

Neither imprisoned nor dead: visualities of feminist activism as an Instagram carousel post

Nem presa, nem morta: visualidades do ativismo feminista como carrossel de telas no Instagram

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Abstract: *In recent years, we have observed how images participate in the dispute over feminist agendas, no longer as a representation of groups of women or a historical record of their actions, but as constituent resources of the political agenda itself. Photographs and videos gain even more prominence as they are associated with the media emergence of everyday facts and episodes that circulate in journalistic coverage and profiles on social networks engendering a particular form of consuming images. This text proposes a theoretical and critical exercise on two recent audiovisual reports about the demonstrations for legal and safe abortion in Brazil on Instagram. In both, we observe how images guide the discursive and affective formations that link visibility and consumption.*

Keywords: *legal abortion; consumption; feminism; image; Instagram*

Resumo: *Nos últimos anos, temos observado como as imagens adentraram a seara de disputa pelas pautas feministas não mais como representação de grupos de mulheres ou registro histórico de suas ações, mas como recursos constituintes da própria agenda política. Assim, fotografias e vídeos têm ganhado protagonismo conforme se coligam à emergência de certos fatos e episódios cotidianos que passam a circular intensivamente entre coberturas jornalísticas e perfis nas redes sociais digitais engendrando uma forma peculiar de consumo de tais imagens. Esse texto propõe um exercício teórico crítico sobre duas reportagens audiovisuais recentes acerca das manifestações pelo aborto legal e seguro no Brasil a partir do*

Instagram. Em ambas, observamos como as imagens conduzem formações discursivas e afetivas que enlaçam visualidade e consumo.

Palavras-chave: *aborto legal; consumo; feminismo; imagem; Instagram*

Introduction

In recent years, several Latin American countries, such as Brazil, Colombia, Chile, and Mexico, have concentrated efforts on countering the continuous setbacks brought about by conservative political movements that change laws and legal norms previously implemented as a public right. In Brazil, the recent vote on Bill 1904/2024, which proposes to amend the Penal Code to equate abortion with homicide, an initiative fast-tracked by the president of the Chamber of Deputies in response to the demands of some political groups, has sparked significant protests and mobilizations across the country in the final weeks of June.

Protests organized by women's groups and collectives advocating for public policies that ensure the right to legal and safe abortion in the country have always been part of the Brazilian political scenario. Photographic exhibitions, artistic interventions, cultural activities, and various feminist political acts have been constantly documented and observed over the years, at least since 1960 (BONAN; FERREIRA, 2005).

However, we currently observe that the primary objective of these images is not merely to constitute a documentary record but rather to play an essential role in the activist strategy of advocacy and protest, positioning the visual field as a constituent element of public debate—particularly with the widespread adoption of mobile technologies and the intensive use of digital social networks.

In this regard, we note that the production and circulation of these images are not limited to the composition of historical archives or documentary records, but function as mobilizing resources within feminist actions, operating as a form of sensory and discursive potentiality that constitutes an intrinsic dimension of contemporary political experience (CALDERÓN, 2020; NORONHA, 2019). As these images enter the realm of communication devices—particularly digital social networks, platforms, and applications—they seek to expand the visibility of their repertoire and political struggles, establishing specific

visual modalities that shape a recognizable and consumable image of feminist activism.

Subjective processes lead to certain consumption practices from which mediated desires, ideals and values are extracted, producing meanings and also representing the lives of individuals, as they connect with other spheres of social and cultural experience (BARBOSA, 2004, p.45), blurring the boundaries between activism, citizenship, ethics, and attributing other qualifiers to consumption, such as ethical, sustainable, activist, conscious (PEREIRA; BRAS; RODRIGUES, 2023; CANCLINI, 1999). Hence, photos and videos participate as important communicative materials in the development of visual signs that reinforce presumed values of engagement, democratic participation and political struggle, engendering subjectivity and consumption.

