

The Discursive Place of feminisms on Facebook: A Heterogeneous Game of Positions^{1/} O lugar discursivo dos feminismos no facebook: um jogo heterogêneo de posições

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ABSTRACT

This work aims to analyze, in light of the theoretical and methodological framework of Pecheuxian Discourse Analysis (Pêcheux's DA), how the discursive place of feminisms² is arranged in the digital world, and which subject-positions are taken up in this place based on the discourse produced by feminist pages on Facebook. We sought to understand the reading gestures in the positions taken up by the pages in their self-descriptions in comparison to what they discursivize in their posts. We analyzed five pages that declare themselves as feminists: *TODAS Fridas*, *Não Me Kahlo*, *Feminismo sem demagogia-original*, *Empodere Duas Mulheres e Ventre Feminista*. In our analysis, we found three subject-positions in the discursive place of feminisms in the digital space: an *intersectional feminist position*, a *Marxist*

¹ This work is an excerpt from my master's research, defended in 2020.

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² We use the word "feminisms", in the plural form, to highlight the plurality of feminist positions.

feminist position, and a *liberal feminist position*. These positions are taken up in the pages' self-descriptions. However, our analysis demonstrates that their effects might or might not be reproduced in the posts.

KEYWORDS: Discourse; Feminism Facebook; Discursive place; Subject-position.

RESUMO

O artigo propõe analisar, sob o aparato teórico e metodológico da Análise do Discurso Pecheutiana (ADP), como o lugar discursivo dos feminismos³ se configura no digital e quais posições-sujeito são assumidas neste lugar a partir do discurso produzido por páginas feministas na rede social facebook. Buscamos apreender os gestos de leitura das posições assumidas pelas páginas em suas autodescrições em confronto ao que discursivizam nas suas publicações. Analisamos cinco páginas que se autodenominam como feministas: TODAS Fridas, Não Me Kahlo, Feminismo sem demagogia-original, Empodere Duas Mulheres e Ventre Feminista. Em nossa análise, encontramos três posições-sujeito no lugar discursivo dos feminismos no espaço digital: uma posição feminista interseccional, uma posição feminista marxista e uma posição feminista liberal. Essas posições são assumidas nas autodescrições das páginas. Porém, nossa análise demonstra que seus efeitos podem ou não ser reproduzidos nas publicações.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Discurso; Feminismo; Facebook; Lugar discursivo; Posição-sujeito.

1 Introduction

Nowadays, social media have been increasingly part of the world population's daily life, making it a means of connectivity among people in varied interactions. Through these networks, individuals take a stand on topics that flow in society, thus producing discourses that connect and spread in the digital environment.

One of the most widely accessed networks today is Facebook. According to Souza (2023), the platform holds the highest number of active users globally, with 2,9 billion accounts in 2023. Facebook has personal accounts, verified accounts for celebrities and artists, and multiple common-interest groups. It has also been characterized as a private space for the expression and mobilization of social movements, producing diverse meanings that go beyond the digital sphere. As an example of this, there is the case of the feminist movements, characterized nowadays for their variety of ideological and political currents, which have found a place in social media to formulate and spread their discursivity.

With this in mind, in this work, in light of the theoretical and methodological framework of Pecheutian Discourse Analysis (Pêcheux's DA), we aim to understand how the discursive place of feminisms is constituted and understand the intertwining of different subject positions taken up in Facebook's digital space. In this regard, it will be used the concepts of discursive place (Pêcheux, 2014; Grigoletto, 2017) and subject-position (Pêcheux, 2014). In our analysis, we identified three

³ Utilizamos o adjetivo "feminismos", no plural, para realçar a pluralidade das posições feministas.

possible positions to be taken up in the discursive place of feminisms which demonstrate the discursive heterogeneity of the movement today. Therefore, we seek to grasp the reading gestures taken up by the feminist Facebook pages in their self-descriptions collated with what they discursivize in their publications.

We adopt in this work the concept of heterogeneity discussed by Indursky (2007), who, based on Michel Pêcheux, defines the difference and the division as a constitutive part of the ideology and, therefore, of the discursive formation (DF). For her, DF is at the same time identical and divided, containing within it identification, but also difference and divergence.

We will analyze the feminist discourse from five different Facebook pages that call themselves feminists: *TODAS Fridas*, *Não Me Kahlo*, *Feminismo sem demagogia-original*, *Empodere Duas Mulheres e Ventre Feminista*. Our corpus⁴ is made of discursive sequences (DS) taken from the “about” tab of each page and posts that signify the body of the woman-subject from two currents of meaning, named as 1) criticism of the normalization of beauty standards imposed by the patriarchal society and 2) the defense of legalization/decriminalization of abortion.

Before we begin the analysis, we will cover some aspects related to digital feminism on Facebook, its characteristics, and what constitutes it as a discursive place of militancy today.

2 Digital feminism: a place of militancy

In the past years, digital media have been shaped as a proper environment for the organization and promotion of the most diverse social movements, which have used social media as a place for mobilization and circulation of ideas, making such networks a discursive place and of militancy with a wide reach and easy spread. Following Costa (2018), the networks have become a mechanism of pressure before the established institutions and have developed themselves as a place of political mobilization.

