, but also sexual harassment by strangers on the streets. For them, street harassment is a form of sexual harassment.

This begins to make it easier to understand why many theorists use the term sexual harassment plus the place it occurs (e.g., sexual harassment on the bus or sexual harassment on the street) to name the negative sexual experiences that occur in public spaces with women, to group everything in a single term (Brunsdon, 2018; Chafai, 2017; Garrido et al., 2017; Lea et al., 2017).

However, we warn that street harassment has some more specific characteristics than sexual harassment and is not as comprehensive, in that it only happens between two unknown people in the public space in a non-consensual and sexually affective manner (Fairchild, 2010; Savio, 2016).

Furthermore, Street Harassment happens without any purpose, as the contact between the two parties tends to last only a few seconds and is unilateral. Consequently, because of its unpredictability and because it is inevitable, research suggests that women experience more negative outcomes from street harassment than from sexual harassment (Davidson et al., 2015; McCarty et al., 2014; Saunders et al., 2017). From what was presented, we understand that the term, Street Harassment, is, in fact, what best denotes the phenomenon analyzed here.

Although there is a great similarity and overlap between sexual harassment and street harassment, because of the existence of sexual connotations in the latter, we emphasize that the differences between them exist and are necessary to be understood, to understand that street harassment is not a type of sexual harassment. Thus, we conclude that sexual harassment tends to be used, more consistently and preferably, to refer to experiences that occur in a work and academic environment, that is, by someone known and of a higher position than the victim. The term sexual harassment has a specific legal meaning in Brazil, characterized by constraints to obtain sexual favors by someone of a higher position than the victim (According to Art. 216-A of the Penal Code).

Street harassment is used to refer more specifically to sexual experiences that occur in a public environment, between unknown people, from man to woman. We warn that this also has a legal meaning in Brazil, as already mentioned, although the term street harassment is not used. The term that the law uses to define such a phenomenon is sexual harassment (Law 13.718/18).

Indeed, the definition and understanding of the terms discussed here make it easier to correctly delineate a situation of violence in which women can suffer in different spaces. From what has been presented, we infer that street harassment and sexual harassment are not synonymous and neither is street harassment a type of sexual harassment, but rather a type of violence against women. Such an understanding helps to promote knowledge and actions to combat such aggression.

Therefore, after understanding and explaining the differences between street harassment and sexual harassment, as well as where they are in violence against women, in the following topic we discuss the possibilities of using the term “pick-up line” as a synonym for street harassment.

STREET HARASSMENT AND PICK-UP LINES: SYNONYMS?

Harassment has never been talked about as much as in recent times, as can be seen not only by reading newspapers and academic magazines but also by the easy incorporation of this word in everyday discourse, in digital social networks and

the media, whether to describe or qualify certain experiences present in the social space (Birman, 2005).

In this context, after understanding the definition and differentiation between street harassment and sexual

harassment, it is also extremely important to differentiate street harassment from a name that often appears as its synonym, both in the social environment, digital social networks, and media, which is the pick-up line. But why are these terms used interchangeably?

Possibly, this confusion happens because common sense perceives pick-up lines as acts, whether verbal or physical, by a man towards a woman with an affective or sexual connotation. However, analyzing the definition of pick-up lines as a relationship of consent between the two parties (Walton & Pedersen, 2021), it is evident that the terms are not synonymous. While pick-up lines involve a consensual relationship, street harassment does not.

Therefore, the pick-up line can be defined, according to the Michaelis Dictionary (2018), as a seductive conversation aimed at a conquest. In addition, it is synonymous with courtship, courtesy, flirting, and seducing. Pick-up lines are encoded from facial and body expressions, such as smiles, looks, and gestures, which can reach the level of conversation or chat (Walton & Pedersen, 2021). That is, we understand pick-up lines as a consensual relationship of flirtation between the parties, more specifically, there is a disposition for this type of interaction between the two parties. On the other hand, street harassment, in addition to what has already been described in the previous topics, is understood as a violent behavior practiced through offensive, embarrassing, and derogatory attitudes in which the intentionality only comes from one of those involved, the aggressor (Farmer & Jordan, 2017).

