

WOMEN AS OBJECTS: Gender Violence in the Brazilian University Context

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INTRODUCTION

Slavery is an extreme example of a human beings' totally losing their freedom and autonomy to the detriment of interests alien to their will (Hirschman & Hill, 1999). The theory of objectification argues that an objectified human being is seen as a singular object – with differentiation – or as a common object – with little differentiation (Kopytoff, 1986; Belk et al., 1989; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). A common object is a kind of commodity, that is to say, an object with little differentiation (Kopytoff, 1986) and with value of use, sale and/or exchange (Williams, 2002), and the act of transforming parts of the body of a person (and their attributes) into a commodity is denominated the commodification of people (Hirschman & Hill, 1999; 2000; Van Binsbergen & Geschiere, 2005).

We have taken as our main object of study young women university students, experiencing growth in self-consciousness and concerned with their self-image. Slater and Tiggemann (2002) adopted Fredrickson and Roberts' (1997) theory of objectification and evidenced that young women face serious consequences arising from the objectification of their bodies (anxiety about their appearance and shame regarding own bodies). Girls often demonstrate excessive concern with their physical appearance and the quest for a perfect body, leading to an increase in the number of feminine plastic surgeries and silicone implants and intimate surgical operations (Sharp, 2000; Hartsock, 2004). These evidences were the motive for the construction of this article and focus on young women such as women university students.

Beyond the objectification, women's bodies can also be commodified in various contexts, as, for example, when a man pays for sexual services (prostitution or pornography), he is making a sexual commodity of that woman's body (Dworkin, 1981; Hirschman, 1991; Hirschman & Stern, 1994). Feminine sexuality, together with her body, are greatly commodified in films, advertisements, internet pages, strip-tease clubs, sexual telephone services, sexual therapies, sex-shops, swing clubs and night clubs in general (Carter, 1978; Dworkin, 1981; Hirschman & Stern, 1994; Henriot, 2012; Szymanski, Moffitt & Carr, 2011). Commodified women are not valued for their human characteristics, so their health, physical integrity and well-being also lose their importance (Dworkin, 1981; Nussbaum, 1999; Moore, 2008), which opens the way for the violation of and violence practiced against woman.

Within this empirical and theoretical context, this article's objective is to understand in what way violent situations against women in the Brazilian university context demonstrate the different facets of objectification and commodification. Thus, we advance beyond the work of Hirschman and Hill (1999; 2000), who deal with the process of the commodification of people, and the work of Sharp (2000), who defends the relation between objectification and commodification. This article's approach has the purpose of corresponding to the existing gaps in research. Existing studies deal with the phenomenon of objectification and commodification as separate concepts and do not examine the relationship between them sufficiently (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Hirschman, 1999; 2000; Haslam, 2006). Sharp (2000), argues that there is a relationship between the concepts and defends the idea that commodification is related to objectification in some way because it transforms people and their bodies into the objects of economic desire. He argues that if a person is objectified it is possible that they have also been commodified,

as in slavery, when the ownership of a slave leads to his/her being interchangeable with other objects, a characteristic of commodification (Nussbaum, 1999).

In drawing attention to these gaps left by the literature, we contribute to the discussion of objectification when we analyze it as a process which can lead to the commodification of people, and how this is reflected in human relations (Sharp, 2000). Additionally, we identified four ways that women may be commodified in the university context, by: (i) commodification of the body; (ii) commodification of sexuality; (iii) commodification of morality; and finally (iv) commodification of feelings.

In empirical and managerial terms, we present insights for teaching institutions and other organizations which combat discriminatory, controlling practices, and encourage their reflection on the humanization of women, thus also contributing to women's self-perception, and which should also be capable of perceiving (and acting against) abuses resulting from the objectification and commodification of the woman's body, sexuality, morality and feelings, elements dealt with on the basis of 20 in-depth interviews and documents including reports of young Brazilian university students.

THE OBJECTIFICATION AND COMMODIFICATION OF WOMEN

The act of transforming a human being into an object for the satisfaction of somebody else's desire is called objectification (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). For Haslanger (2012), objectification is taken to be a relationship of domination in which the objectifier imposes his will to the detriment of someone else's desire. Objectified persons lose their human values and characteristics, thus being transported into the universe of things (Haslam, 2006; Morris, Goldenberg & Boyd, 2018). Human characteristics such as emotional responsiveness, interpersonal warmth, cognitive openness and individuality, are replaced by inertia, frigidity, passivity, superficiality and, consequently, their body can be treated as something which can be broken, violated, hurt, just like an object (Nussbaum, 1999; Haslam, 2006). Dehumanization not only occurs in situations of conflict or of extreme negative evaluation, "dehumanization becomes a daily social phenomenon, rooted in common sociocognitive processes" (Haslam, 2006, p. 252).

