



# Behavior Analysis and Feminism: Contributions From Brazil

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## Abstract

This article presents non-Portuguese readers with developments regarding studies on the intersection between feminism and behavior analysis conducted in Brazil, focusing on two concepts: empowerment and rape culture. *Empowerment* is described as a process in which women acquire novel behavioral repertoires that are related to changing aversive contexts that are dependent on their gender. *Rape culture* is defined as a set of contingencies that endorse or permit sexually abusive behaviors in a patriarchal context. Thus, the differential reinforcement of behaviors emitted by men and women leads to stereotypical male or female repertoires, and to male domination over women. The implications of these topics are discussed, as well as some barriers that are encountered by Brazilian feminists. Finally, suggestions are made for future research aimed at reducing gender and other inequalities.

**Keywords** feminism · behavior analysis · empowerment · rape culture · Brazilian feminist thought

Feminism can be broadly defined as a multitude of social movements, research, and thought aimed at reducing inequalities between men and women. The contributions of feminism to different disciplines have been described by many authors in areas ranging from biology and psychology to technology, engineering, and mathematics fields. Feminist authors and scholars have criticized the underrepresentation of women in science, the notion that differences in intelligence are purely biological (i.e., that brain structure necessarily leads to better abilities in men compared to women), and the use of primarily male subjects in research whose results are said to be valid for both male and female individuals (e.g., Fausto-Sterling, 2000; Keller, 1999, 2006; Schiebinger, 2001).

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Although it is hard to ascertain when feminist ideas began, written registers of feminist movements and thought can be traced back to the 19th century (e.g., Fougeyrollas-Schwebel, 2009). The origins of feminist thought are usually traced to authors such as Mary Wollstonecraft and Simone de Beauvoir (e.g., Auad, 2003; Garcia, 2011). However, it is important to mention that although these authors certainly contributed to feminist thought and practice, not many women in this and previous periods have been able to read and write, attend school, and have time and resources to write and publish. This means that published texts will always be just one small part of feminist thought.

In behavior analysis, the most visible author who published in English on the intersection between the field and feminist ideas was Maria del Rosario Ruiz. Maria Ruiz's publications aligning behavior analysis and feminism started in 1995 and continued until 2013. Maria Ruiz wrote about some common grounds within the philosophy of radical behaviorism and feminism, offered a behavior-analytic conceptualization of the term "gender," and analyzed values and ethics within behavior analysis using a feminist point of view, among other contributions (Ruiz, 1995, 1998, 2003, 2009, 2013; Ruiz & Roche, 2007; Terry et al., 2010).

In Brazil, the first organized group of women who openly discussed themes related to feminism within behavior analysis, to the best of my knowledge, was a student movement called *Coletivo Feminista Marias & Amélias de Mulheres Analistas do Comportamento* (the Marias & Amélias Feminist Group of Women Behavior Analysts). This group, formed initially by eight women, started in 2015. In their letter of principles, they stated,

[The group] was founded as an initiative for women interested in studying feminism from the perspective of behavior analysis and radical behaviorism. The group acts autonomously and has no institutional or party affiliation, bringing together female students and professional women in behavior analysis from different backgrounds.

Our struggle is inspired by the figure of Professor Dr. Maria Amélia Matos, pioneer of behavior analysis in Brazil. In addition to honoring her, we want to follow her steps of leadership, courage, clarity, and objectivity, and mirror our dedication to quality work, scientifically based and relevant to the society in which we live. Above all, we hope and work to follow her example as a scientist engaged in planning contingencies to make society fairer and more egalitarian. (Comporte-se, 2015, paras. 1–2, author's translation)

Since then, the group has been one of the main channels responsible for making the demands of feminism and the relationship between feminism and behavior analysis more visible in our community. To study the contributions of Brazilian behavior analysts concerning feminism is a difficult endeavor for many reasons. For example, as there are no record of publications of early initiatives regarding feminist thought and practices among behavior analysts, it is difficult to determine when those initiatives started. Although not openly considered feminist work, there is Brazilian literature on what may be considered "women's studies" within behavior analysis (e.g., Fred Keller's, 1988, paper on behavior analyst women in Brazil). Despite these difficulties, researchers who study behavior analysis in Brazil have been contributing to the development of behavior analysis from a feminist perspective.