One of the movements that has appropriated social media for political and social militancy is feminism, which despite not having emerged in the same timeframe of social media – being much earlier than that -, finds in them a resource conducive to new formulations that characterize it today.

⁴ Our corpus was gathered from 2018 to 2019, the period of my master’s research. For this work, we selected posts on the subject of women’s bodies. These posts, collected via Facebook’s search engine, span from 2012 to 2019.

From the first events organized by women in the 19th century, in the pursuit of suffrage, to today, the feminist movement has undergone several transformations, adapting itself.

Current feminism is, thus, constituted amid various forms of oppression to which women are subjected, making it not universal, but quite heterogeneous. For Castells (2018), the practice and the feminist discourses make this movement quite varied. This variety increases as we analyze its forms from a global standpoint.

For the author, the movement is much more complex since it encompasses new and diverse issues depending on the ideological affiliation of the individuals who comprise it. This heterogeneous game is put into circulation in cyberspace, due to its openness to old and novel formulations regarding women-subjects, which consider the distinct positions of our society (feminist, sexist, among others). The feminist discourse is, thus, constituted as a way of promotion, reflection, and transformation on the positions that naturalize a woman's role in society.

This digital feminist discourse does not restrict itself to the online environment. According to Garcia and Sousa (2014), the discourse that is territorialized in cyberspace is transported to a world external to it, occupying the core of urban militant practices and returning again to the digital space to form other networks of meanings. In the space of networks, the contradictions are not silenced. Rather, they highlight the heterogeneity of positions put in circulation and in dispute for meaning. As for digital feminism, Black women, lesbians, Indigenous, trans, and others, can be the subjects of their discourse and reclaim their position.

This opening of the digital to the contradictory, the divergent, but also to regularity, manifests itself, for example, on feminist Facebook pages, like the ones previously mentioned, that design the common thread of digital feminism and cyber militancy.

As a place where meanings of/about feminism circulate, Facebook has complex characteristics due to the very nature of its environment, because at the same time as the strength of women's movements is shown, the interdictions and violence against them are also readjusted (Costa, 2018).

The network also allows for more flexible discussions and identity positionings within the feminist movement. In this sense, Facebook has paved the way for collectives that are still marginalized within the feminist movements themselves that find in the digital space new ways of circulating meanings and promoting ideas.

In this matter, Araújo (2016) argues that the circulation of unorthodox knowledge about feminism is enabled by the use of social networks. Considering the author's view, we believe that

the conditions of digital production such as “speed, fragmentation produce other modes of stabilizing meanings, which can be thought through the places of subjectivation of the subjects, such as the author function and the feminist identity itself” (Araújo, 2016, p. 18).

In this work, we call the discursivized feminism on social networks *digital feminism*, a denomination that encompasses “feminist practices that have, their materialization in the digital, which do not signify or signify in other forms outside of the digital” (Araújo, 2016, p. 114). From this perspective, we understand that, in the digital environment, the process of materialization of meanings of/about feminism is done differently from the space outside it.

We can thus see social networks, especially Facebook, are spaces of production and circulation of discourse and, for this reason, for the constitution of subjects in their positions. Therefore, women-subjects have in the digital space a proper place for the deconstruction and reconstruction of discursive and social places that were imposed on them throughout history, accentuating new forms of identification.

In the next section, we are going to discuss some theoretical formulations about the relation between the discursive place and the subject positions, which will support our analysis of digital feminism pages on Facebook.

3 Discursive place and subject position in digital feminism: the place of theory

In order to understand the discursive place of feminisms, it is necessary that we talk about the notion of discourse we have adopted in this work. We understand discourse as effects of meanings among speakers (Pêcheux, 2014). This meaning is the effect of the ideological work of language built from the inscription of the subjects in discursive formations (DF) defined as that which from “a position given in a conjecture that is given, [...] determines what can and must be said” (Pêcheux, 2014, p. 147).

Thus, it is through the inscription in a given DF that the sayings produce meanings, once they are constituted through the relationship with other formulations producing effects over that which is said in a given situation. The meaning hence does not exist “on its own,” as Pêcheux tells us (2014, p. 146), “but on the contrary, it is determined by the ideological positions that are at stake in the socio-historical process in which words, expressions and prepositions are produced, i.e.

reproduced". The author, therefore, argues that the production of meanings is directly related to the ideological positions held by those who produce discourses.

This means that everything that is said in a given socio-historical moment produces meaning because it is part of a particular discursive formation and not another. The subjects, constituted through ideological interpellation (Pêcheux, 2014), from the social place they occupy, inscribe themselves in a particular discursive formation through a relationship of identification with the subject of knowledge (subject-form) of the DF. This relationship of identification is what Pêcheux (2014) calls subject-position. The subject-form is responsible for incorporation-dissimulation of the elements from the interdiscourse, that is, the different sayings that cross the entire discourse, producing the subject's effect of evidence.