Studies which have analyzed the consequences of objectification, specifically in the case of women, reveal that when their appearance becomes the focus, they auto-objectify themselves (Nussbaum, 1999; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Fredrickson & Harrison, 2005; Gervais, Vescio e Allen, 2011, Saguy et al., 2010). In her self-objectification a woman may diminish her competence, her qualities as an agent, the singularity of her talents, alter her perception as an individual human-being (dehumanization), devalue the importance of her feelings and experiences and reduce her concern with physical or emotional damage – to exemplify, in a study undertaken by Heflick & Goldenberg (2014), the women behaved consistently as objects, restricting their eating and movements. Objectified women may assess themselves on the basis of their appearance, see themselves as less competent and, consequently, undertake activities with weaker motivation and performance (Fredrickson et al., 1998; Gapinski, Brownell, & LaFrance, 2003; Quinn et al., 2006; Gervais, Vescio & Allen, 2011).

There are various ways a woman may be objectified. One manifestation of objectification, seen as a simple, subtle, very common male gesture is the glance at or visual inspection of a woman's body, when her body is treated as an object to attract, incite or satisfy somebody's sexual desire (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Beyond

becoming someone's property, the woman's body can be exchanged or used in activities varying from advertising to pornography, from "booth babes" (advertising models) to the traffic of human beings and sexual slavery (Henriot, 2012). By way of example, pornography is a way of dehumanizing and objectifying women by removing their full moral condition and making objects of them for the satisfaction of someone's desire (Hirschman, 1991; Haslam, 2006; Puvia & Vaes, 2015).

Beyond being treated as an object a woman may be transformed into a commodity (Hartsock, 2004), that is to say, into something which possesses value when used (material goods useful to human beings), sold or exchanged (which makes it alienable or exchangeable for other commodities) and of low differentiation (Marx, 1936; Belk et al., 1989; Kopytoff, 1986). The process of the transformation of a human being – or, more specifically, of a woman – into a commodity, is defined as commodification (Kopytoff, 1986). Thus, a woman is transformed into a commodity when she becomes a unit under someone else's control (Kopytoff, 1986). For Williams (2002), the commodification of human beings means putting a price label on someone who should not be commercialized, transforming that someone into something which can be commercialized because he/she comes thus to have value for sale, exchange or use. For Hirschman & Hill (1999; 2000), commodification also consists of transforming people into others' property, as occurs in slavery or concentration camps, which shows that commodification is not limited to the world of objects (Kopytoff, 1986).

Factual examples demonstrate how women can be treated as commodities: there is a region in China where women are disposed of and controlled by men or other people. As other's property, they may be sold or exchanged, not just for money, but for other goods, services or masculine honour (Hirschman & Hill, 1994; Henriot, 2002); women are treated as others' property in various parts of the world as for example in Togo in Africa, where a woman is her husband's - and his family's - property, even after his death (Moore, 2008); in Vietnam women are sold as fiancées and wives (Henriot, 2002); in various places women are presented as trophies by executives, depending on how young, blond, slender and beautiful they are, thus demonstrating the importance of the visual aspect of women's bodies (Hartsock, 2004); men of the Hualu people of Seram (eastern Indonesia) state that they buy their wives and pay a high price for them, which shows the value of use and commercialization which women possess for them (Valeri, 1994).

METHODOLOGY

In our study we used 20 in-depth interviews (of the one-to-one type) and documentary analysis as our principle source for the collection of data, the interviews being undertaken in two phases, held in the years 2017 and 2018, the documentary analysis also being undertaken during those two years.

In the first phase of the interviews, in the second semester of 2017, fifteen young women who are or were taking the graduate Administration course in a traditional, private, Brazilian institution of university education, were heard. Open-type questions were asked to encourage the free expression of the thought and feelings of the interviewees. Thirteen interviews were held in the candidates' presence and two were held via Skype, lasting for an average of one hour and twenty-two minutes. The content of the interviews was recorded digitally, with the participants' consent and transcribed in full. The initial selection criteria of the interviewees limited them to candidates of the female sex who had had some kind of involvement with feminism during their graduation

course through feminist organizations. The first three candidates interviewed were selected because of their constant activity in the feminist organization of the university where they study. The sampling process was continued with the use of the snowballing technique (Patton, 2002; Martin & Eisenhardt, 2010), in which other key informants were identified by the first interviewees, after being questioned as to their knowledge of other colleagues with the required characteristics.

In the second phase of the interviews which occurred during the second semester of 2018, we heard five young men who are or were studying the graduation course at the same institution as the girls. We thus began with the semi structured course for our analysis, which was fed after the analysis of the replies of the girls interviewed. This sequence was organized to contribute on four dimensions: (i) the trajectory of the student in the institution, (ii) his role and activity in different student groups, (iii) his critical position with regard to these groups, and (iv) the situations of objectification and commodification experienced or witnessed by the students.