This article aims to present non-Portuguese readers with some developments regarding studies on the intersection between feminism and behavior analysis conducted in Brazil. To do that, this article provides readers with demographic data on the country, followed by information on the distribution of behavior analysts in Brazilian universities. The article then summarizes two selected Brazilian publications that were chosen because they add to the existing published English literature on feminism and behavior analysis. The article finishes by describing barriers Brazilian behavior analysts experience in addressing gender inequality, and suggesting research themes and ideas that could increase the chances of carrying out more focused research on reducing gender and other inequalities and, in a broader sense, increasing social justice.

## Demographic Information About Brazil

Brazil is the fifth largest country on the planet. With a population of more than 200,000,000 inhabitants, it is the sixth most populated country in the world (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística [IBGE], 2020a). Brazil is highly disproportionate in terms of gender and race, among other dimensions (e.g., class). In 2019, men still earned almost 30% higher wages than women. In the same year, Black individuals earned almost 30% less than the national average wage (IBGE, 2020b). Brazil is ranked 97th on the Gender Inequality Index, an index that measures inequalities in three dimensions: reproductive health (mortality and birth rates), empowerment (proportion of women in parliament seats and in the population), and economic status (rate of labor force participation). As a comparison, the United States is ranked 15th (United Nations Development Programme, 2020).

## Behavior Analysis Education in Brazil

Brazil has more than 2,400 colleges and universities (Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira, 2018). Despite the fact that there are many educational institutions, and according to Dutra (2019), Brazil has only six graduate programs in which at least one line of research is behavior analysis (Universidade Federal de São Carlos, Universidade de São Paulo, Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, Universidade de Brasília, Universidade Federal do Pará, and Universidade Estadual de Londrina). These are located in four regions of the country (southeast, midwest, north, and south).

Although there are only six graduate programs in behavior analysis in the country, many graduate students that completed their master's and doctorate degrees in these institutions have started working as university lecturers at other universities throughout the country, expanding the reach of behavior analysis in Brazil. It is safe to say that behavior analysts are working in more than 20 states, throughout the five regions of the country.

## Studies on Feminism and Behavior Analysis Conducted in Brazil

Since the Coletivo Feminista Marias & Amélias de Mulheres Analistas do Comportamento was founded, three papers have been published in Portuguese

on the subject. Additionally, Pinheiro and Mizael (2019) edited the first book on the topic, *Debates sobre Feminismo e Análise do Comportamento (Debates on Feminism and Behavior Analysis)*.

There are also research groups specifically aimed at investigating gender issues and feminism. Two examples are the Grupo de Pesquisa e Análise Comportamental das Práticas Culturais de Opressão de Gênero e Raça (Behavior Analysis and Research Group on Cultural Practices of Gender and Race Oppression), led by Dr. Ana Arantes, and the Grupo de Pesquisa em Gênero (Research Group in Gender), led by Dr. Danielly Tatmatsu from the Universidade Federal do Ceará.

The next section will summarize two important contributions made by Brazilian researchers: an analysis of empowerment and a behavior-analytic account of rape culture. These important works by Couto (2019) and Freitas and Morais (2019) are published in Portuguese. The purpose of summarizing those works here is to disseminate this information to a non-Portuguese-speaking audience.

## Empowerment

Couto (2019) reviewed the literature from 2006 to 2016 on feminism in several disciplines, looking for mentions of the word “empowerment,” and selected excerpts that led to an understanding of what controlled the emission of the word “empowerment” in those texts. Defined as “the process by which women acquire new behavioral repertoires that, in some way, relate to the changing of aversive contexts dependent on their gender” (p. 167, my translation), the term was categorized into two main notions, according to Couto: empowerment based on internal states and empowerment based on countercontrol.

The first notion of empowerment can be defined as a “classification that, in general, considers behaviors related to the verbal expression of feelings from the women studied as characteristics of the empowerment process” (Couto, 2019, p. 144, author’s translation). Thus, empowerment is seen as the feeling of realizing the control exerted by sexist cultural practices; the feeling of defying cultural norms of femininity and masculinity (e.g., providing for the whole family, masturbating); the feeling experienced, for instance, by an individual in their choice of clothes, accessories, and sexual partners (in this context, seen as an illusion of freedom); and ways to build self-esteem and self-confidence (related to the feminist concept of agency; e.g., women’s writing groups). Given that the notion of empowerment based on internal states focuses on feelings and does not provide a sound behavioral translation, the focus here will be on the notion of empowerment as countercontrol.

