

IT IS NOT THAT FUNNY. CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF RACIAL IDEOLOGIES EMBEDDED IN RACIALIZED HUMOUR DISCOURSES ON FACEBOOK IN BRAZIL

ABSTRACT

This study explores the use of Facebook as a powerful mechanism enabling individuals to disseminate and reinforce racialized discourses and negative representations of black individuals in Brazil, particularly concealed in disparagement humour posts and their associated comments. For this purpose, the study applies *Critical Discourse Analysis* as research method to unveil the embedded racialized and discriminatory discourses.

ANATOMY OF RACISM ON FACEBOOK

There are *five important dimensions* to understand the full reach of the ideological racist discourses embedded on Facebook:

- 1) the target of the online racism;
- 2) the names of the Facebook communities where those content circulate;
- 3) the reverberation capacity of the posts published;
- 4) the actual comments; and
- 5) the profile of the individuals who engage in this behaviour and their inner motivations for doing so.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Preliminary fieldwork results have revealed the following aspects:

- a) almost 80% of the victims of online mockery are predominantly middle-class, well-educated black women aged between 20 to 38 years;
- b) oftentimes the derogatory posts employ rude and impolite language to talk about black individuals;
- c) many users of Facebook communities displaying derogatory content express their endorsement to the content with laughter and jeer;
- d) there are evidence indicating a considerable degree of reverberation capacity of the derogatory comments given that they can potentially engage users for months and even for a couple of years after the original publication; and
- e) black women are at the forefront of the initiatives to challenge those derogating practices.

IN SUMMARY

- ✓ It can be inferred that the underlying discourse embedded in the posts displayed on Facebook convey that being black in Brazil is associated with engagement to low qualified jobs, that is expected that they do not hold an university degree or any schooling at all, they are prone to be involved with illegal activities, they predominantly live in *favelas* and that their social place is at the lower social strata and there is the place where they should stay.
- ✓ On top of that, it is also considered that Facebook as a social media platform, enables individuals to convey their racist and discriminatory ideologies in such a way that it was not possible before, and due to social convention constraints, the sort of derogatory comments displayed online is not usually expressed in ordinary face-to-face interactions.
- ✓ Finally, the reverberation of the posts strongly contributes to the reinforcement of the disparagement discourse given that they keep engaging people for a long period of time in this conversation like an echo in cyberspace.

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