Our principal purpose in this phase was the verification of points of convergence/divergence as between the perceptions of men and women with regard to objectification and commodification, thus increasing the internal validity of the research (Creswell, 2003). The men heard were selected because they had exercised an active role in student groups within the institution (e.g., band responsible to sing during sport events and parties, academic board and groups) – our purpose was to select individuals who might have witnessed the situations initially described by the girls and who, for that reason, would be able to confirm or refute the girls' versions, giving rise to different interpretations of the phenomenon investigated (Patton, 2002). After these five in-depth interviews it was observed that the reports presented by the girls were fully confirmed by the boys', which was why the interviews were discontinued.

With regard to the documentary analysis, while the interviews were underway we had access to the documents of the feminist group acting in the teaching institution, available on a data storage site. On this site there exist campaigns undertaken by the group against gender inequality and research projects on gender questions undertaken by members of the group, which served as support for our data analysis, research questions which were frequently undertaken after the university parties. We, further, became members of the Facebook group (with about 500 members) and of another group consisting of about eight thousand students and ex-students. Our participation in the Facebook groups enabled us to observe the dynamic of the group's members and the perception of other students regarding gender questions in the institution.

Beyond the documents of the group and the social networks, we also analyzed the lyrics composed and sung by two bands mainly of masculine students of the institution, and videos published on YouTube about gymkhanas for the reception of new arrivals for the course, promoted by veteran students of the institution. The three sources contained content of a strongly macho, sexual and aggressive nature, which is why access to these documents was fundamental, enabling us to complement the data collected during the two phases of the interviews and to achieve the purpose of the article on the basis of our scheme of triangulation of the data.

To deal with the data collected, the 27-plus hours of interviews, totalling 378 pages with single spacing and Times New Roman size 12 type, were transcribed. There was, therefore, careful control of the data-collection, their coding, classification and analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The transcriptions were transferred to Atlas TI software, appropriate for the qualitative analysis (Friese, 2014), and the coding was

undertaken line-by-line to identify the principal concepts or codes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The process of analysis recommended by the grounded theory technique, which involves three kinds of coding: open, axial and selective, was adopted. This choice was made because the research also possesses an inductive character, given that we began the research with the data-collection and later explored the information to see which themes or questions emerged from the field, which is aligned with our choice of non-structured planning in the first phase of the study, following the precepts of Glaser, Strauss and Strutzel (1968) and Strauss and Corbin (1990).

In the first phase of the codification, the data were analyzed in an open manner on the basis of key-words (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Locke, 2001). Sequentially, in the stage of axial codification, we analyzed the relations between these key-words and grouped them in categories and subcategories according to their nature and properties (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Finally, during the selective codification, we grouped, refined and shuffled these categories and subcategories of similar character and properties to regroup them. The grouping process continued until the categories were clearly identified, expressed in their causal and environmental conditions and, principally, achieved the objectives of the research project (Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). At the end of this process 346 quotations were selected under 41 codes. Table 2 presents a synthesis of the coding scheme thus constructed:

Table 1 - Coding Scheme, Illustrative Data and Literature

Theoretical dimensions and main references	Second-order categories	First-order themes	Exemplifying quotations (selected examples)
Objectification Fredrickson & Roberts (1997) Nussbaum (1999) Loughnan et al. (2010) Gray et al. (2011) Haslanger (2012)	<i>Self-objectification</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-objectification in professional and personal terms 	“I always loved the field of the humanities too, but I felt discouraged from doing Economics, for example, because it’s a man’s profession.”
	<i>Denial of Subjectivity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Banalization of the questions of the objectification and commodification of women 	“My veteran colleagues and even people of my generation have a thicker shell, they’re prepared to have a boss who tells them to get fucked because he’s in a bad mood. They have this shell and I think it’s due to these songs. As soon as I arrived at the faculty, that shocked me. I said: “My God in Heaven, what’s going on here?”; and then I had to learn to deal with this.”
Commodification Kopytoff (1986) Belk et al. (1989) Hirschman & Stern, 1994 Hirschman & Hill (1999;2000) Hartsock (2004)	<i>Ways of Control</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commodification of the Body 	“At the parties there are cases which involve aggression, and they always involve the girl friend. The girl is there with her boyfriend and he gets angry about something...once I saw a boy hit his girlfriend, he gave her a sock.”
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commodification of the Sexuality 	“Once I went to a party dressed in a skirt with a (girl) friend and a guy stuck his finger inside me under my skirt. And he did the same with her. We don’t even know if it was the same guy. It was horrible. I was going to get a drink and the space was very crowded. I never went in a skirt again, I was very angry, that day was difficult. The guy stuck his finger inside me? It’s absurd! He didn’t even look into my face, I didn’t see his face. I was in shock, you can’t even believe what was happening!”
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commodification of the Morality 	“In the band everyone has a nickname and a friend has the nickname “lunch-box” because she was dating a guy who had the nickname “backpack”, so she was “the lunch-box of the backpack”. When she told me that, not even she herself perceived how problematic it was, other people didn’t perceive it, her nickname is “lunch-box”, and I doubt that would happen if the situation was the reverse.”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commodification of the Feelings 	<p>“A girl had an affair with a guy, a real fool and a great misogynist, who used too to date a girl from the faculty many years ago. This girl used to send him nudes and one day she won the Miss Lay-down contest of the faculty and he, to show off the fact that he’d had sex with her, sent the photos of the nudes to his friends, and they were very shocking photos, which even showed her face. One of those guys sent the photos to the faculty’s mailing list, the whole faculty saw the photos, from the coordinator, the director, to the cleaning staff.”</p>
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On this basis we arrived at the results and the discussion with the literature, which are set out below.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Woman Perceived and Behaving as an Object