## Empowerment Based on Countercontrol

Countercontrol can be seen as individual and social behavior “that occurs in response to social aversive control,” leading to escape or avoidance responses that “do not reinforce, and may even punish controllers’ responses” (Delprato, 2002, pp. 191–192) and to the attainment of reinforcers, changing, thus, the source of control (from controller to controllee; Skinner, 1953). This use of empowerment relates

to descriptions of changing current contingencies that are disadvantageous to women—in terms of reinforcement or punishment received in those contexts by behaviors emitted by them, or in relation to the perception of misogynist cultural control practices and the description of such control practices as the target of intervention . . . aimed at changing them. (Couto, 2019, p. 157, author’s translation)

Therefore, this sense of empowerment is related to the possibility of changing the power distribution among individuals, aiming at a more egalitarian distribution of power. Power can be talked about in behavior-analytic terms as an aspect of a relationship and is described by Baum (2017) as “the degree of control each party exerts over the behavior of the other” (p. 201).

In the literature reviewed, this sense of empowerment was seen in descriptions of (a) the changing of power relations (e.g., the democratization of social relations between men and women); (b) the features of behaviors that lead to changes in power relations, or that are consequences of those changes (e.g., workshops for divorced women); (c) the process by which women acquire behavioral repertoires that, otherwise, will not lead to reinforcement—based on gendered practices and norms (e.g., cash transfer programs for women); and (d) the acquiring of behavioral repertoires related to education in order to participate in male-dominated settings (e.g., verbal reports of difficulties faced by women in different environments because of their gender).

One implication of the notion of empowerment as countercontrol is that women who ascend financially after gaining microcredit may act as role models for their peers and also help their communities, but this type of financial aid is not enough, in itself, to change patriarchal structures (*patriarchy* can be defined as a form of organization and social domination based on the exploitation of women by men; Saffioti, 2004). Another implication is that this type of empowerment is usually followed by some reaction from their male partners or colleagues. As Couto (2019) pointed out, “this alteration (of the contingencies) is not entirely peaceful, involving more than the perception of control, but also facing the aversive control exerted by partners and men around them” (p. 164, author’s translation).

Couto (2019) stated that the process of learning the behavioral repertoire called “empowerment” is usually acquired while in the presence of other women who reinforce behaviors that are not in accord with sexist cultural practices prescribed to women in a given society. An example would be a female university lecturer of engineering who does not reproduce ideas such as “men are better than women in engineering,” reinforces women when they raise their hands to answer her questions during class, and encourages her female students to work in male-dominated settings.

Although Couto (2019) used the term “countercontrol” to understand one of the uses of the word “empowerment,” it is worth mentioning that behavior aimed at equalizing power distributions explicitly or raising women’s social power positions in general is a larger topic than countercontrol per se. That is, power may enable countercontrol. Hence, this section’s title could be “Power” (as defined by Baum, 2017, which would render countercontrol itself a subsection of the benefits of power). However, since the analyses were made by Couto, I decided to maintain the title as she put it.

## Rape Culture

Brazilian behavior analysts have also contributed to the understanding of rape culture. Freitas and Morais (2019) offered a behavioral definition of *rape culture* as “a set of contingencies that are encouraged and/or permissive of violent sexual practices, and by a set of classes of sexually abusive behaviors, from more subtle (behaviors) to rape, that happen in the patriarchal context” (pp. 121–122, author’s translation).

According to Freitas and Morais (2019), the word “culture” is used to express that cultural practices, although seen as natural, are learned and, therefore, amenable to change. The word “rape,” on the other hand, could be seen as indicative of the severity of the acts. The use of the term “rape culture,” therefore, is interpreted by Freitas and Morais (2019) as an attempt to change the function that naturalized behaviors (i.e., behaviors that are learned and are considered innate or innocuous behaviors, given their high frequency in a society) have in society. This would allow for nonstereotypical rapes, that is, rapes that do not occur according to the general population’s expectations to be repudiated, as well as stereotypical ones.

Rape myths can also be studied through a behavior-analytic lens. *Rape myths* are beliefs that are held by the population regarding the stereotypical characteristics of a rape, such as who the aggressor is, where the rape usually occurs, and whether the woman resists the advancements made by the aggressor. Nevertheless, studies show that the popular belief of how rape usually happens does not account for most of the actual reported occurrences of rape.