The lack of a strong identity between young people and formal democratic representation institutions has led to the creation of new arenas for mobilizing the political energy of young people. In this regard, I point to the generation of a new atmosphere in the advanced stage of consumer society: that of responsible consumerism and the politicization of freedom of lifestyle choices — in the sense of using different signs of material culture. (MACHADO, 2011, p.12).

Thus, this text aims to reflect on how recent actions by feminist movements advocating for sexual and reproductive rights have developed a specific form of political visibility through the use of digital social networks, focused on two central media-communicative functions: a) shaping visibility of feminist actions in order to produce new dynamics of confronting violence and the biopolitical control over girls' and women's bodies; b) modulating an attention economy in order to promote interactions based on image sharing in *stories*, which has prevailed as an aspect of social bonding characteristic of image consumption in network culture.

We argue that images of feminist actions for the right to legal and safe abortion, particularly when produced and disseminated through Instagram, are not limited to representing an activist discourse, although

they compose it within a broader historical framework. Instead, they seek to portray lifestyles and subjectivity of institutionally violated bodies to be (re)positioned and (re)viewed in the public sphere, now mediated by a communication device that establishes its own qualifiable scene space. To this end, we propose a preliminary exercise of theoretical-critical analysis on a small series of images comprising two recent audiovisual reports in Brazil: one on the Catarinas Portal profile, denouncing the impediment to the legal abortion of an 11-year-old girl, a victim of rape, in the state of Santa Catarina, in 2022; and another on the G1 portal profile, reporting on protests against the voting of PL 1904/2024, between May and June of this year, in Brasília. In both cases, we observe that the materiality of the images resorts to the association between media events and symbolic references, including those of a popular consumer culture, promoting a continuous movement of recursion that sustains the viewers' attention to the united bodies, in assembly, sliding between different screens as in a carousel.

Image and visibility of feminist activism on digital platforms

According to Facioli; Gomes (2022, p.07), the popularization and increasing use of digital social networking platforms and websites indicate a new arrangement of disputes surrounding Brazilian feminist activism. The way images and emotions are managed in order to mobilize people, proposing arrangements and negotiating values aims to compose a legitimate framework of struggle and recognition of rights that challenge the everyday social imagination.

Political disputes are also intensely ideological, moral, and affective, occurring in symbolic and semiotic terms replicated in the form of texts, hashtags, and memes (FACIOLI; GOMES, 2022, p. 05). Thus, the researchers affirm the relevance of considering the participation of digital technologies in the mobilization of feminist actions today, whether for the circulation of their content or for the formation of a political repertoire, as all aspects are systematically mediated.

The use of online platforms by activists is central to mobilizations for specific protests and, more than that, we argue that they are built as a way to ensure visibility for demands and political agendas. In these terms, the media fill a historical gap left by weaknesses in democratic processes for spaces of speech, listening, rights claims or denunciations. In Brazil, this phenomenon builds an intimate relationship between individuals and these technologies, which are not limited to digital ones. The expectation placed on the media for the resolution of individual problems is an example, in neighborhoods and cities. Programs such as “Aqui e Agora”, aired in the 1990s and hosted by journalist Gil Gomes, with the slogan “a vibrant newspaper, a weapon of the people, showing life on TV as it is”, were characterized by receiving amateur videos of everyday situations, with a denunciation character of various problems. (FACIOLI; GOMES, 2022, p.08).

As a first investigative step, we delimited the observation of audiovisual reports whose images were broadcast by two well-known Brazilian news portals: one specialized in feminist activism, the Catarinas portal, and the other by the G1 Portal, from the media conglomerate Grupo Globo. In the first example, Catarinas, we noticed that it is through the gender focus that the portal creates, elaborates, formulates and composes its journalistic work. “This perspective that differs from the masculinist perspective, but is not journalism specialized in women, seems to indicate an attempt to bring other points of view to the construction of reality and, with regard to journalism, from different practices” (GUSTAFSSON, 2018, p.134).