The patriarchal structure present in Brazilian culture contributes to women’s being seen and treated as subjects (Nussbaum, 1999). For the interviewee Vítor, 23, “[...] society is patriarchal and is based on a relation in which you have the man as the head of the family and normally it’s he who gives the orders.” Situations expressing machismo may be witnessed said in various contexts, including the university context. Lucas, 26, relates that he has witnessed evidences of machismo in the faculty, “I have lived through and seen many cases of teachers’ making macho comments in the classroom and even harassing (women) students.”

The theory of objectification suggests that Western culture contributes to women’s internalizing an objectifying view of their own bodies, whereby they worry about their own physical appearance (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Objectification leads people into concentrating on their physical characteristics to the detriment of their mental and moral status, and the emphasis on women’s physical attributes may reduce their perception of their competence (Loughnan et al., 2010; Gray et al., 2011). On being objectified, girls suffer personal and professional consequences, denominated auto-objectification by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997).

The women’s interviews revealed the consequences of the objectification they had undergone, whether personally or professionally, including: loss of confidence in their ability to perform class-room activities; excessive concern with their bodies; denial of their basic alimentary desires; fear when choosing the profession they are going to follow because of gender, the feeling of a lack of ability to take up positions of leadership, especially when they were involved with boys in their daily activities.

Adriana, 23, relates that when she took over the presidency of a student organization she was very afraid of exercising her activities: “Even as president I was still insecure, I did not go to speak to the coordinator, it was the general secretary and the vice-president who went, I did not feel secure in doing things. I kept the internal administration, the smaller things, in my hands.” Julieta, 21, tells how she suffers from uncertainty about her own body, and that because of it she imposes limitations on what she eats: “I’m not 100% secure about my body, not about anything I want at the moment I want it, because I’m extremely worried about my body.”

Jéssica, 21, felt ashamed to demonstrate her intellectual abilities in the classroom because she was the butt of colleagues’ jokes; she stated “the teacher wrote some challenges on the board and I was shy of saying I had finished first, because he ridiculed

the boys who were present and he used to say that even a woman could do it.” According to her, she always enjoyed the exact sciences, but chose to do a course in the human sciences, because she was afraid of the difficulties she would face if she chose a predominantly masculine course and because of the experiences of her colleagues: “I have (women) friends who are doing Engineering and who suffer a lot because of it and friends who do Administration who hear ‘a woman does not know how to administer companies’.”

However, these situations are often banalized in the girls’ university context. Nussbaum (1999) states that one of the ways of objectifying a person is the negation of their subjectivity, that is to say, the objectifier treats the person as something whose experiences and feelings are unimportant (Joy, Belk, and Bhardwaj 2016). Carlos, 22, states that “The way in which we live makes us banalize these practices which are horrible”, referring to the lyrics of the songs and situations of machismo which arise in the university environment; César, 23, states that the words sung by the faculty band are offensive, but that in the right context there is no problem. He refers to the court jester who had permission to tell the king the truth as a joke, as if the lyrics of the songs in the party atmosphere represented a parallel space in which it was permitted to say what one really thought of women, as he thus emphasizes: “He (the court jester) is the only person who may speak the truth to the king. Henry VIII was famous because he shut himself away with his court jester because he (the jester) was mad, he is outside the social structure, so he may say just anything.”

We noted this argument used in the Facebook group in the discussion as to whether the lyrics of the songs of an aggressive nature written by students should be continued. This group consists of students and ex-students of the faculty and has some eight thousand members. A post on this topic was appreciated by 166 people and generated 684 comments, from those who agreed that there was the need for a change in the content of the lyrics to those who thought that an exaggeration. Some defended the lyrics: “[...] university songs, despite being offensive and using words which in the wrong context might suggest machismo and discrimination, in the right context mean nothing of the kind. There is no intention of offending anyone and within the context everybody knows that” and “I listen to good music at home. University games are synonymous with orgies and fun. That’s the way it works here in São Paulo, in Brazil and in the world”.