For instance, in a study conducted in the United States, Ryan (1988) asked respondents to describe a situation of rape. The results showed that, in most cases, individuals reported that a typical rape occurs in a public location (dark street, alley), that the aggressor is an unknown man who is aggressive during the act, and that the victim firmly resists the act. The reality, however, is very different from what people usually report as being a typical rape situation. Freitas and Morais (2019) showed that the majority of rape victims in Brazil are children and adolescents (more than 70% of the total number of victims). Overall, 70% of rapes (of children, adolescents, and adults) are committed by victims’ fathers, boyfriends, male friends, or male acquaintances. More specifically, for adult victims in Brazil, 39.5% of rape aggressors are male acquaintances. For adolescents, the percentage of rapists who are acquaintances is even higher—62.2%. Furthermore, although in 70% of reported rapes, the aggressors use physical force and beating, in 48% of the cases, the threat is verbal (the percentages do not add up to 100% because, in some cases, more than one form of aggression was used; Cerqueira & Coelho, 2014).

These myths, therefore, are used to formulate rules on how to behave to avoid being raped. If a woman learns that women who go out alone in the evening or wear lipstick and clothes that reveal their bodies are raped, and they were not raped in situations where they were not wearing lipstick and revealing clothes or walking alone in the evening, then this link can foster superstitious behavior (Freitas & Morais, 2019; Skinner, 1953). Additionally, if men also learn that women who wear revealing clothes and lipstick or go out alone in the evening are raped, those stimuli could signal that it is okay to rape them. This shows that these myths serve not only to avoid being raped (as alleged) but also, more importantly, as scripts for how a respected woman should

behave (making, consequently, fewer behavioral options available to women than to men) and, one could argue, as discriminative stimuli for men to abuse or rape women.

One implication of myths such as “women who wear revealing clothes are more likely to get raped” and “women who go out alone are raped” and their reinforcement by peers, family, and the media is that, when a rape does occur, two main reactions related to these myths are likely to occur: (a) blame the victim and (b) disregard that what happened was, in fact, a rape. In the first case, instead of punishing the aggressor for raping a woman, the focus will be on stimuli correlated with rape, as given by these rules (myths). Therefore, if the woman is accused of being “provocative” in her clothing choice, for instance, then the verbal community often concludes that “she deserved to be raped” or that “she knew that this could happen.” In other words, the if-then rule of this myth (if you wear revealing clothes, then you will get raped) is used to justify men’s sexual aggression. One consequence of blaming the victim could be that less support is offered at the police station, at the hospital, and even by her family. In fact, in a study on public opinion conducted in Brazil, 58.5% of respondents agreed with the statement “if women knew how to behave, there would be fewer rapes.” Additionally, 65% of respondents agreed with the statement “women that wear revealing clothes deserve to be attacked” (Instituto de Pesquisa e Economia Aplicada, 2014, p. 23)

In the second case, these myths can also affect naming a situation of sexual violence a rape. For instance, if a woman who did not consent to sexual intercourse with her boyfriend wants to report the rape to the authorities, her friends could dissuade her from doing so because they learned that rape is a crime that happens only when a male stranger attacks a woman in an alley or dark street. If rape is not defined by a lack of consent, but by the combination of revealing clothes, a male stranger, and walking alone on the street, then it is a logical (but incorrect) conclusion that if an acquaintance, friend, or partner sexually assaults a woman, then the larger community does not usually call it a rape (i.e., the community comes to an incorrect conclusion). As Freitas and Morais (2019) pointed out, studies show that it is less likely for a woman to call a situation rape when the act is perpetrated by a man who has some kind of relationship with her (friend, boyfriend, husband, or acquaintance).

Another characteristic related to naming a situation a rape, in which the sexual aggressor is the boyfriend or husband, is the reinforcement schedule to which the woman is exposed. It is common in abusive relationships (in which sexual abuse or rape could be present) that the delivery of reinforcement and punishment is arguably on an intermittent schedule, which could make it harder for women to notice that they are in an abusive relationship. Hence, those victims usually relate their partners with stimuli deemed positive and negative, such as being caring and nice in some situations, but negligent, irresponsible, aggressive, and arrogant in others. Negatively valenced behaviors may, thus, conflict with social statements (rules) that are learned, such as “family is the most sacred thing in the world,” “husbands want the best for their wives,” and even “the man is the reflection of his wife.” This conflicting relation could, therefore, make it hard for her to relate him to his negative features and, consequently, to realize she was raped (or name the sexual aggression rape), given a lifelong learning history of such statements (e.g., Mizael et al., 2016).