Subject and meaning are mutually constituted. The subject, interpellated by ideology and affected by the unconscious, is not, for this reason, the source of meaning. Meaning is thus the effect and work of memory, triggered by the discursive formations and by different subject-positions taken by the subjects of discourse, and that result in contradictions, dispersions, breaks, displacements, showing the heterogeneity of discursive and ideological formations (Pêcheux, 2014; 2015). The discursive formation of feminisms is an example of this heterogeneity, once it encompasses several subject-positions in its interior, as we will see in our analysis. These positions are not universal because they are historically situated, representing a place in the social formation that constitutes them.

In regard to this relationship between subject and discursive formation, the identification of the subject in a DF is related to the social place it occupies in a given social formation. This is due to the materiality, in discourse, of the power relations that constitutes the social relations, and that shape the social place occupied by the subjects.

According to Grigoletto (2007), in the transition from empirical to discursive space, the social place occupied by the subject, determined by the social and ideological formation, will determine their discursive place "through the movement of the subject-form and the discursive formation itself with which the subject identifies themselves" (Grigoletto, 2007, p.128). Therefore, it is through discursive practice that a given social place is stabilized, since whenever a subject enunciates their discourse, they do so from a social place, affected by different power relations.

Social and discursive places are mutually determined. The former is only legitimized by discourse and the latter happens through the determination of social place that makes it possible the inscription of authorized subjects to do so in a given discursive formation. Social and discursive

place are thus constructed in the relationship between language and history (Grigoletto, 2007). Also, according to the author, discursive place and position are not synonymous for in the interior of the discursive place one can find different subject-positions. For that reason, the discursive place represents an instance of the relationship between subject-form and the positions of a DF in a given conjecture or situation.

In our research, we observed that the feminist social place determines the feminist discursive place and vice versa. In this way, the discursive place of feminisms is constituted in a process of break with the DF from patriarchy, opening up the possibility of positions and other meanings for the identification of the women-subjects, sheltered in another DF, that of feminisms.

The discursive place of feminisms is made of a bundle of feminist political and ideological positions: liberal, Marxist, intersectional and others. So, the notion of discursive place produces an effect of unity over the dispersion, since although it is fragmented into various positions, it refers to the fact that these positions have something in common that unifies them imaginatively: the fight against gender oppressions.

In the digital feminist discourse on Facebook, we can observe that the speaking-subjects from the pages (admins and members) speak from subject-positions that, by relating to the subject-form of the discursive formation of feminisms, can establish relationships of identification, counteridentification or even disidentification (Pêcheux, 2014) with the characteristic knowledges of the DF of feminisms, producing, in this latter case, contradictory effects of a return to the DF of patriarchy.

This diversity of subject-positions characterizes the heterogeneous aspect of the discursive formation (Indursky, 2008). For Indursky, DF is composed of positions that are dominant and dissidents, allowing for the different meaning, the discordant (counteridentification), since it is just a place for reproducing the same meanings. The impossible in this conjecture is the antagonism (disidentification) because there would be a break, and consequently, the establishment of a new DF. In this manner, we can argue that the feminist discursive place opens up the possibility of different modes of relating to feminist ideological and political positions, without breaking the domain of knowledges. Therefore, we understand DF as a space of heterogeneity and possible displacements of subject-positions and different or divergent meaning effects.

In the next section, we are going to analyze this heterogeneous operation of the feminist discursive place based on the formulations of selected Facebook pages.

4 Discursive heterogeneity in digital feminism: three possible positions

The current feminist movement is characterized by the plurality of its political and ideological currents which also constitute the discursivities of digital feminism. As a more flexible environment, the cyberspace has made it possible the articulation of various forms of identities of the movement (Castells, 2018; Costa, 2018; Lima, 2013). The different ways in which women are affiliated with the movement comprise its current discursive heterogeneity, no longer in a universal way, but in the dialectical relationship between gender, race, and class. Taking up a position based on these categories, or their intersectionality, characterizes different subject-positions in the digital feminist discursive place.

In this section, we analyze based on the categories of discursive place and subject-positions, the constitution and formulation of the feminist discursive place in the following Facebook pages: *TODAS Fridas* (TF), *Não me kahlo* (NMK), *Feminismo sem demagogia-original* (FSD), *Empodere duas mulheres* (EDM) e *Ventre Feminista* (VF). Our corpus is made of discursive sequences taken from the *about*⁵ tab from each page – in which the feminist subject-positions are explicitly defined – in comparison with the positions taken in published posts of the pages, which address the issue of the subject-women's body. Analyzing the self-definitions, we identified three feminist positions which the enunciating-subjects inscribe themselves in: *an intersectional feminist* (TF and NMK); a Marxist feminist (FSD); and *a liberal feminist position* (EDM and VF). However, in the posts, we will see that these positions do not produce the same meaning effects.

It is important to highlight that the reference made here to the intersectional, Marxist and liberal positions refers to the effects produced on the pages, considering the gestures of interpretation of their enunciating-subjects. Therefore, we focus on the positions observed on the pages and their relationship with the networks of memory with which they are affiliated.