The boys defended the idea that at sporting events and parties there are no limits, and one of them uses the word orgy, which makes allusion to sexual orgies and parties with many drinks. For the students who defend the maintenance of the lyrics of the songs, the phrases sung do not have the intention of offending anyone and that there exist the right contexts to express this kind of thought against women, that is to say, within the right context it is acceptable to offend women.

The argument that in the right context the lyrics of songs do not contain offensive meaning could be contested by the analysis of situations of physical and sexual violence committed against the girls at university parties, the principal environment in which the lyrics of the songs are sung. These reports are recorded in the documents relating to research projects undertaken by the feminist group with the students of the faculty to understand possible situations of aggression against them.

One of these research projects was undertaken after a party held in 2014. A questionnaire made available on internet was answered by 212 women students of the faculty and 69% of the respondents stated that they were approached or harassed aggressively at some moment in the party by young men and 51% of them did not feel

comfortable circulating alone at the party. In their description of how they were approached or harassed, the respondents said: “Men insisted on trying to kiss me and when I refused they continued to try to force me to. I had to break away or run to some friend of mine” and “A man got hold of me, insisting that I was his girl-friend and he didn’t leave me alone, afterwards he pushed me against a wall and tried to force me to kiss him”.

Regarding the various forms of objectification proposed by Nussbaum (1999), it is clear that the phenomenon has several different aspects, but that these consist of treating as an object something that is not an object, but rather a human being” (p. 218). However, beyond being objectified, women may also be commodified. We perceived, from the interviewees’ reports, that the situations of abuse and violence demonstrate four ways in which a woman may be commodified in the university context, by: (i) commodification of her body; (ii) of her sexuality; (iii) her morality; (iv) her feelings (Kopytoff, 1986; Nussbaum, 1999; Hirschman & Hill, 1999; 2000). These forms of commodification will be explored in the following section.

Commodified Bodies, Sexuality, Morality and Feelings

“What often happens at parties is that the boys give a girl drink to make her drunk, and afterwards take her elsewhere: to their house, a corner of the party area or their car to do whatever they want with her and afterwards the girl does not remember what happened (Mariana, 21).” Mariana’s report reveals a series of abuses which girls suffer during the parties and university sporting events. Mariana also witnessed other cases of boys at parties who took advantage of a girl’s having drunk to take advantage of her physically. Among the abuses reported are: kissing the girl’s face, neck and mouth forcibly; pulling her hair or her arm; caressing parts of her body: her breasts, stomach, shoulders, buttocks and genitalia; using offensive language; pushing, biting, pinching, throwing beer on her head; obliging her to make physical contact, among other examples that indicate the sensation of control that the boys feel with regard to the girls. This situation demonstrates how women can be seen as objects and commodities to be consumed and controlled in accordance with their owners’ interests (Kopytoff, 1986; Nussbaum, 1999; Hirschman & Hill, 1999; 2000).

The belief that others can exercise power over the woman’s body – and that she exists to serve – is ancient, profound, deep-rooted, diffused in everyday life, and rarely contested (Dworkin, 1981). Julieta tells of situations in her daily life which demonstrate how she needed to fall in line with the expectations of others, such as members of her family and friends:

[...] I remember episodes in which my step-mother said, “your bra’s showing, cover it up”. My uncle’s wife saying “your body’s good, but you can’t get any fatter, you must stay like that”. When I was small my hair was curly and I grew up hearing that my hair was ugly, bristling, and that it was not pretty. My cousins are blondes, with smooth hair, and I was physically different from them. Then when I was about 12 years old I wanted to straighten my hair. I spent 8 years of my life straightening my hair. Until I entered the faculty and met Melissa (founder of the feminist group of the university), and I said: “Look at that girl, look at her hair, why should I try to straighten my hair?” (Julieta, 21)

Gardner (1980) states that women's bodies are more often subject to other people's commented assessments, as for example, about their bra showing, about their body's being acceptable and about their hair not being pretty, showing that both men and women can objectify a woman.

The feeling of ownership and power which some young men demonstrate with regard to a woman's body also finds expression in the lyrics of the songs sung by students of the faculty to provoke the rivalry between the universities at the university games. The words say: "Even though you're not attractive. I've come to eat you, you'll do it free for (the name of the faculty)", "You're a worthless whore", "I'm different, I'm going to be president, you the secretary, my cleaner", "Come to fuck with me, on all fours, face to face, I'll fuck even your belly button, just don't kiss me, bitch", "Vagabond, you don't feel pain", "I dirtied the mouths of the lay-downs of the whole city, afterwards I didn't even kiss her, or create a friendship, afterwards I despised her so much that she fell in love with me" and "That thing isn't a woman, it's a thing with a vagina, it only serves to do a blowjob on me".