This association between pick-up lines and harassment also appears in the international literature (Saunders et al., 2017). For some authors, the harassment of someone in the street, derived from the English term “Street Harassment”, is also used as a synonym of the term “catcalling” (Chaudoir & Quinn, 2010). However, according to O’Neill (2013), the term “Street Harassment” refers more formally to unwanted

sexual comments expressed in contexts of public space to women, to objectify them sexually. The term “catcalling”, although it also refers to unwanted interactions of a sexual nature in public spaces, from men to women, according to O’Neill (2013), does not reach the gravity and nature of the phenomenon, since the lightness of this term detracts from the importance and weight of the discourse. But after all, what are the limits that define a flirtation/pick-up line and when does it become street harassment?

This line between street harassment and pick-up lines is a fine line, as a similar act, for example, staring, can be seen as being flirtatious by a man, but as harassment by a woman. This is because the characterization of harassment is not only related to the act itself, but also to the power relations that govern the interaction between men and women. However, we emphasize that a pick-up line becomes harassment when a situation that should be pleasant and convenient for both parties involved becomes uncomfortable for one of them, generating fear, discomfort, anguish, anxiety, and other negative feelings.

Therefore, the pick-up line is a flirtation that occurs in a situation where one perceives a disposition for this type of interaction, for example, if there has already been a receptive exchange of glances (an exchange, not a one-sided gaze). Therefore, any approach in a public space, directed at a woman who has not shown signs of being receptive to this type of contact, cannot be considered friendly or desirable. In other words, it’s street harassment. Therefore, these two phenomena differ, and treating them as synonyms is a social problem. That is, naturalizing street harassment as a pick-up line, placing them as synonyms, prevents a crime from being detected and, in fact, society from questioning its harmfulness.

To understand how this phenomenon is harmful to women and is far from being just a pick-up line, in the following topic we present and describe the consequences of this phenomenon in women’s lives.

WOMEN’S EXPERIENCES IN PUBLIC SPACES: WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF STREET HARASSMENT?

By understanding street harassment as a manifestation of sexism, we affirm that harassment is sexist behavior. Therefore, such sexist behaviors have several consequences for women, both at the individual and social levels (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Regarding street harassment at the individual level, we first point out the high prevalence of this phenomenon in women’s lives. Research indicates that street harassment is recurrent, in a way that it is so commonly experienced by women from different countries and cultures. In Canada 77% of women (n=1900) reported experiencing street harassment (Lenton et al., 1999); in Australia 91% of women (n=1426) reported regularly experiencing street harassment (Johnson & Bennett, 2015); in Afghanistan, 93% of women (n=321)

reported experiencing regular street harassment (Women and Children Legal Research Foundation, 2015); and in Egypt, 85% of women (n=1010) reported having suffered some type of street harassment in the previous year of the survey (Shoukry et al., 2008). These data reaffirm how much such a phenomenon is a reality.

Given this scenario, based on the understanding of the high prevalence of street harassment, studies point to its implications for women. Fairchild and Rudman (2008) point out that the experience of street harassment can have indirect consequences that reduce the quality of women’s lives, for example, increased fear of rape and restriction of movement, which routinely affects women’s mental health. In the same way, Campos et al. (2017) found that street harassment has

important effects on women's perception of constraints and social restrictions (times to come and go, clothes to wear, not walking alone, etc.). Key results indicated that just under two-thirds (62.8%) of women reported experiencing some form of street harassment.

Moreover, from this perspective, for Akram et al. (2020), street harassment occurs every day and causes negative psychological effects on women, such as depression, anxiety, and stress. It should be noted that the explanation for the occurrence of street harassment is not directly related to the clothes the woman is wearing. In this regard, Akram et al. (2020) found in one of the main results of their research that the women who suffered the most harassment wore a Burka (33.2%).

Street harassment, therefore, has several implications for women's lives, resulting in restrictions on their daily mobility and the need for hypervigilance (Donnelly & Calorego, 2018; Ramadan, 2018). Furthermore, according to DelGreco and Christensen (2020), street harassment is positively related to anxiety and depression, as well as negatively related to sleep quality, so both anxiety and depression mediate the relationship between street harassment and sleep quality.