4.1 A position on race, gender, and class: the intersectional effect

The intersectionality effect is present on the pages *TODAS Fridas*, created in august 2015, and *Não Me Kahlo*, founded in July 2014. On these pages, the idea of a universalized woman-subject stemming from the patriarchal ideology is deconstructed by mobilizing knowledges related

⁵ The *about* tab present in every Facebook page and it is constituted as a place of description and specification of pages created by enunciating-subjects of the pages. This tab contains information such as creation date, political and ideological affiliations and data on the NGOs and collectives that comprise the page or that started them.

to the various oppressions that underpin relations of social inequality, thus evoking problematizing aspects of social asymmetry between genders and the characteristics that put women in this system of oppression.

The intersectionality, as Akotirene (2018) highlights, is a concept that aims to instrumentalize theoretical and methodologically the analysis of structural oppression, considering the indissociability between racism, capitalism and cisheteropatriarchy. Feminism incorporates the category of intersectionality to denounce the various types of oppression suffered by women through race and class, in addition to those related to gender. Akotirene (2018) reminds us that intersectionality requires oppressed individuals to conceptually instrumentalize race, gender, class, and nation, avoiding analysis under the same axis of oppressions and paying attention to the modern colonial matrix and the new forms of interpretation for identity effects.

In its *about* tab, the page TF takes up the meanings of intersectionality as elements to be legitimized, inscribing itself in the subject-position we are addressing, as we can see in DS1 (discursive sequence), transcribed from the aforementioned tab:

SD1⁶: For the emancipation of women in society. *Against all forms of oppression stemming from Patriarchy, Racism and Capitalism. For an end to gender roles.*

In DS1, the meanings of intersectionality are present in the signifiers *Patriarchy, Racism and Capitalism* referred as *forms of oppression of women*. The terms, highlighted by the page in bold and capital initial letters, produce the effect of personification of these signifiers, placing them as identities that must be identified for their power. Moreover, the sayings in the tab mention as motto the “emancipation of women in society,” which refers to the general feminist agenda, but at the same time links this agenda to the intertwining of the antipatriarchal, antiracial and anticapitalist fights. Therefore, the page’s position produces a gesture of full identification with the intersectional feminist subject-form and of disidentification with positions inscribed in the field of gender oppressions resulting from patriarchy, racism, and capitalism.

In posts on TF that address the woman-subject’s body, the effects of meaning of intersectionality produced in the page’s presentation are also mobilized. However, we realize that there is no regularity in the production of these effects, with the discourse of these posts being sustained mainly by elements that refer to the idea of a universalist feminism (Figure 1).

⁶ We have marked in italics the traces of the positions analyzed in the discursive sequences.

Figure 1: the intersectional feminist subject-position on the body on TF



Image from the page *Todas Fridas*. https://www.facebook.com/TODASFridasoficial?locale=pt_BR.

We can highlight the following DS from the image above as examples of the discursive operation of the page in relation to women's body.

DS2:

- 2.1 The beauty standard is happy people!
- 2.2 Sexual education to prevent, contraception to avoid pregnancy and legal and safe abortion to avoid dying.
- 2.3 Poor women has a thousand-fold risk with unsafe abortions.

In the formulations taken from Figure 1, we notice that the issue of the woman-subject's body is also mobilized through two networks of meanings which we named: 1) criticism of the normalization of the beauty standard imposed by patriarchal society; 2) defense of legalization/decriminalization of abortion. However, the meanings of intersectionality are not regularly present in posts by TF that produce these effects. When addressing the beauty standard imposed by patriarchal society, the prejudice against fat bodies is highlighted as a social problem, without aspects related to race and social class being implicated in the problematization of the

scorn and stereotyping of the fat body. The relationship between beauty and happiness is signified, at the same time, as a result of acceptance and as a way of accepting this body outside the standard defined by the patriarchal DF.

When the discursivization regarding the woman-subject involves abortion, some posts raise questions concerning the religious affiliation or the marital status of women, with only one of them relating abortion to women's social class ("Poor women has a thousand-fold risk with unsafe abortions"). The issues of race and class do not appear in all the posts, even when it is emphasized that women who have abortions are diverse. In DS2, for example, when using the emblematic phrase in the fight for decriminalization of abortion, by quoting "legal and safe abortion to avoid dying", the meanings about race and class are not taken up to inscribe this discourse in an intersectional position in the posts.

In the self-description of the page NMK, the affiliation with the intersectional position happens differently:

DS3: The feminist collective *Não Me Kahlo* was born as a space of study and debate on feminism in its *diverse variants, respecting social plurality, individuality* and valuing joint work to build an egalitarian society, thus *paying attention to feminist demands and agendas*.