Analyzing some of the stanzas of these offensive lyrics one may perceive masculine sentiments of power and possession regarding the body and sexuality of women. Lucas, 26, tells how he and his colleagues sang "We've come here, just to drink, our sport is in the vagina, to be your boss is our destiny." Other lyrics say they found many girls in the street, demonstrating the perception of women as available, accessible, like common objects, without anything that would make them singular, just like a commodity (Kopytoff, 1986). The lyrics refer to the girls as ugly, that is to say, without any beauty that might attract the possessor's eye, "I don't want you, you are just too ugly, so go away fatty, go away vagabond, far from my cock", "I'm going to cover your face with a blanket", and even so the boy is going to have sexual relations with her, who will do this without charging anything: "You will do it free for (the name of the faculty)", referring thus to the prostitutes who offer sexual services in exchange for money, and making reference once more to the woman as a commodity (Monto & Julka, 2009; Rudman & Fetterolf, 2014).

When the lyric says "you're a worthless prostitute", and "that's not a woman, it's a creature with a vagina, only useful to do a blowjob on me", the woman comes to possess a value of use, for which she will be used for sexual purposes and afterwards be discarded (Hartsock, 2004). The lyrics continue with innumerable vulgar expressions which demonstrate how the woman's body can be used to satisfy sexual desires, as in a relationship of power, and afterwards be discarded as worthless (Hirschman, 1991).

In the lyrics of the songs the woman is objectified and commodified in various ways. The studies of Haslam (2006) and Morris, Goldenberg & Boyd (2018) state that the de-humanization can be mechanistic or animalesque. In mechanistic de-humanization, the woman is objectified for her physical appearance and not for her sexual aspects, that is to say, she is seen as an object which can be used and manipulated. That is why she is portrayed as incapable of feeling pain (Heflick & Goldenberg (2009), as in the passage of the song: "vagabond you don't feel pain", just as if she were an object, a piece of furniture, for example. In animalesque de-humanization, the objectification focuses on sexual aspects, and the woman is seen as an animal. Thus, she can be used for the satisfaction of her owner's sexual desires, as in: "lick my whole body, get hold of my cock."

After the satisfaction of sexual desires, she may still have value of use for her owner, because she will continue to offer services, now as secretary or cleaner, while the

boy will exercise intellectual activities as president, as in the passage: “shut your moustached mouth, come and serve my coffee.” Thus, the woman can be seen as a commodity to be used, discarded and used again at any moment.

Another song sung at the university parties received the name “Daddy’s secretary”, and passages of this song say: “She has a moustache, she looks like a skivvy, offering her cunt is her greatest hobby, come here, I’ll hire you”; “Come to me, come to be fucked, serve my coffee and suck me, but I’m not going to kiss you”; “When I fuck you cover your face because I don’t want to see you, you are too ugly, shave that moustache”; “Come to be Daddy’s secretary.” The woman continues to be seen as ugly and is diminished to the status of rendering sexual and domestic services (Hartsock, 2004). Another strong indication of the commodification of the body and sexuality are the passages “Just don’t kiss me, bitch” and “But I’m not going to kiss you”, in which the lyrics say that there will be no kissing in any of the relations, because kissing indicates a more intimate and sentimental contact between them, revealing the relationship’s ephemeral and transient nature.

Commodification can be observed in situations in which men believe that women are the property of other men and, as they are accompanied, they may feel safe and protected, but when they are alone, their bodies are available to be possessed by other men. Pietra, 20, feels uncomfortable about simple things in her routine such as getting into an elevator at the university, because she perceives the looks and the attempts to invade the privacy of her body, because she is without her boy-friend. Henrique, 23, states that when he is at his girl-friend’s side, the boys respect her, but if he’s some paces behind her, he realizes how much his presence is necessary to inhibit other boys’ harassment. “There are many guys who hold my girl-friend’s hand in the middle of a party. When I am holding her hand, no one does anything. But when I’m two steps away they think they can do just anything. They hold her hand, touch her waist, caress her hair.”

Another fact which demonstrates the thinking of certain men regarding their belief that women are other men’s property is the fact that they apologize to the boy-friend because they thought that the woman was available. Henrique, 23, says that when boys approach his girl-friend at a party, he speaks to them and the boys’ reaction is to apologize to him, “I put my hand on the boy’s shoulder and say “bro” and the boy immediately says “no, I did wrongly, forgive me.”

However, men do not always succeed in respecting what they consider to be others’ property. Belk (1988) argues that the owner seeks to control his belongings, but he also has an interest in others’ possessing them too, that is to say, that they should enter the field of rivalry when they understand that they possess less than the other person. This is why situations arise in which a man commodifies a woman even when she is accompanied by another man, as in the example quoted by Izis, in which she witnessed a fight between two boys because of a woman at a university party:

A couple were together and another chap passed and touched his girlfriend and he said “Ah what’s that you’re doing to my girl?” and they started to fight each other [...] and then this boy started to fight the other one and afterwards started to hit the girlfriend, bit her and she started to bleed, then the bouncer arrived, talked about the situation, we separated the couple and I went to talk to her (Izis, 21).