This latter example also relates to the conflicting relations paradigm (Mizael et al., 2016). This paradigm is an experimental model for how to study prejudices and life



histories, but it is broadly about conflicting relations in a person's life. In this paradigm, two stimuli are indirectly related through conditional discrimination training and then tested to see if those relations enter an equivalence class (e.g., Black faces and positive attributes, Protestant symbols and Catholic names). Therefore, this type of experiment could also be used to study aspects of rape culture, as in Freitas's (2019) work, which used vignettes that described stereotypical and nonstereotypical rapes to evaluate how often men would blame the victims. The conflicting relations paradigm was used to form classes between names of women (from the vignettes) and the word "victim" and to evaluate whether this would lead to a decrease in blaming those rape victims described in the vignettes. The results showed that 8 of the 10 participants formed the intended classes (i.e., started relating the women's names from the vignettes to the word "victim"). Additionally, six participants no longer blamed the victims for the rape. Freitas and Moraes (2019) concluded that rape myths, in general, function to negate, diminish, and justify sexual violence.

### Barriers Faced by Brazilian Behavior Analysts Studying Feminism

Brazilian behavior analysts face many barriers while trying to address social issues such as those involved in feminism (e.g., gender inequalities). A few examples are the lack of specific literature written in Portuguese, prejudice, and a lack of financial resources to attend conferences, among others. For the purpose of this article, two of them will be addressed: language and activism. These were chosen because (a) one could argue that a significant part of the literature on feminism published in peer-reviewed journals is written in English, and (b) because feminism is not only a scholarly initiative but also a social movement, I believe these are two of the most significant barriers Brazilian behavior analysts (and women in general) face when studying or campaigning for feminism.

#### Language

Being citizens in a country with enormous social inequality, Brazilian behavior analysts face the important barrier of language. Given that many behavior-analytic publications are published in English, this is one of the first barriers students face. For example, nine behavior-analytic journals (*Behavior and Social Issues*, *Behavior Analysis in Practice*, *Behavior Analysis: Research and Practice*, the *European Journal of Behavior Analysis*, the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, the *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior*, *Perspectives on Behavior Science*, *The Analysis of Verbal Behavior*, and *The Psychological Record*) were searched using the keyword "feminism"; 10 papers on the topic were found, and all were written in English on the topic (the search was conducted in November 2020). Nine of them were written by researchers whose institutions are in the United States (Baires & Koch, 2019; DeFelice & Diller, 2019, Ruiz, 1995, 1998, 2013; Ruiz & Roche, 2007; Simon et al., 2007; Sundberg et al., 2019; Wolpert, 2005). One paper was written by a researcher from Australia in collaboration with a researcher from Brazil (Guerin & Ortolan, 2017).

Additionally, according to research conducted by the British Council (2014), 5.1% of Brazilians report having some level of knowledge of English. Of these, 47% declared having a basic knowledge of the language. This barrier relates to accessing



papers and other important documents produced by behavior analysts from English-speaking countries (and individuals who publish in English in general) because many students are not well versed in English and, therefore, may take more time to read papers written in English, may have more difficulty interpreting the information, or may not have the ability to read those papers at all. Another difficulty relates to publication outlets. Most of the behavior-analytic journals are English-language journals, which may make it more difficult for Brazilian researchers to publish and disseminate their work because they need to write the manuscript in a language that is not their native language.

## Activism

In 2019, Brazil ranked fourth worldwide in the number of killings of human rights activists. This trend of being one of the most dangerous countries for activists in the world has been present since at least 2016 (Galvani, 2020). Besides Brazil being one of the most dangerous countries for activists, many assassinations have no legal consequences, such as going to prison. Therefore, one may argue that impunity is a type of consequence that reinforces the act of murdering activists. A notable mention is the assassination of Marielle Franco in 2018. Franco was a Brazilian politician who openly fought for women's and LGBT+ rights. Despite a public campaign aimed at discovering who gave the order to kill her and Anderson Gomes (her driver), there is still no official identification of the killer(s) and, consequently, no legal procedures against the individual(s) who murdered Franco and Gomes.

This brief contextualization is important to show that publicly fighting for women's rights and for reducing gender inequality can lead to death threats and other dangerous consequences. Although it may appear as though it is less dangerous to fight for women's rights in settings such as universities, the reality is that the threat is everywhere. Professor Débora Diniz is an example: Diniz was a university lecturer at Universidade de Brasília, and for more than 15 years, she advocated for women's rights, such as the right to have an abortion. In 2018, after helping to initiate a bill where a pregnancy could be terminated up until the 12th week, she received several threats, including death threats, and was advised by the government to leave the country for her own safety (Pires, 2018). She continues to develop her important work in another country.

