

CGI contribution on Gender Justice and the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression to the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of freedom of opinion and expression

14 June 2021

Note:

This report has the objective to inform the thematic report on the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression and Gender Justice for the 76th session of the General Assembly. Due to the Brazilian's Internet Steering Committee (CGI.br) multistakeholder performance and its important role over 26 years of existence for building a free and safe Internet that ensures the protection of fundamental rights for its adequate appropriation by society, the CGI.br decided to contribute with this UN call on Gender Justice and the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression. However, it is important to highlight that the present analysis is a broader description of the situation in the country, not focusing only on a specific population (women journalists, human rights defenders, politicians, feminist activists, women leaders, and other women in the public space) with which CGI.br doesn't have specific data to make a more critical contribution. Therefore, the intention at this moment is to contribute to the understanding of the challenges and opportunities that currently exist in Brazil regarding the debate on freedom of expression, Internet, and gender. And in a second moment, the intent would be to deepen the debate in order to map the challenges and possible solutions.

1. THE ROLE OF CGI FOR INTERNET DEVELOPMENT AND THE PROMOTION OF ITS PRINCIPLES³

- The approach to complex problems as gender justice requires multifaceted answers, and a multistakeholder perspective could help to build them.³

2. RELEVANCE AND CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE SUBJECT IN BRAZIL⁵

- Brazil faces major challenges regarding gender justice ⁵
- Gender inequalities in Brazil are present not only in the labor market, but also threaten fundamental rights and women's lives.⁷

3. THE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT AND THE CHALLENGES FOR GENDER JUSTICE⁹

- Understanding Internet access and its appropriation as a fundamental right and the importance of a free and open Internet that doesn't reproduce historical inequalities⁹
- The online environment can reproduce the prejudices of those who develop such environment¹¹
- The Internet as a mirror of society¹³
- The contradictory paths of the Internet to empower women in leadership roles¹⁵

As seen in a previous topic, the data collected by the IBGE Gender Report illustrate the size of this discrepancy between the participation of women in managerial positions and in the public sphere (federal and state representatives, councilors and the Executive). Brazil has the lowest representation among the twelve countries in South America with 14.8% of congresswomen in this sphere. Nevertheless, this percentage increased in Brazil compared to 2017 when only 10.5% of the bench of congress was composed of women.¹⁵

- A Legal framework is important for the defense of human rights criminalizing its abuses, but the solutions must go beyond using the Internet as a path to empower women¹⁸

4. RELEVANT INITIATIVES¹⁹

5. REFERENCES²⁰

1. THE ROLE OF CGI FOR INTERNET DEVELOPMENT AND THE PROMOTION OF ITS PRINCIPLES

- The approach to complex problems as gender justice requires multifaceted answers, and a multistakeholder perspective could help to build them.

The Brazilian Internet Steering Committee (CGI.br) is the organization responsible for establishing guidelines for the use and development of the Internet in the country. Composed of representatives from different sectors, CGI.br has in the multistakeholderism a value that guides its actions, aiming at promoting the technical quality of the Internet, as well as its growing and adequate use by society. In addition to being the organization that manages the country top level domain (.br), CGI.br is the country's leading authority on issues related to the Internet, and unequivocally contributes to the maintenance of a safe, universal, and free Internet.

Among its attributions, CGI.br is responsible for “articulating actions related to the proposition of norms and procedures associated with the regulation of activities inherent to the Internet”, guaranteed by principles for its governance. Its multi-sector model is pioneer in the world with regarding Internet management in different countries and contributes to making Brazil an important player in the global Internet ecosystem. As such, its involvement in issues that permeate the use and development of the Internet in the country is essential to shed light on the paths that should be taken for the adequate appropriation of technology by society.

The gradual and constant growth of the Internet and its economic and social importance demands special attention to the way this infrastructure has been used and captured by different actors and sectors of society. Since the Internet has become a fundamental tool for human development and an enabler of a new information society¹, it must be understood as the means by which the social and cultural cohesion of this society is built upon. Consequently, the mechanisms of its governance should

1 explicar origem do conceito em daniel bell em uma abordagem pós-industrial e expansão do termo para explicar o fluxo global de conhecimento.

explain the origin of the concept in Daniel Bell in a post-industrial approach and expansion of the term to explain the global flow of knowledge.

be based on values that contribute to the maximization of the benefits from the use of new technologies that constitute this medium and respond to the challenges imposed by its rapid proliferation.