The argument between the boys was motivated by the interest in possessing that girl, as if she were an object who could be bought in a shop or disputed at an auction. The

feeling of rivalry between them was motivated by one's having possession of something that the other did not. The girl at that moment became a belonging to be fought over. However, at a particular moment she was blamed for having awoken the interest of the other boy. She, as his property, could not cause him this kind of confusion and in reply to that, he attacked her physically, biting her arm and blaming her for the situation (Varman, Goswami & Vijay, 2018).

Henrique, 23, and Carlos, 22, told of a situation in which a friend of theirs attacked his girl-friend physically, biting her arm several times, because of a text message that the girl had received on her mobile phone. Henrique recounts: "I saw it, it was bizarre, it seemed she had received several punches on her arm". It is possible to perceive the strong sense of ownership that this boy-friend had with regard to her, a characteristic of permanent commodification. When his feeling of ownership was threatened, his reaction was to attack the young woman, as he regarded her as his property. His violent reaction was a way of expressing his fear of losing his possession, seen as an extension of his self (Belk, 1988).

Beyond the possibility of treating bodies and sexuality as commodities, it is also possible to treat a woman's emotional and psychological aspects as commodities. In some songs' lyrics the boys state that the girls who study at the rival faculty are carriers HIV, according to the passages: "She's got HIV" and "My cock has got used to a girl with cream cheese, referring to a secretion caused by sexually transmissible diseases. The passages reveal an attempt to control the girls' morality, seeing that the boys describe them as having health problems which cannot be verified or confirmed, a situation which can be called slander or defamation of the girls. In this process, the feelings and the morality of the woman come to be controlled and what they feel or think about themselves or about what they learn or know, also becomes their owner's property.

In the commodification of intangible aspects such as the feelings and morality lose their relevance and also come to be treated as the commodifier's property:

There was an event which was a kind of beauty competition and elected the prettiest student. The girls had to go up on the stage and do something to show why they had to win the contest. They said, 'I'll make you drunk, but that's no problem, you'll drink a lot and you'll not even realize that you are up there'. A girl took off her clothes and all the boys enjoyed it and egged her on. What shocked me was that the following day in the faculty everyone was calling her a whore (Melissa, 23).

"In the gymkhanas of the faculty rag there was the exam of the wet t-shirt and the one who won was the one who took off the most pieces of clothing. There were girls who pulled off their knickers and kissed other girls on the mouth" (Elizabete, 29). Olívia, 23, recounts "when I entered in 2014 there were still veterans who came to the rag with a rubber dildo and who made the girls do a blowjob on the dildo in the middle of the avenue." Melissa, 23, witnessed, during a gymkhana for the reception of new students, girls being encouraged to take alcoholic drinks until they became so drunk that they lost their timidity and participated in activities that would help them to conquer the title of the most beautiful among the new students.

Melissa, 23, tells, further, that a girl accepted the challenge to go up on the stage and take off her clothes - to do it she drank a lot of alcohol and received encouragement from a group of students at that moment. The next day, however, she was ridiculed and reduced to the status of a prostitute by some of the faculty students. Her morality before

the other students suffered because at that moment of relaxation she decided to give in to the encouragement she received to make that moment more amusing, but after the effects of the alcoholic drinks had worn off her behavior was censured by some of those very students who had egged her on.

Melissa, Elizabete and Olívia told of situations in which some girls, when they self-objectified themselves, subjected themselves to ridicule, because they believed that that situation in which they exposed their sexuality could gain them the social approval of their other colleagues (Fredrickson & Harrison, 2005; Hill & Fischer, 2008; Saguy, et al., 2010). It was possible to confirm the situations described by Melissa, Elizabete and Olívia by means of videos available on Youtube which were recorded by students during the events described. It may be seen that the feelings and morality of the girls who participated in the activities were being controlled by other people, because the girls gave in to the shouts from the public that they should act in the way they expected them to act, by, for example, spreading mayonnaise on their bodies in a sensual fashion, show the intimate parts of their bodies and kiss other girls just to receive the approval of the public which was present (Kopytoff, 1986; Belk, 1988; Hirschman & Hill, 1999; 2000).

CONCLUSION

Our purpose in writing this article was to understand in what way violent situations against young women's in the Brazilian university context demonstrate the different facets of objectification and commodification. Thus, we interviewed 20 young Brazilian university students who live within a context of great objectification and commodification of women, and we analyzed documents of digital repositories, social networks and sites, as well as students' personal documents. In our analysis, we concentrated on how different aspects of the university context such as parties and sporting events demonstrate the objectification and commodification of women. Our principal theoretical concern was not, therefore, to reveal the violence the women suffered, but rather to understand in what way these violent events demonstrate the different facets of objectification and commodification.