It is worth mentioning that Catarinas is an independent feminist journalism collective, created in 2016, subsidized by crowdfunding (a collective fundraising campaign, through Catarse) and currently receives support from UN Women. On its Instagram profile, it frequently presents images with coverage of mobilizations, protests, campaigns and the like organized in the story format, created to portray, among other topics, the agenda of sexual and reproductive rights.

With greater visibility on social networks, the portal gained notoriety in the traditional press when it published, in 2022, in partnership with

Intercept Brasil, a report on the case of an eleven-year-old girl, a rape victim, who had the right to abortion denied by the Santa Catarina justice system. Since then, the portal has intensified the production of content on sexual and reproductive rights in the country so that the monitoring of the actions includes various communication and media resources, among them, audiovisual materials (images, videos, illustrations and texts) that are widely used on platforms and social networking sites, both from the portal itself and passed on as sources to other news agencies.

In 2021, the portal formalized a partnership with the Gabo Foundation, from Colombia, further intensifying the production of audiovisual material in order to expand the distribution of specialized content in Latin America. In this article, we chose to select an audiovisual report entitled “Maternal death: the State’s omission in access to legal and safe abortion”, written by journalist Kelly Ribeiro.

Figure 1 – Women protest to guarantee the right to legal and safe abortion in Brazil



Source: Portal Catarinas, 2022, captured by the authors.

The report is comprised of a small set of twenty visual frames, the slides, among which the first displays the title and the last, the signature with the logo and the website address of the portal. The chosen format was the story, a feature provided by Instagram, on the Catarinas profile. Story is a format of visual, dynamic and interactive content, with slides linked in a linear sequence that can be “swiped” side by side, popularly known as a “screen carousel”, composing a brief narrative; the telling of a story about a specific topic.

The use of this format, created in 2011 by Snapchat, was soon adopted by other platforms and social media sites, and today it is the largest type of visual content consumption (JASTI, 2021), because it is done quickly and in views that allow for various modes of interaction, especially the sharing of images, defining a specific type of visual consumption. In the first two slides of the series, the title of the report appears prominently overlaying the photograph of a gathering of women carrying the green scarf, an emblematic symbol for legal and safe abortion originally used in feminist claims in Argentina, but which has been adopted by various women’s movements in other countries. On the raised green bandana, one can read the slogan of the main campaign: “legal abortion to not die”.

In the following slide, a group of women walking through the streets is seen more clearly, some with raised arms, clenched fists, faces in speaking expressions, carrying signs with catchphrases. The foreground is occupied by two women with their faces painted black and white, whose eyes, nose and mouth appear as dark cavities similar to the design of a stylized Mexican skull. Both appear with signs hanging on their chests declaring that they would have already been “killed by the State”, whose bodies, although still alive, are condemned by a political government that not only regulates women’s sexuality and reproduction, but sentences them to violence and death; therefore, they would be a kind of walking skull. Below the photograph, a colored box reveals a brief text explaining that unsafe abortion is the main cause of maternal

death among girls and women in the country and that only a public policy that ensures access to legal abortion would prevent deaths.

In the sequence of slides, from the first to the fifth, as well as to the tenth, we see the same visual structure; a photograph of women's bodies wielding the green scarf occupying the central part and, just below, a brief text summarizing statistical data, institutional documents about the number of deaths and public policies to be guaranteed by the State. Initially, we observe that these materials serve to impact a quick and objective reading about the Brazilian reality that still conditions abortion to death. In this sense, they act as a resource that intensifies the pedagogical content, expanding the repertoire of public debate among platform users. However, their materiality is not limited to this, since the images soon link and associate with other circulating signs, values and affections, producing new meanings to political imagination. Observing the movements of images that are activated in a context of constant re-elaboration, because they can be cut, copied, pasted, mixed, repainted, modified and shared again, as in platforms and digital networks, allows us to point out the emergence of visualities that enhance sensitivities and discourses around the theme.