Recognizing the urgency of these responses, the Report The Age of Digital Interdependence assumes that the interconnected Era which we live in “cannot afford to wait any longer to develop better ways to cooperate” for the improvement of the Internet impacts in advancing the human condition. And invite the global community to commit to a Declaration of Digital Interdependence that ground this cooperation on “common human values – such as inclusiveness, respect, human-centeredness, human rights, international law, transparency and sustainability”². In Brazil, CGI.br understood a long time ago the importance of establishing principles to guide the development of the Internet, recognizing the great opportunities that the Internet represented for the country but also its risks. Then, in 2009 the “Principles for the Governance and Use of the Internet in Brazil”³ were launched in an unprecedented way.

Developed from an intense multisectorial debate, the Principles brings initially the respect for human rights, and diversity as the fourth Principle, which guides the initiatives headed by the Committee. Among them, research by Cetic.br already brings variables related to sex. The workshops at the Internet Forum in Brazil (FIB) are selected taking into account the gender of the proponents. Other initiatives and debates related to the Internet infrastructure in Brazil and its governance, such as the construction of laws that govern its system, is oriented by the Principles. It is worth mentioning in particular the creation of the Marco Civil Law of the Internet in Brazil, approved in 2014, and one of the first initiatives in the establishment of rights and duties for the online environment.

There are 10 principles established for the Governance and Use of the Internet in Brazil⁴ that guides the debate on the development of the Internet in the country.

2 <https://www.un.org/en/pdfs/DigitalCooperation-report-for%20web.pdf>

3 <https://principios.cgi.br/>

4 To wit: (1) Freedom, privacy and human rights, (2) Democratic and collaborative governance, (3) Universality; (4) Diversity; (5) Innovation; (6) Net neutrality; (7) Net unaccountability; (8) Functionality, security and stability; (9) Standardization and interoperability; (10) Legal and regulatory environment

2. RELEVANCE AND CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE SUBJECT IN BRAZIL

- Brazil faces major challenges regarding gender justice, even women being most of the population.

Brazil is the 93rd country in the Gender Equality Ranking launched by the World Economic Forum in 2021⁵. Women in Brazil faces more challenges than men in their entry and autonomy in the country's labor market, but also the problems surrounding a care economy in which women are overloaded, spending twice as much time (on average 10 hours a week more than men) on unpaid domestic chores which constitutes work made invisible in society⁶ and hinders the participation of women in the paid labor market.

The report Pictures of Inequality⁷ exposes a “structuring scenario of Brazilian social inequality”. Brazil has more women than men in the population, representing 51.8%⁸. Between those, most declare themselves black and brown (52.7%). And their participation in almost all sectors and productive and public activities is notably smaller as these social variables are considered.

According to this same survey, families in Brazil made up of couples with and without children have men as heads of the family (55.1% and 26.2%, respectively). Although the idea of heads of family may be diffuse, these numbers are relevant when analyzed together with other indicators on the labor market, income, and education. The proportion of employed women with children aged 0 to 3 years, for example, is lower than those who do not have children in this age group (54.3% compared to 67.2%). Children are, in fact, a preponderant factor for the barriers faced by women in

5 <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2021>

6 https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/livros/liv101784_informativo.pdf

7 Free translation. The official title in portuguese is Retratos da Desigualdade”, which is product of a joint effort between UN Women, The Institute for Applied Economic Research (Ipea) and the Policy Secretariat for Women of the Ministry of Justice and Citizenship. Available in portuguese at <https://www.ipea.gov.br/retrato/>

8 Data from National Household Survey, 2019, from the Brazilian Statistics Institute. Available at <https://www.ibge.gov.br/estatisticas/sociais/populacao.html>

the Brazilian labor market. When men with children are analyzed, the level of employment is much higher than that of women. And comparing men with children and without children the logic is reversed, the former have an employment rate of 89.2%, while among those who do not have children the rate is 83.4%⁹. Besides, the Gender statistics from IBGE in 2010 highlights the difference in the level of employment among women with children who attend day care centers and those who don't have this benefit, which is 65.4% and 41.2%¹⁰ respectively. This is another perverse indicator for Brazilian women who have children.