In the description given in DS3, the words race, gender, and class, which indicate intersectional affiliation, are not present. Despite this, on NMK's website, in addition to the mention of these terms, an intersectional position is explicitly taken up. In DS3, however, the formulations that identify the page's profile mobilize the meanings of collectivity – *feminist collective, social plurality, joint work, egalitarian society* – and those of singularity – *individuality*. Hence, the gesture of authorship of the page's profile is based on a feminist position that dominates the meanings of a social fight that is attentive to individualities, i.e., the differences between the women that comprise the movement.

When we analyzed the posts related to the woman-subject's body on the page the NMK, we noticed that the mobilization of meanings of intersectionality is similar to the one observed in relation to the page TF. There is no regularity in addressing the topic from an explicitly intersectional position in all the posts, although some elements of this positions are suggested, from the use of images of racialized women, as seen in the posts from Figure 2, or in the production of meanings that questions the image of women in the memory of capitalism. See Figure 2.

Figure 2: the intersectional feminist subject-position on the body on NMK



Image from the page *Não Me Kahlo*. https://www.facebook.com/NaoKahlo?locale=pt_BR.

In Figure 2, we highlighted the following DS as examples of how the discourse on women’s body works.

DS4:

- 4.1 If all the women woke up tomorrow loving their bodies, think about how many companies would break.
- 4.2 We want sexual education to decide, contraception to avoid abortion and legal abortion to avoid dying.
- 4.3 But to criminalize abortion does not save lives. It only condemns women to death or jail.

In Figure 2, we noticed that the issue of the woman-subject’s body is also mobilized through two networks of meanings: 1) criticism of the normalization of the beauty standard imposed by patriarchal society; 2) defense of legalization/decriminalization of abortion.

In the posts criticizing the beauty standard, the fat body or the body that does not conform to the socially imposed standard is summoned to produce meanings that confront patriarchal, capitalist, and racist discourses, disrupting the stabilized memory space about the body, especially of fat and black woman, as we can see in DS 4.1 and in the image that accompanies this utterance. In these sequences, women are urged to love their bodies, not letting themselves be subjected to social standards (“Fuck society,” “Love your body”) and the beauty industry.

As for the network of meanings defending the legalization of abortion, however, the posts on TF do not mobilize knowledges of intersectionality on a regular basis, as they do not problematize class and gender determinations in their approach to the issue. Although formulations

about the death of women are mentioned in 4.2 and 4.3, the intersectional issues that run through the discussion and that would be proper to the position are taken up sporadically.

As we can see in the posts shown in figures 1 and 2, the discursive processes of constituting the feminist place of the pages TF and NMK are based on the deconstruction of a universal body ideal for women and on the defense of a certain autonomy for these bodies when addressing the legalization of abortion. On these pages, despite their self-description indicating an affiliation with intersectional feminism, the feminist subject-position does not place themselves as a regular effect on the discourse on the body, occasionally mobilizing knowledges that dominate this position, such as issues of race, class, and gender relations.

4.2 A position on capital and gender: the Marxist effect

The page *Feminismo sem demagogia – original* was created in October 2012 on Facebook. The position taken up by the page takes up elements of the memory of Marxism, mobilizing meanings related to the notion of work and class as foundation of female oppression. From this perspective, it would not be enough for subjects to fight against gender inequality, but also to fight the capitalist and patriarchal system that would be the basis for sustaining the oppression of women. In this position, the sense of collectivity is always taken and highlighted as a form of fight.

In the Marxist feminist subject-position, the meanings are directed towards the construction of a new society, detached from class divisions, which results in female emancipation. Common to this position is the understanding that class society exposes the woman-subject to certain barriers structured by the attribution of value to production activities for the market, devaluing female labor and keeping the operation of housework still the responsibility of women.

In the self-description of the page FSD, the identification with the Marxist feminist subject-position is shown in the association between patriarchal and capitalist oppressions, as can be seen in SD5.

DS5: Only the workers, men and women, acting *together in a revolutionary movement* will be able to definitely *destroy class society* and with it *women oppression* once and for all.

The use of terms dear to the political and Marxist philosophical current, such as *workers*, *revolutionary movement*, *class society* and *oppression*, inscribe the page, as we have analyzed in this study, in the Marxist feminist subject-position. From DS5, we can suppose that the submission of women to men is a consequence of class society, and its elimination will only be possible through a revolutionary movement.

In its posts about the woman-subject's body, however, the page does not regularly mobilize elements that are part of the Marxist discursive domain about gender. In Figure 3, we considered some posts of the page that claim the subject's body as a form of feminist resistance to patriarchy.

Figure 3: the Marxist feminist subject-position on the body on FSD.



Image from the page *Feminismo sem Demagogia original*.
https://www.facebook.com/FeminismoSemDemagogiaMarxistaOriginal?locale=pt_BR

DS6 takes up the meanings about bodies found in the posts in Figure 3.

DS6:

- 6.1 Start a revolution, love your body.
- 6.2 It is to preserve women, the majority of whom are black and poor. May we not forget. Forward, comrades. Let's continue the mobilizations.
- 6.3 Legalization is necessary and urgent to save the lives of thousands of poor women.