Another implication of this phenomenon is fear, because, based on this feeling, women tend to avoid certain streets, clothes, places, and times, for fear that this will result in greater violence, such as rape (Saunders et al., 2017; Farmer & Jordan, 2017). Therefore, for Saunders et al. (2017), street harassment, in addition to being recurrent and negatively affecting women, happens in an inevitable and omnipresent way. Thus, the accumulation of experiences with street harassment may help explain a series of emotional demands that disproportionately affect women, such as depression, sexual dysfunction, and eating disorders.

Therefore, because of this, we understand that street harassment can trigger physical and psychological damage to women because when a man makes an inappropriate comment or stares at a part of a woman's body, this reinforces the sexual objectification and self-objectification of the woman herself (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Thus, women learn through their experiences to associate emotions of humiliation and worthlessness as part of their sexual identity (Sánchez-Díaz, 2019).

Furthermore, in addition to these consequences at the individual level, street harassment also impacts women at the social level. To understand such impacts, we emphasize the relationship between men and women, in general, which suffers interference motivated by gender inequality and naturalized power relations. It is in these gender-related issues that stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination become more evident. It is from these phenomena that discourses are justified and legitimized in the alleged naturalness of power relations (Pereira & Souza, 2017; Von Smigay, 2008), in

which the practice of man's control over a woman's body is naturalized.

As a form of expression of power relations, in which women find themselves, street harassment is characterized as an informal means of communication and assumes several functions, one of which is the dissemination of the gender hierarchy. As Fitzgerald and Hesson-McInnis (1989) point out, sexual harassment of women workers and students has been a problem ever since women began to work and study outside the home. Based on this same logic, we understand street harassment as being that from the moment women have started to occupy and be on the streets, they have suffered retaliation, since this is not the "place for them to be", as they should be at home.

Thus, we note that street harassment is not only about sexual gratification. It's a question of power. For Kearl (2010), street harassment is about power and not about sexual attraction. This power translates the inequality between men and women into the simple right to be in and occupy different spaces, serving to reinforce the notions of hegemonic masculinity, and becomes a serious form of discrimination (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008).

Therefore, we argue that street harassment is a public health problem like sexual harassment in terms of its negative effects (DelGreco & Christensen, 2019), so that it attacks, insults, defames, and curtails the fundamental rights of women to come, to go, and to stay (Farmer & Jordan, 2017; Saunders et al., 2017; Donnelly & Calorego, 2018; Fairchild & Nguyen, 2020).

Therefore, the perception of the multiple social functions of street harassment serves to recognize the gender asymmetry that occurs in public spaces (Kearl, 2010), as well as its role in maintaining gender inequality. Street harassment works to produce an environment of psychological and sexual terrorism, to coerce women from the streets, regardless of their clothing or the time of day (Bowman, 1993).

In this way, it is possible to perceive the existence of other impacts and losses at the social level. For example, there is a reduction of economic opportunities for these women (Roy & Bailey, 2021), as they may want to stop studying, working, attending, and occupying different spaces for fear of this aggression. Street harassment compels women to avoid or reduce the use of public spaces (Roy & Bailey, 2021).

Therefore, we can observe that these sexist experiences remind women of their subordination to men, positioning women as things and objects (Calogero, 2013). Thus, street harassment is based on the cultural domination of women, although women and men share the same culture, women are subordinated by the sexist culture (Davis, 1994). In short, sexist behaviors, such as street harassment, are associated with the maintenance of the social system, that is, the gender hierarchy.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This work aimed to carry out a literature review on street harassment, defend the use of this term, and propose a definition for it, concerning its limits, possibilities, and understanding through social psychology.

Initially, we analyze how the literature conceives this phenomenon, of the convergences and divergences, both in the definitions and in the use of terms and, finally, we arrive at the definition of the term Street Harassment. Thus, we define it as unwanted intrusive practices with sexual connotations, which happen unpredictably and unavoidably, either verbally or non-verbally (comments, gestures and sounds, abusive and embarrassing looks), practiced by men against women in public spaces, in a way that sexually objectifies them.