The indicators of the 2019 National Household Sample Survey¹¹ show that women are the majority among the working-age population (52.4%), as well as the population that declares themselves black and brown (55.7%). The IBGE gender report¹² also shows that, in 2019, the participation rate in the labor force of the population over 15 years of age reached 73.7% among men and 54.5% among women. The last demographic survey, carried out in 2010¹³, also shows that the only sector where women have more participation than men is in education, health and social services (1.6% compared to 3.9%) and domestic services (14.7% compared to 0.9%).¹⁴ Careers in the country are also marked by gender inequalities when observing the low number of women hired in the sciences, mainly in medicine, engineering, and technology.¹⁵

The numbers of the Higher Education Census clearly expose this inequality: while the completion rate in the courses in Computing and Information and Communication Technologies, and Engineering, Production and Construction is significantly higher among males (86.4% and 62.7% respectively), the courses in Education (75.6%), Health and Well-Being (73.8%), and Social Sciences, Communication and Information (72.3%) show that women have the highest completion rate. Considering the Brazilian population in 2020, only 10.7% of Brazilian

9 https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/livros/liv101784_informativo.pdf

10 <https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/livros/liv88941.pdf>

11 https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/periodicos/2421/pnact_2019_1tri.pdf

12 https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/livros/liv101784_informativo.pdf

13 The next demographic survey was supposed to be carried on in 2021, but because of the pandemic it was postponed to 2021. Although, in this year, it has been postponed indefinitely due to lack of funds: <https://brazilian.report/number-of-the-week/2021/04/24/nationwide-census-postponement/>

14 <https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/livros/liv94414.pdf>

15 <https://querobolsa.com.br/revista/saiba-quais-sao-as-profissoes-com-maior-e-menor-numero-de-contratacoes-de-mulheres-no-brasil>

women in university are enrolled in STEM programmes versus 28.6% of men¹⁶. In addition, the presence of women in decision making management positions is also lower among women themselves, 37.4%, even though they are the portion of the population with the highest level of education (19.4% of women with higher education compared to 15.1% of men)¹⁷. Although with a higher degree of education, the income of female workers is 60% of the income of men comparatively.¹⁸

- Gender inequalities in Brazil are present not only in the labor market, but also threaten fundamental rights and women's lives.

In 2014, 57.5% of the population in Brazil fully or partially agree that *“If women knew how to behave, there would be less rape occurrences”*¹⁹, according to the survey “Social Tolerance to Violence Against Women” conducted by IPEA. The survey also exposed that the majority of the population (63%) agree that “Cases of domestic violence should only be discussed among family members”, which leads us to believe that the perception of domestic violence is a family matter, not a police one, as it should be. This indicator is even more worrying when it is observed that 65.1% of the population at some level agree that “A woman who is attacked and continues with her partner likes to be beaten”. Although to a lesser extent, it is still astonishing that 26% of the population agrees that “Women who wear clothes that show off their body deserve to be attacked”, and illustrative of a country that registers the fifth highest rate of femicide in the world²⁰.

According to the Eva survey, conducted by the Igarapé Institute, between 2010 and 2018, more than 214.000 women and girls suffered sexual violence, and in 2018, 58% of them were under 14 years of age. Between 2015 and 2019, more than 386.000 women were threatened. In 2019, more than 148.000 women suffered moral violence,

16 http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf

17

https://download.inep.gov.br/educacao_superior/censo_superior/documentos/2020/Apresentacao_Censo_da_Educacao_Superior_2019.pdf

18 <https://censo2010.ibge.gov.br/noticias-censo.html?view=noticia&id=1&idnoticia=1099&busca=1&t=mulheres-nivel-superior-recebem-60-rendimento-homens>

19

https://www.ipea.gov.br/portal/images/stories/PDFs/SIPS/140327_sips_violencia_mulheres.pdf

20

<https://artigo19.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/24/files/2018/03/Dados-Sobre-Femicid%C3%ADdio-no-Brasil-.pdf>

and more than 30,000 were raped. Such indicators reveal that machismo and patriarchy are so deeply rooted in Brazilian culture that it is still possible to find justifications for violence against women in blaming the victim.

It is true that measures in the public sphere are already being taken to reduce the high rate of violence against women in the country. The laws Maria da Penha and Femicide, from 2006 and 2015 respectively, according to the Report Data on Femicide in Brazil²¹, are two important initiatives seeking to build a responsible Legal Framework for gender equality in the country. But to really change the scenario of violence in a context in which the structures themselves of the social system allow it to occur²² more than just laws that criminalize these actions are needed. There is the need to go beyond in the building of safe environments for the full performance of women in all economic sectors, in policy, in labor, in the streets, and, mainly, in their homes.