In DS6, we had access to some of the forms in which the woman-subject's body is enunciated on the page FSD. In the first two posts, the fat body is taken up as a metaphor for the non-standard body propagated by the patriarchal memory. We have noticed that the signifier

revolution, taken up in formulation 6.1, which is highly required by the Marxist discursivity, is used by the page in reference to the attitude of ascending this body. However, in the posts mentioned, there is no mobilization of other meanings that link body issues to the determinations of the capitalist social structure.

As for the posts defending the legalization of abortion, we can see a return to the meanings of race, gender, and others that might reproduce a Marxist feminist position, when the women who are victims of clandestine abortion procedures are identified as “black” and “poor”, and when “comrades” are called to join the “mobilizations” for all women. In the posts, “poor” women are enunciated as victims of this system that criminalizes abortion, but the racial agenda is silenced.

The feminist subject-position of *Feminismo sem demagogia – original* discursively works the deconstruction of the patriarchal image of the woman-subject by disidentifying with the position of universality of the patriarchal DF, emphasizing the need to destroy the cultural structure that sustain this universalization. However, this position is not regularly taken up in the posts from the meanings of Marxist feminism mobilized in the page’s self-description. This discrepancy means that, at least in relation to this aspect of the right to the body, the sayings that would inscribe the page in a diverse position to those seen on the pages analyzed previously, TF and NMK, are erased. Thus, although the page FSD positions itself as Marxist feminist in its description, this affiliation mobilizes the meanings that dominate this position in only a few posts.

4.3 A position about individuality and empowerment: the liberal effect

The liberal feminist position is taken up by the pages *Empodere Duas Mulheres*, created in February 2012, and *Ventre Feminista*, founded in February 2015. On both pages, there is a mobilization of the meanings to understand the feminist fight as a deconstruction of inequality between men and women, without mentioning in its network of knowledges aspects related to oppression by capital or racial issues.

To better understand this position, it is imperative that we observe some issues related to liberal feminism as a political and ideological current. This position focuses on understanding female submission as a product of the inequality in the system and not as exploitation of the subject by capital, patriarchy, and racial division, as happens in Marxist and intersectional feminism. For the liberal position, the woman-subject’s main problem is their exclusion from the public sphere, and the solution to this would be to demand and promote equal social spaces for men and women.

Liberal feminism finds in the intellectual Betty Friedan and the author's creation of the National Organization of Women (NOW), the most relevant points within the movement (GARCIA, 2011).

To some scholars of the feminist movement, the intersection between liberalism and feminism was very fruitful for the movement (CYFER, 2010). Some of the feminist agendas found in the liberal thinking the theoretical support the movement needed to mobilize itself against laws and social rules that prevented women's right to their bodies and public life. The very notion of autonomy that underpins many feminist demands is the result of the confluence between feminism and liberal ideals.

The defended autonomy for the liberal current of feminism is placed from a concept of individual right. For liberalism, this individual right mobilizes the subject's emancipatory potential and the valorization of autonomy, "understood as the (collective) capacity to govern oneself" (MIGUEL, 2000, p. 94). In this fashion, liberalism understands the collective as the incorporation of individual interests, in which the subjects have rights and choices, but not without proposing the break with the capitalist system.

On the pages EDM and VF, the liberal feminist position is built by proposing the empowerment of the woman-subject, sorority, and empathy among women, as the basis for sustaining the movement and as a way of breaking with machismo. The forms of identification for the woman-subject in the liberal position are produced by the work of deconstructing the patriarchal imaginary of the woman-subject and reconstructing it through the affirmation of women as subjects of their wills, who can and should make choices based on an equal legislation.

On the page EDM, we noticed a movement of affiliation with the liberal discourse by sustaining a subject-position supported by the notions of individuality and choice, considered fundamental attributes for liberal feminism.

DS7: To me, feminism is much more than I can touch. It's much broader, and it will only be true when it doesn't exclude anything and can reach where I'm not.

The discursive operation of DS7 shows that, in the page's description, the meanings of individuality are mobilized, taking up knowledge from liberal DF. The individual subject's dimension is indicated through the private character given to the concept of feminism, which can be seen in the textual materiality by the use of personal pronouns and first-person verbs (me and I; think and am) and thus places the subject of the discourse as a point of reference. At the same time, also in

the formulation of DS7, we see the attribution of a universalist and generic meaning to feminism (*it will only be true when it doesn't exclude*), thus opposing itself to the idea of feminism in which individualities would be erased or silenced. The respect to the individualities would be, therefore, the premise of the liberal feminist position, sidelining reflection on social and historical determinations that stand in the way of women's emancipation.

DS8 takes up and confirms some of these effect meanings.

DS8: When I can learn with all the experiences that are not part of me, and when I can witness full empowerment, sorority, and empathy among women. I don't want to be part of something limited, the fight is much bigger.

In DS8, we see the mobilization of terms as empowerment, sorority and empathy, signifiers highly used in current feminisms. The use of the term *empowerment* is highly diffused on social media. However, it is not about a word coined in recent times. The expression is an adaptation of the of the English word *empowerment* coined by the north American sociologist Julian Rappaport in 1977 (BERTG, 2018). Its meaning is associated with the idea of "empowering or enabling" (BERTH, 2018, p. 19) oppressed groups so that they can become autonomous.