As our principal results we emphasize the woman's ample objectification and commodification in the university context and their negative consequences, such as self-objectification in its personal and professional aspects demonstrated by reports of uncertainty regarding their bodies, in exercising the activities of leadership and their choice of profession (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Gray et al., 2011).

Further, we note that, beyond the parts of her commodified body, a woman can also have her sexuality, morality and feelings commodified, seeing that they come under others' control, i.e. that of the boys who study in the same faculty as they do. This kind of commodification implies, among other aspects, interference in their freedom of movement, their choice of clothes to wear, with whom to interact, what and when to eat, the way of feeling pleasure and even when to have their sexuality exploited. Further, when their feelings and morality are commodified, what the woman feels about herself and others, her dignity, her personal and professional interests, and her reputation before others also come under control.

Our article presents, therefore, three central conclusions. The first of them, theoretical and thematic, concerns the literature on the objectification and commodification of people, it contributes to the understanding of the relation between

these theories (objectification and commodification). As far as we know, no previous study has brought these theories together (Sharp, 2000).

The second contribution, empirical and managerial, concerns those teaching institutions which play a fundamental role in the creation of policies to inhibit the perpetuation of any type of discrimination and control. Teachers and managers of such institutions should be sensitive to their students' environment. Measures such as regulations and internal rules, codes of ethics and punishments for infringements, should be taken so that women university students be seen as equals in their competencies and rights and may freely exercise their physical and intellectual abilities. Our results show that there is still much to do in the Brazilian scene; we know that this objectification and commodification of women also concern other regions of the world. A series of public policies should be created to deal with this question, as it involves not only the interests of individuals and institutions but also of the nations in general (Hirschman & Hill, 1994; Hartsock, 2004; Moore, 2008; Henriot, 2012).

The third contribution, linked to our study's objective, is directed to women individually, as our article reveals daily practices which make them undergo objectification and commodification, and in which, in particular cases, they also auto-objectivate themselves, which contributes to third parties' feeling they have the right to commodify them. In this respect, our contribution lies in encouraging reflection on the importance of the humanization of women and returning to them the singularization of what was once considered a commodity. Women should be enabled to perceive when they are suffering these abuses, and our article can contribute to this broadening of perception, and consequent action, on the part of women when they are objectified and commodified. This is a subjective aspect of our study, of difficult assessment, but which is of fundamental importance and lies behind our undertaking this research project.

Our results point to the existence of a frequent objectification and commodification of women (concepts which are related to and which have gathered strength on the basis of a historical processes), which may be understood as a thesis, notion or happening (Hegel, 1812). Further, we identified on the basis of the literature that singularization is the antithesis of objectification and commodification (Kopytoff, 1986; Belk et al., 1989), that is to say, an antagonism, contradiction or idea opposed to the original thesis. Our dialectical solution for the conflict between thesis and antithesis consists of the process of growing awareness of individuals (including the victims), and in the existence of institutional rules and laws which combat the objectification and commodification of women – this dialectical solution is denominated synthesis by Hegel (1812), which we believe to be the solution to our research problem, which consist of the range of contributions made by our article.

Despite the above-mentioned contributions, our article presents certain limitations due to the research method. First, the data were collected only from young university students in Brazil, thus the wider application of our results cannot be immediately guaranteed. Secondly, we concentrate our analysis particularly on situations that arise at parties and university sporting events and recognize that the situations arising in other contexts of university life - the lecture rooms and other premises - can provide us with rich reports on the phenomenon and which, therefore, should be investigated more closely. Despite this limitation, our choice of investigating specific university contexts – which arose gradually as we listened to the interviewees – brought about the coherence between our research question and our collection and analysis of the data.

We understand that the objective proposed has been achieved and suggest future studies on how self-objectified women behave in the university environment – we noted their excessive concern with their bodies, their fear of exercising activities of leadership and their choice of professional careers, but see great opportunity in developing the discussion of these and other aspects arising in other contexts. Another opportunity for future studies consists of the analysis of how men develop their objectifying and commodifying thinking about women. Our interviews revealed that boys who experienced positive feminine influence during their upbringing, e.g., that of independent mothers or sisters who work out, had a less objectifying tendency than those without the same feminine references: this reflection gives the opportunity for further research projects on the theme.

In conclusion, our research helps to understand that their objectification and commodification results in negative consequences for women. Finally, with a study on the phenomenon which results in violence against women, we hope to offer important insights into the roles of men and women, of institutions both public and private, for awareness and the creation of practices which will contribute to a change in the thinking and behaviour of society in general.

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