Violence against women goes beyond private spaces and affects the low presence of women in different spaces of public life. In politics, women have very low representation. In 2020, the proportion of women in the House of Representatives was 14.8%, placing Brazil as the country in South America with the lowest rate of women in this position, according to IBGE gender statistics²³. There are currently 77 congressmen in the country among the 513 chairs for this position, and there are states in which women have not yet achieved any representation at all. In the position of councilors, the average percentage of women is 16%, with an even smaller rate of black women, only 5.3%. In the executive branch, women are an even smaller minority, holding only 7.1% of ministerial positions. The country has 5.570 municipalities, but only in 639 of them (about 11%), do women have the position of City Mayor.²⁴.

To increase female representation in the country's public life, the 2009 law that amends the Voting Code, requiring parties to have a minimum of 30% of women candidates in proportional elections, is a relevant initiative in an attempt to guarantee female participation in the political process. However, this does not guarantee that

21 Free translation. <https://artigo19.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/24/files/2018/03/Dados-Sobre-Feminic%C3%ADdio-no-Brasil-.pdf>

22 <https://www.ipea.gov.br/atlasviolencia/arquivos/artigos/3519-atlasdaviolencia2020completo.pdf>

23 https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/livros/liv101784_informativo.pdf

24 <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/geral/noticia/2018-03/brasil-ocupa-161deg-lugar-em-ranking-da-presenca-das-mulheres-no-poder>

women in fact take on these positions of power, as the law determines a percentage of women candidates and not of women effectively elected. This situation leads to a significant number of female candidates with zero votes (10% of the candidates in the 2018 elections²⁵), who are registered as such even without knowing, just to meet the party's quota. Furthermore, this initiative also does not tackle the problem of political violence, which has women as its main victim, and constitutes one of the main factors in the exclusion of women from political spaces.

3. THE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT AND THE CHALLENGES FOR GENDER JUSTICE

The online environment is today one of the main media through which society interacts and different social actors play their roles. The Covid-19 pandemic only reinforced this space as a central part of people's lives. However, if on one hand the Internet opens up many possibilities, on the other it can reproduce - and even deepen - inequalities that exist outside this new environment. In this sense, it is crucial that the appropriation of the digital universe considers the challenges that society faces in guaranteeing offline fundamental rights, especially those related to gender and race inequalities. Therefore, it is also worth highlighting that the main challenges pointed out below are related to fundamental rights that should be ensured to guarantee equal opportunities for women and men and that their freedom of expression and opinion aren't violated. But here it is also understood as opportunities, not only the way they use technology but how they participate in its development.

- **Understanding Internet access and its appropriation as a fundamental right and the importance of a free and open Internet that doesn't reproduce historical inequalities**

The principles for Internet governance and its use in Brazil aim at promoting digital inclusion so that no social group is excluded or harmed by the use of this new social environment in which the Internet is configured. Therefore, it is also from these

25 <https://azmina.com.br/reportagens/laranjas-profissionais-com-zero-votos-em-eleicoes-antiores-elas-sao-candidatas-em-2018/>

principles that the important issues raised on gender injustices and women violence in the online environment should be discussed.

In Brazil 82% of the population has access to the Internet and among the rural population the rate is 60%, according to the latest survey published by ICT Households. Although there is no significant difference in the proportion of women and men who access the Internet, the use made by different groups in society varies greatly and reflects in the entire country. For example, Internet access made exclusively by cell phone is considerably higher among the rural population, women, blacks, and indigenous people. This form of connection is also regarded as a lower quality connection indicative of the lack of local infrastructure.

Regarding activities developed on the Internet, men perform more leisure activities than women, such as playing online (43% compared to 32%) and watching videos or movies (79% compared to 69%). Likewise, men are also the majority in the proportion of people who carry out work activities on the Internet, pay bills and financial services. Among the activities that women perform most on the Internet are sending messages (94%), voice calls (76%), and use of social network (78%).

Also with regard to access, a recent study by the University of Oxford in partnership with the IDB and IICA, Digital rural gender divide in Latin America and the Caribbean²⁶ shows that the female population in rural areas is the most excluded one from the digital world, not only in Brazil but across the entire Latin American region. This study shows that the most vulnerable populations are also the mostly excluded from the internet in Brazil. Not only the lack of infrastructure and resources, but also for the lack of adequate public and private initiatives that guarantee the necessary conditions for their participation in the digital world and, above all, that ensures an improvement in all aspects of life, and even contribute to economic and social advances in different countries²⁷.