Some say that the theory of empowerment is a creation of Paulo Freire since the Brazilian educator worked with the Conscientization theory as a practice for freedom. But unlike Rappaport, Freire believed that the groups themselves should be empowered through the process of critical consciousness of reality affiliated with a transformative practice (BERTH, 2018).

Another meaning attached to the term *empowerment* attributed by Berth is linked to the social work of developing "the potentials of individual victimized by systems of oppression, which aims primarily the social liberation of an entire group, based on a broad process and on various fronts of actions, including intellectual emancipation" (BERTH, 2018, p. 34).

Thus, we realize that the use of *empowerment* by the page *Empodere Duas Mulheres* evokes the meanings of the social, similar to what Berth (2018) proposed when discussing inequality between sexes, but the page does not problematize the different systems of oppression that act on women-subjects in different ways.

In DS8, we also notice the use of the signifiers "sorority" and empathy" conceived as important for the enunciating-subject as a way of destabilizing the current patriarchal order. These two words are understood by the feminist movement, in general, as attitudes that should be developed among women. That way, the meanings of these words to the feminist movement are

constructed by the notion of solidarity among women and affection in relation to the diverse experiences of women. However, this position leaves out other issues related to how this sorority and empathy would be understood by the page in terms of the different forms of oppression that affect woman-subject in the current context of the capitalist and patriarchal system.

In the posts by EDM, we noticed that the affiliation with the liberal position remains regular in the discursive network about the woman-subject's body, as we can see in Figure 4.

Figure 4: the liberal feminist subject-position on the body on EDM.



Image from the page *Empodere duas Mulheres*. https://www.facebook.com/empodereduasmulheres?locale=pt_BR.

In the posts that constitute Figure 4, we selected the formulations highlighted in DS9.

- 9.1 Girl, start a revolution, stop hating your body.
- 9.2 A woman's body is not public.
- 9.3 Abortion is a public health issue.

In DS9, we have examples of how discourse on body works on the page EDM, based on two networks of meanings considered: 1) criticism of the normalization of the beauty standard imposed by patriarchal society; and 2) the defense of legalization/decriminalization of abortion.

In the first formulation in DS9, the patriarchal beauty standard is named *deconstruction* through the women's acceptance of their bodies ("stop hating your body"). In this statement, it is highlighted the individuality characteristic of the liberal position and how the idea of "revolution" is also placed in this context of the individual and not of the collective. In 9.2, the assertion that a woman's body is not public, but something individual, and that it should not be commented on by

third parties, refers to the memory of feminist sayings that formulate women's bodies in the relationship between the public and private spheres.

This memory reproduces meanings of the public in relation to the woman-subject's body based on a legal perspective. In this perspective, the types of violence suffered by women, which patriarchal ideology circulates as belonging to the domestic space, such as domestic violence, are seen as problems that must be solved by social institutions.

Abortion, on the other hand, it is signified as a public health issue, not as a criticism of the standardization of bodies by the patriarchal discourse. By highlighting the importance of the legalization as "a public health issue," the page mobilizes meanings related to the social implications of abortion, rather than focusing on the death of women per se.

In this way, the liberal feminist position taken up by the discourse on the page EDM mobilizes the meanings from the memory of liberalism and its association with the feminist movement, by placing *empowerment* in the sphere of individualities. In this perspective, the page reproduces the meanings present in its self-description, reaffirming its liberal feminist position in its posts.

The last page that comprises our corpus and that also mobilizes knowledges of the liberal feminist position is *Ventre Feminista*. The page materializes its form of affiliation with the feminist movement in the following description in its "about" tab.

DS10: *Choice, empowerment, support, information.*

This utterance reminds us of the way of saying of an advertising enunciation, in which the properties and characteristics of the objects to be sold, are laid out on a shelf within easy reach. In DS10, the formulation lists requirements for consolidating the position of a feminist woman: *choice, empowerment, support, and information*. The nouns are presented as products available to the subject, in this case the woman-subject that seeks feminism in the digital space.

The term "choice" recalls, through memory, the meanings of women's individual freedom. These meanings are in line with the ideals of liberalism, mentioned above, and which Friedan (1971, p. 267) delineates as "will to power" and "self-assertion" in the search for the rights to be, and in the "the courage to be an individual". Autonomy, in liberal feminism, according to Friedan (1971), is seen as the affirmation of individual rights, which would be capable of deconstructing the power of the other over the woman-subject, in this case, the patriarchal power.

“Empowerment” is the exercise of the subject’s power to transform themselves in the face of the various forms of social oppression that affect certain socially disadvantaged groups. In this sense, the mobilization of the notion of “empowerment” together with terms such as “support” and “information” adds to the networks of meanings the ideas of instruction and abandonment that would underpin the feminist movement.

Let’s observe how the liberal position is textualized in the posts on the page VF.

Figure 5: The liberal feminist subject-position on the body on VF.