Next, we differentiate this term from other seemingly similar terms, such as sexual harassment and pick-up lines. Given this, street harassment differs from sexual harassment, because sexual harassment refers to experiences that occur in a work and/or academic environment by someone known and of a higher position than the victim. In contrast, street harassment refers more specifically to sexual experiences that occur in a public environment, between unknown people, but more specifically from a man to a woman, to objectify her. About the difference between street harassment and pick-up lines, the pick-up line refers to a relationship of consent between those involved. That is, while pick-up lines involve a consensual relationship, street harassment does not.

We believe it is important to discuss the pick-up line when dealing with street harassment because there is a common belief in the application of the term pick-up line to refer to a situation of harassment, to bring up the possibility that there is a positive intention of the subject who harasses. That is a benevolent perception of this phenomenon. This is extremely dangerous, because it portrays the minimization of a form of violence, putting the aggressor in the place of the one who praises, in which the act is apparently positive. This makes it difficult to perceive harassment as a form of violence and, consequently, to denounce it, resulting in the dissemination of these behaviors, to maintain gender inequality.

To this end, we argue that recognizing and using the correct term to name this phenomenon is of paramount importance, as identifying it will allow for a more effective fight, to frame it as a crime, as already provided for in the Law of Sexual Harassment (Law 13.718/18).

In this way, we can infer that street harassment is a form of violence against women, thus being a manifestation of sexism. This has several negative consequences for women and, therefore, public actions are needed to combat it. Indeed, we estimate that street harassment experiences should not be treated as an individual and insignificant problem, but rather as a social problem, resulting from patriarchal norms and gender inequality present in society, revealing the dynamics of power between genders that exists covertly in the streets.

Therefore, understanding Street Harassment as a phenomenon that is configured in hierarchical gender relations based on sexism is relevant to demonstrate the different forms that this phenomenon can have, as well as to make the population aware of the importance of perceiving and naming such a phenomenon as a way of delegitimizing gender inequality. In addition, we note the importance of verifying how this phenomenon, which is often not perceived, refers, in a hostile manner, to a strong power relationship of men to the detriment of women based on their sexual objectification.

We trust that this article makes an important contribution to science, in the sense of integrating the literature on the topic and proposing the use of a specific term to define intrusive experiences based on comments, gestures and sounds, abusive and embarrassing looks of a sexual nature, practiced by men who are strangers to women in public spaces in a way that objectifies them. In addition to the scientific contribution, this article also presents important contributions to society in general, by facilitating the understanding of street harassment, to contributing to the fulfillment of one of the basic principles of human dignity, that is: to be able to come and go freely, with the right not to be harassed, respecting the woman's privacy and integrity.

Previously, before being able to name and define inappropriate, reprehensible, and violent behavior by men, such as Street Harassment, it was the behavior of women that was seen as problematic and in need of explanation. Thus, as a research agenda, we emphasize that it is not only important to define, describe, and demarcate a phenomenon, but also to understand why it happens. Thus, future studies can better explore the legitimacy of this phenomenon empirically and, for this, should be based on social psychology, using theories such as the theory of system justification (Jost & Banaji, 1994) and the theory of ambivalent sexism.

Thus, we trust that the present work brings an unprecedented contribution to the literature as it proposes to gather and analyze a set of studies that use different terms to refer to the same phenomenon, intending to defend the use of the term street harassment, presenting a clear and objective definition of it. Thus, we understand that an adequate framing of the concept is of great importance, aiming at scientific analysis and promotion of public policies, to promote the reduction and prevention of this phenomenon.

We hope that this study will allow for the use of the term street harassment in future research, especially in the Brazilian context, within the scope of the intrusive experiences of sexual connotation, which happen unpredictably and unavoidably, whether verbally or non-verbally (comments, gestures and sounds, abusive and embarrassing looks), practiced by men against women in public spaces, in a way that sexually objectifies them. This is because the sexual objectification of women is still very present and naturalized in Brazil.

Furthermore, based on the results found in this narrative review, as well as the research agenda that we seek to encourage in Brazilian academia, we hope to contribute to the development of more effective social intervention strategies for preventing and tackling the facets of different forms of violence against women. We understand that discussions

are increasingly necessary about the importance of actions aimed at understanding, preventing, and combating, which aim to give visibility and guarantee space for debate, to face the different forms of violence against women in our country and the world.

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Data availability statement

Research data is available on request from the corresponding author.

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