These data, still preliminary for a deep and necessary analysis of the gender gap in Brazil regarding the use of new technologies, already point out important issues to be considered about the way the Internet has been appropriated by society, and the possibility that we are reproducing historical inequalities that exist in the country. And they raise a question that is already in vogue among players who are part of the global

26 <https://repositorio.iica.int/handle/11324/12489>

27 <https://www.iadb.org/en/news/digital-exclusion-obstacle-hinders-rural-womens-work>

Internet ecosystem. If, on the one hand, ICTs allows new possibilities for connection, interaction, and content creation, on the other hand it is necessary to understand whether the growing rates of digital inclusion have in fact generated more democratic and qualitative access for all groups, including those who are socially excluded.

- **The online environment can reproduce the prejudices of those who develop such environment**

The applications of artificial intelligence that are multiplying on the Internet today are the product of human action, fed by databases built by people or groups ahead of technological development and programming. In Brazil, this role is played mostly by men. As shown by data from national research bodies²⁸, courses related to Science and computing are mostly done and completed by men (undergraduate courses in the field of Computing and Information Technologies, women accounted for only 13.3% of enrollments), and the IT market has only 20% of women in its workforce. This inequality does not necessarily indicate lack of interest or skill, but gender stereotypes that need to be tackled, as well as harassment and violations that women undergo when entering this field, as shown by a study conducted by the Harvard Business Review in different countries²⁹. The Economic Forum report also points out the gender discrepancy in the field of exact sciences and states that the gap harms women in achieving their economic autonomy.

Although the country has shown improvements in the gender gap in the field of education, data indicate that in programs linked to the exact sciences field, “only 10.7% of Brazilian women in university are enrolled in STEM programs versus 28.6% of men”. In addition to the fact that girls are discouraged from their childhood to pursue careers in the sciences field³⁰, they undergo numerous types of harassment and prejudice along the way. PNAD data reveal that 79% of women who enter courses in the IT field end up dropping out of University, this dropping rate can be explained by discrimination they undergo in the university environment³¹. When they enter the labor market, the harassment and inequalities to which they are exposed increase. Lower

28 https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/livros/liv101784_informativo.pdf

29 <https://hbr.org/2014/03/whats-holding-women-back-in-science-and-technology-industries>

30 It is worth mentioning here some qualitative studies on the subject :<https://repositorio.ufba.br/ri/bitstream/ri/32218/1/internet-e-feminismos-REPO.pdf> e <http://www.fundosocialelas.org/elasnasexatas/elas-nas-exatas>

31 <https://meunegocio.uol.com.br/blog/a-dificil-missao-de-ser-mulher-no-mercado-de-ti/#rmcl>

salaries in similar positions are the first example that can be given in this regard, but it is not the only one.

The harmful consequences of discrimination gaps by algorithms in the digital society are enormous and examples abound. Particularly in Brazil, some examples that can be brought up are the reported cases of search results for “black woman teaching” on Google, which returned pornographic results; or the Study of the Security Observatories Network, which reveals a possible race bias in the facial recognition system used in public security in the country, resulting in a significant increase in young blacks incarcerated in the country³². Despite the female presence on the Internet being slightly greater, data indicates that the digital gender gap persists, as it is related to the scarcity of women who research and work directly in the field. Thus, to investigate the relationship between women and digital technologies, one has to take into account the different dynamics of inclusion, exclusion, and power in ICTs.

The Brazilian organization PretaLab, which works to include women in digital technologies, especially those that are even more invisible in Brazilian society, develops an important work in this field, assuming that “bringing these worlds together could boost the technology sector in Brazil”³³. The data compiled by the organization in partnership with ThoughtWorks show that the workforce responsible for the production of technology in Brazil is basically concentrated in the Southeast region, primarily in the state capitals, and as already observed, with a predominance of male labor (68%), young (77% aged 18 to 34), and white (58.3%)³⁴. Black women, for example, represent 1/3 of technology and innovation professionals. To reflect on the social impacts, the lack of initiatives aimed at expanding opportunities for the excluded portion of the population, and the reproduction of social inequalities in the production of technology in the country, it is worth noting that this section of the IT professionals in Brazil are far from being representative of the Brazilian society, whose population is made up mostly of women, blacks, and class C and D individuals. These data support the crucial debate on the non-neutrality of technology, which perpetuates the invisibility of women in society and the production of technology serving the interests of specific social groups.