Image from the page *Ventre Feminista*. https://www.facebook.com/ventrefeminista/?locale=pt_BR.

We selected from Figure 5 three formulations to comprise DS11.

DS11:

11.1 Black, fat and beautiful.

11.2 We live in a society that doesn't let women grow old in peace.

11.3 We live in a hypocritical and cynical society that condemns abortion and has abortions.

DS11 brings formulations that are representative of the way discourse on the body works on the page VF. In the first formulation of DS11, there are two adjectives that, through patriarchal memory, would characterize a body outside the norm (black and fat). However, the production conditions of the post, because it is a place where the female body is exulted in its diverse forms, the two words produce opposite meanings, valuing this black and fat body. These adjectives produce a metonymical effect in order to represent all women who fit the first two characteristics,

“black” and “fat,” seen as derogatory and reasons for prejudice in patriarchal society. The last characteristic listed, “beautiful,” functions as affirmation of the page’s feminist position on breaking with the social standards of whiteness and thinness as models of beauty.

In formulation 11.2, old age is also addressed through the criticism of the patriarchal standard of youth. Old age is presented in the patriarchal DF in different ways for men and women, as a source of pride for men and of disdain for women. By stating that “society” does not “let women grow old in peace,” the enunciating-subject reaffirms the social character attributed to old age as a problem for women.

The last formulation is related to the network of meanings defending the legalization of abortion by questioning the social hypocrisy in criminalizing the practice and at the same time executing it. From this formulation, other meanings can be present, through the interdiscourse, as the way in which society practices this abortion, whether through paternal abandonment, signified in the memory of the feminist movement as a form of abortion, or clandestine abortions conducted both in high quality clinics and in precarious ones.

Thus, the page VF, like EDM, constructs its subject-position in the descriptions and the posts in a similar way, affiliating itself with the liberal position within the DF of feminisms.

The liberal position of the pages EDM and VF is elaborated between the meanings of individuality (choice) and empowerment, in the production of meanings of support and solidarity that the feminist movement would provide. These meanings are presented in a broad way and without delimiting other issues such as class and race. This erasure of categories does not imply their exclusion in the interior of the discussions proposed by the pages, given that the affiliation with liberal feminism allows these pages to mobilize the topics of class and race in their posts only when it is convenient, without damaging the understanding of their position.

Final considerations

In our analysis, we were able to identify some characteristics that mark the movement of ideological affiliation by the pages we researched. We realized that all the pages are inscribed in the feminist discursive place, but the positions that they take up from this place differ and diverge on many points. Our analysis delimited three effects that demarcate the occupation of the place of feminisms among five pages that comprise our corpus: the *intersectional*, *Marxist*, and *liberal*. We

understood these effects as the different forms in which the pages support the production of meanings about women in their posts, given the ideological affiliations they assume in their profiles.

The effect of intersectionality, perceived on the pages TF and NMK, is characterized by taking up the meanings of class and race as way of inscription in the feminist discursive place. This effect is produced by the way the pages declare themselves and by the way they mobilize the meanings of race and class in their posts. We noticed that in the approach to the issues on body, the meanings of intersectionality are not always emphasized, and the regularity of the discursive operation lies in the concealment, at specific moments, of the issues on race and class in the posts.

In the Marxist effect, observed on the page FSD, the meanings of class and gender are mobilized as fundamental to the feminist antipatriarchal fight. The break of the social system that sustains the patriarchal imaginary formation is taken up as a proposition capable of breaking with the oppression of women in society, which is structured by gender inequalities. The page's Marxist feminist position is constituted from the formulation of an image of what a woman would be and her deconstruction in the search for different images of women for a gender-equal society. The production of meanings about Marxism in FSD's feminist position does not run through all the posts about the body and does not appear as a common thread in the criticism of the dominant beauty standard and the defense of the legalization of abortion.

As for the liberal effect, the pages EDM and VF mobilize the meanings of individuality, empowerment, and solidarity among women to constitute their feminist positions. The image produced for the women-subjects in this position is constituted by the way in which they relate to each other in society, in other words, by the ideal of sorority and mutual support, and by the freedom of choice of these women as beings of freedom and autonomy. On the pages EDM and VF, the affiliation with liberal feminism, declared in their self-descriptions, is reiterated in the posts about body, thus reproducing effects and trajectories of memory of liberalism within feminism.

The discursive place of feminisms on social media is shaped by the heterogeneity of discourses that cross feminist sayings and by several possibilities for positioning oneself in relation to issues of/about women. As we have seen in our analysis, the pages place themselves in different subject-positions when they demarcate their affiliation with the current feminist movement, but when they formulate their gestures of interpretation on the woman-subject's body, they erase or silence important knowledges that constitute these positions declared in their self-descriptions. Therefore, we can affirm that the discursive heterogeneity of feminisms is not consolidated in the

positions taken up in the posts on the pages analyzed in two positions, the intersectional and the Marxist, and that only the liberal position constructs its discursive place of feminisms in accordance with what it shows in its self-description.

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