Moreover, currently, there is an openly misogynistic and sexist president in Brazil, who makes comments such as "I would never rape you because you do not deserve it," "[She] does not deserve [to be raped] because she is very ugly," and "That is why the guys pay less for the woman (because she gets pregnant)" (Carta Capital, 2018, author's translation). Therefore, women and other oppressed groups and individuals are even more afraid to fight for rights such as LGBTQIA+ and women's rights, as they fear persecution or even a dictatorship in the country.

## Suggestions for Future Research

One suggestion for researchers in Brazil and abroad on the intersection of feminism and behavior analysis is to provide functional definitions of terms used in the feminist literature. This would enable, at least to a certain degree, different

manifestations of what we call “oppression,” “agency,” and other terms used in feminist theory to be understood in different countries, as the focus would be on functional relationships. Of course, it is paramount to evaluate whether such an undertaking would be possible, or whether the differences in cultures would lead to culturally sensitive definitions of these terms.

Another suggestion is to include Black women in their analyses. This may involve a) including Black women as participants in studies; b) showing evidence that (at least in Brazil) Black women are the majority of women who suffer from violence in public and private settings and, therefore, deserve special recommendations on how to tackle this problem, and c) using Black feminist thought alongside the hegemonic writings made by White, middle-class, heterosexual feminist women.

It is also important to attempt to describe the maintaining variables of misogynistic behavior. Although analyses such as those by Couto (2019) are important, a next step is to hypothesize the maintaining variables of behaviors that lead to gender inequalities. In other words, although understanding what situations occasion the emission of the word “empowerment” is important, equally important is to determine the features of the environment that shape, occasion, and reinforce those responses. Hence, in future studies, it may be relevant to distinguish, for instance, suggestions for how behavior analysis could identify and ideally implement contingencies toward equality with a focus on empowerment that results in change, from those with a focus on “empowerment” that occasions feelings of progress but actually reinforces the maintenance of the status quo. Another line of research could be to make visible the history of women in behavior analysis from Brazil and other countries, especially Black women, women of color, and women who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community.

An important consideration is how Brazilian behavior analysts can contribute within Brazil and, at the same time, make it possible for individuals from English-speaking countries (and others) to become acquainted with Brazilian publications in Portuguese. This consideration is hard to address, but a potential solution is to form groups where individuals from different countries get together to share recent developments in their countries and then share that information with peers and colleagues. This would be particularly helpful in situations where many people do not have the opportunity to learn a second language. In this case, researchers and individuals who speak more than one language could form alliances to share the developments carried out in their countries using videoconferences, presentations at conferences, and articles such as these included in this special section, among others. Another suggestion is that Brazilian and foreign journals allow researchers to publish articles in two or more languages (e.g., an article could be published in a Portuguese version and an English version).

## Concluding Remarks

Brazil has been producing relevant knowledge on the intersection of feminism and behavior analysis aimed at reducing gender and other inequalities found in Brazil and abroad. Although this article focused on two topics (empowerment and rape culture), there are publications on many other topics: for example, feminist functional-analytic psychotherapy (Fideles & Vandenberghe, 2014), the possible links between Simone de Beauvoir’s thinking and behavior analysis (Silva & Laurenti, 2016), abusive

relationships (Pereira et al., 2018), the participation of behavior analyst women in scientific and academic activities in Brazil (Laurenti et al., 2019), and the functional analysis of sexual harassment at universities (Linhares & Laurenti, 2019).

Additionally, the book *Debates on Feminism and Behavior Analysis* (Pinheiro & Mizael, 2019) covers topics such as the history of the first Brazilian women in behavior analysis, intersectional feminism, patriarchy, behavioral interventions aimed at increasing the participation of women in computing, street harassment, variables related to gendered practices important for clinicians in counseling women, and abusive relationships.

I believe this initial trend of publications on feminism could increase if we find journals open to these issues, individuals and groups that collaborate in research and practice, and university lecturers and researchers open to discussing topics such as the difficulties faced by women in academia and the difficulties of being both a mother and an academic. Likewise, initiatives to develop experimental models to investigate gender bias and differential treatment based on gender (and other social markers), among other research experiments, could also increase our understanding of what oppression is and our ability to reduce it.

As Conceição Evaristo, an important Brazilian writer, said, “My text is a place where women feel at home, feel truly recognized” (Mulheres que Escrevem, 2017, para. 8, my translation). Thus, based on studies and practice, the expectation is that the lives and suffering of women and other oppressed groups will be recognized. Above all, we as behavior analysts will use behavior-analytic tools to draw nearer to the values of equity and social justice in the world.

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## Declarations

**Conflict of interest** The author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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