32 <http://observatorioseguranca.com.br/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/1relatoriorede.pdf>

33 <https://www.pretalab.com/dados>

34 Os dados da pesquisa sobre o perfil de programadores no Brasil encontra-se disponível no site <https://www.pretalab.com/dados>

● The Internet as a mirror of society

While the Internet is a tool that brings opportunities to society, it can also act on social dynamics that deepen exclusion. In this sense, efforts for digital inclusion must be supported by initiatives that enable society to use technology appropriately.

As discussed in topic 2 of this document, women in Brazil are victims of violence that is structurally impregnated within society. In the online environment, this reality is also reflected in data that place women as the main victim of attacks and violence. The Helpline channel from Safernet Brazil indicates women as the main victims in 70.5% of cases of exposure of intimate content on the Internet, in 67.4% of cyberbullying cases and in 62.1% of cases of improper exposure of violent content. In addition to being the main victims of online attacks, a recent survey by Plan International Brasil shows that the problem starts early: among young people aged 15 to 25 in Brazil, 77% have already undergone harassment online. Data collected by CETIC in 2019, which corroborates and further deepens the debate about risks on the Internet for children and young people aged 9 to 17 show that girls are more exposed to offensive content and discrimination. Among girls, 48% have already witnessed some type of discrimination on the Internet, 31% have gone through some sort of offensive situation and 15% of them reported having been treated in an offensive manner³⁵.

The survey conducted by InternetLab and Coding Rights on violence against women online³⁶ seeks to advance solutions to these problems, exposing the seriousness of not having adequate treatment to these “manifestations of online violence under the belief that they begin and end in the digital environment”. The work identifies at least 11 types of violence to which women are more exposed on the Internet which, through the use of different strategies, can go far beyond the online environment and can in fact reach cases of threat to women's lives and physical integrity.

The exposure of women and young people to this type of situation, in addition

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https://cetic.br/media/docs/publicacoes/2/20201123093441/resumo_executivo_tic_kids_online_2019.pdf

36 https://www.internetlab.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Relatorio_ViolenciaGenero_ONU.pdf

to revealing the perpetuation of social behaviors marked by gender discrimination and harassment against women, also show how they can be continually excluded from public spaces, furthermore affecting their autonomy to exercise their capabilities and competences. According to an international study, gender violence on the Internet is one of the reasons that prevent women from being more present in the online environment³⁷.

The COVID-19 pandemic context has worsened women's situation in all spheres. Already foreseeing this scenario, at the beginning of the pandemic UN Women published a report on the actions needed to deal with the problem, stating that "from health to the economy, security to social protection, the impacts of COVID-19 are exacerbated for women and girls simply because of their sex". In Brazil, the survey carried out by the Brazilian Public Security Forum³⁸ pointed out a nationwide increase in domestic violence against women, especially in the State of São Paulo (44%). Another independent survey recorded "195 femicides during March and April 2020, at 5% average raise from 2019"³⁹. The consequences of the pandemic in the labor market also indicate that women were mostly affected showing a higher unemployment rate (16.4%) than men (11.9%), also presented a growth of 14.5% among 2020. According to a survey by Sebrae, the pandemic also affected the number of entrepreneur women in Brazil. The reduction of 1.3 million women owned businesses is a significant figure considering the unequal percentage that already existed among men (66.4%) and women (33.6%) in this respect and reflects the overload of domestic work and lower access to resources for women in Brazil⁴⁰.

37 <https://webfoundation.org/2021/03/how-online-gender-based-violence-affects-the-safety-of-young-women-and-girls/>

38 <https://forumseguranca.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/violencia-domestica-covid-19-v3.pdf>

39 <https://forumseguranca.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/violencia-domestica-covid-19-v3.pdf>

40 <https://covid19.ibge.gov.br/pnad-covid/>

● The contradictory paths of the Internet to empower women in leadership roles

As seen in a previous topic, the data collected by the IBGE Gender Report⁴¹ illustrate the size of this discrepancy between the participation of women in managerial positions and in the public sphere (federal and state representatives, councilors and the Executive). Brazil has the lowest representation among the twelve countries in South America with 14.8% of congresswomen in this sphere. Nevertheless, this percentage increased in Brazil compared to 2017 when only 10.5% of the bench of congress was composed of women.

In recent years a positive change was observed and possibly greater openness for women to participate in formal politics in Brazil. However, this movement has its counterpoints. On March 2018, the then elected black representative of the city of Rio de Janeiro, Marielle Franco, who fought against women violence was murdered.⁴² Three years later, on May 2021 Benny Briolly a transgender representative elected by the city of Niterói, had to leave Brazil after receiving several death threats.⁴³ This is only two of many examples of women and minority groups in leadership positions who are increasingly experiencing violence.

The complexity of the reality that women face to exercise their freedom of expression and citizenship has its spectrum in the virtual environment. As well argued by a former CGI adviser⁴⁴ while Internet access has contributed to broadening feminist discourses and represented an opportunity to bring up a debate that was historically neglected by public opinion, it has also opened a new space for violence which puts at stake the performance and physical integrity of these women.

This contradiction is materialized in the experience of women in the virtual environment which, if on the one hand exposes them to gender violence, also constitutes a space for complaints with the potential to strengthen its causes. For example, the Observatory MonitorA⁴⁵ found in the 2020 elections that women

41 https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/livros/liv101784_informativo.pdf

42 https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assassinato_de_Marielle_Franco

43 <https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2021/05/20/trans-councillor-brazil-death-threats-benny-briolly/>

44 Flavia Lefreve signs the article LAYER DISCRIMINATION: SOCIAL CONDITION AND GENDER
https://cgi.br/media/docs/publicacoes/4/20210422084146/ColetaneadeArtigos_TIC_GovernancadaInternet_Genero_digital_CGIbr.pdf

45 https://www.internetlab.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/5P_Relatorio_MonitorA-ENG.pdf

candidates received an average of 40 offensive tweets a day, mainly threats, speeches of incitement to violence and hatred, intellectual unworthiness, criticism of their bodies, age, and ethnic-racial belonging. Men also received attacks, but they were political in nature, aimed at their proposals and actions as politicians. On the other hand, the Internet can provide women in public life with a space to disseminate and strengthen the defense of women's rights - whether through individual empowerment or through the creation of networks of recognition and support, such as the #metoo movements and #meuamigosecreto.

Addressing this contradictory reality that Brazilian public women face in the online environment is a delicate task. While exposed to death threats, revenge porn situations, virtual lynching, exposure of family members, among other situations, they also have an opportunity to speak out. Therefore, the first step to address the challenges without incurring the risk of increasing them, is to understand other complexities and inequalities that women in Global South countries are exposed to.

- **Women participation in its Governance**

The data shown here do not present the problem itself, they are part of a diagnosis of the lack of representation and participation of women and other under-represented parts of the population, in the activities and processes of development, creation, and decision-making related to application, use, and impacts of technology in contemporary society. In this sense, in addition to public policies and a legal framework that focus on tackling inequalities and guaranteeing the full exercise of the rights of every citizen regarding the use and exploitation of new communication and information technologies, which stands out here as a primordial action, the urgent need to increase the spaces of action and representation of women also in the processes of production of technology, norms, standards and rules that govern it in society.

In Brazil, women are only 17% of the total people who work with programming and 15% of newcomers to technology courses, and in the first year, 8 out of 10 students drop out of college⁴⁶. Although the number of computer courses has grown

46 Disponível em <<https://epocanegocios.globo.com/Economia/noticia/2018/02/apenas-17-dos->

586% in the country in the last 24 years, the rate of women enrolled dropped from 34.89% to 15.53% in the same period⁴⁷.

This ecosystem of technologies, built, researched, and commanded by a specific group, leads to a series of problematic issues, in Brazil and in the world, linked to differences such as race, gender and sexuality. Gender asymmetries in digital technologies, along with some characteristics of these media, also lead to other points of attention, such as the emergence of forms of violence that were previously unthinkable. To address this problem, it is worth raising here the participation of women in the specific field of technology and in Internet Governance itself. The low participation of women in technological careers, but also in Internet governance, impacts on access and on the way in which men and women benefit from ICTs. According to the World Bank Skills and Jobs in Brazil survey⁴⁸, published in 2018: “Brazil has a low-quality education system in which reputation among youth, especially girls, is rarely able to overcome 'heavy' and outdated gender-biased social norms” (p. 11). In addition to these social barriers, Brazilian women represent only 22% of Computer Science classes despite being the majority in the population and in Higher Education⁴⁹, which indicates that this lack of representation in education continues in the labor market.

The emergence of a society guided by an algorithmic intelligence mediating a large part of the social relations that take place in the digital environment brings the need to raise the role of diversity in the production of this technology. The development of systems based on machine learning necessarily demands that the teams dedicated to instructing them are diverse enough to reproduce in their automation all the plurality present in society, and that such diversity is at the service of “improving accountability mechanisms and reviewing decisions and using artificial intelligence to identify deviations”⁵⁰ with the initial purpose of avoiding and then mitigating the impact of their biases. In this sense, acting in the encouragement of initiatives and promotion of

[programadores-brasileiros-sao-mulheres.html](#)>. Acessado em 10 de julho de 2018.

⁴⁷ Disponível em <<https://mdemulher.abril.com.br/trabalho/por-que-as-mulheres-ainda-sao-minoria-na-area-de-ti>>. Acessado em 13 de julho de 2018.

⁴⁸ <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/29958/9781464812934.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>

⁴⁹ Censo IBGE 2010.

⁵⁰ ELISA BETTEGA, ALGORÍTMICO BASEADO EM GÊNERO?

policies that expand the role in this field is essential, not only in development but mainly in the decision-making process. It is worth mentioning some highlights in Brazil that work in this line. [Reprograma](#), [Minas Programam](#), [InfoPreta](#), [Maria Lab](#), [Django Girls](#), [Desprograme](#), [WoMakersCode](#), [Rails Girls](#).

- A Legal framework is important for the defense of human rights criminalizing its abuses, but the solutions must go beyond using the Internet as a path to empower women

Brazil has been advancing in the creation of laws dedicated to different forms of violence in digital media, including gender violence, such as laws 12,737/2012, 13,642/2018 and 14,132/2021. The first law, known as Carolina Dieckmann Law⁵¹, was published in 2012 and amended the Penal Code to typify a series of conducts in the digital environment as infractions, mainly in relation to the invasion of computers, tablets and cell phones “in order to obtain, adulterate or destroy data or information” in addition to establishing specific punishments, something unheard of so far.

Law No. 13.642/2018, of April 2018, amended the current legislation to add attribution to the Federal Police with regard to the investigation of crimes committed through the internet that spread misogynistic content, defined as those that propagate hatred or aversion against women. The norm, which was nicknamed 'Law Lola', was inspired by activist Lola Aronovich, who suffered numerous threats as a result of posts on her blog “Write Lola Write”, which addressed feminist themes. Her posts made Lola start receiving death threats, rape and physical aggression, having declared that she had already filed eleven police reports. A more recent example is law 14.132/2021, which criminalizes the conduct of harassment in online and offline environments.

The Marco Civil da Internet (MCI), which had as main source for its elaboration the CGI.br Principles, is also an example of an initiative that ensures the right of expression, privacy and empowers Internet users. While it establishes rights and guarantees for internet users, it also determines guidelines that will guide the actions

51 A lei ganhou este apelido após a atriz Carolina Dieckmann ter seu computador invadido e fotos íntimas roubadas e divulgadas sem sua autorização.

of the Public Power. Despite addressing a series of fundamental issues for guaranteeing the human rights of women, the MCI, as well as the other laws mentioned, do not act on the causes of violence, discrimination and inequalities faced by women, but only on its consequences. In other words, structural problems related to gender issues present in our society and in the technologies themselves are not reached by these legal bases, and still lack the attention of the State, private initiative and the continuous engagement of civil society in order to create better instruments of inclusion.

4. RELEVANT INITIATIVES

Some good non-governmental practices that are being headed in Brazil to empower and enhance women's right to freedom of opinion and expression:

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□ Think Eva and Think Olga are two sister organizations that share the same mission: to sensitize society to issues of gender and intersections, in addition to educating and equipping people who identify themselves as agents of change in women's lives. <https://thinkolga.com>

□ AzMina is an independent feminist magazine that respects and values women in all their diversity <https://azmina.com.br>
Lola Aronovich "UFC professor, feminist, of the left wing, blogger for 13 years, now with YT channel <http://bit.ly/lolafala> Ungrateful with patriarchy since I was little." <https://writelolaewrite.blogspot.com/>

□ UPWIT - Unlocking the Power of Women for Innovation and Transformation is a gender intelligence and innovation consultancy. Its objective is to foster female leadership and a change in culture within companies so that they perceive diversity as a vector of innovation. <https://cargocollective.com/upwit>

□ PrograMaria is a meta-site about women and technology. More than helping to teach the necessary tools, PrograMaria wants to empower girls and women, showing that they are capable of realizing their own ideas. <https://www.programaria.org>

□ MariaLab is a non-profit, non-partisan association with private sector companies, which works at the intersection of politics, gender and their technologies. <https://www.marialab.org/>

□ {reprogram} is a social impact initiative that focuses on teaching programming to cis-and transgender women who do not have the resources and/or opportunities to learn programming. <https://reprograma.com.br/>

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