In the photos of the series, women who appear united in protests spread across various cities in the country, wielding the green scarves and disputing public space for legal abortion, are seen in a process of multiplication. It is not just a story or a portrait of a girl or a woman; it is all the girls and women who appear vulnerable to the violence of the laws and norms that condemn them and sentence them to death. "Expanding access to legal abortion is a fundamental part of addressing this public health issue," declares the blue box on the second slide.

The recognition that the claim does not apply to one, but to all girls and women is part of the emergence of a politics of exposure of subjects allied in a common claim, that is, of a "scene of appearance" of bodies and lives in precarity, in vulnerability, as Butler (2018, p.34) states. And here it is necessary to highlight that, from the author's perspective, the scenes of appearance that are formed from exposure to precarity do not

seek to reaffirm this state, but to start from it to change the imposed conditions of violence and thus transform the social experience of injury. Precarity, according to Butler, would function as a mediating term that operates as a place of alliance between groups of people who otherwise would not have much in common. Therefore, by coming together, by constituting a collective and common body to the images, girls and women produce a challenging form of visibility that destabilizes realities and norms, considering the right to appear “on stage” as a coalition framing of people who share the same subjection and erasure. What do these groups need to claim in order to exist (Butler, 2018, p.34)? According to the content of the series, only the implementation of public policies that ensure sexual and reproductive rights would break the framework of violence and mortality in the country.

In our broader research, we found that the latest Epidemiological Bulletin from the Health Surveillance Secretariat of the Ministry of Health (Brazil, 2022) indicated an increase in the number of women’s deaths. According to the main index recorded by the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) factor, in 2019, the rate was 57.9 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, but this number rose to 74.7 in 2020. The latest National Abortion Survey (DINIZ; MEDEIROS; MADEIRO, 2021) also indicated that 52% of women were 19 years old or younger when they had their first abortion. The highest rates were detected among respondents with lower education levels, Black and indigenous women, and those living in poorer regions of the country.

Furthermore, on the Catarinas portal itself, there are more detailed data on a survey conducted in partnership with the Gênero e Número agency and the AzMina portal, indicating that, between 2012 and 2022, 483 women died from abortion in public health hospitals in Brazil (PORTAL CATARINAS, 2023). The organization analyzed over 1.7 million hospitalizations recorded in the Hospital Information System (Sistema de Informações Hospitalares do Sistema Único de Saúde - SIH-SUS) as pregnancies ending in abortion. According to the survey, hospitalizations for miscarriage, abortion for medical and legal reasons,

other types of abortion, unspecified abortion, other abnormal products of conception, failed abortion attempts and complications resulting from abortion and ectopic or molar pregnancy were taken into consideration. Of this total, more than half of the hospitalizations were recorded as miscarriage. “However, proportionally, the highest number of deaths occurred in cases of failed abortion attempts. These are incomplete abortions, in which hospitalization occurred to complete the procedure” (PORTAL CATARINAS, 2023).

We understand that this cross-referenced data set provides a more accurate and objective overview regarding the actual number of deaths of women and girls resulting from abortion procedures in the country, in addition to identifying who the main fatal victims are. However, this expanded reading would be unlikely to reach a larger population of different social and age groups. This model of organizing content as stories, mixing texts, photos and illustrations in each slide connected to the next and passing side by side by sliding fingers across the screen, coordinates the gesture of hands and eyes for quick reading, also favoring a specific mode of attention to the social problem.

“The politicization of subjectivity is the greatest hallmark of new generations” (Machado, 2011, p. 13), states the researcher, when analyzing the close link between democratic ideals and advertising brands among young people. Thus, it is not expected that there will be an effective mobilization resulting in the adoption of political street struggles, for example, solely based on content created and disseminated on platforms, but that there is an indication of a certain notion of connection and political awareness then negotiated by feminist political ideals that circulate, among others, as signs of consumption on screens and networks.

In this context, the summary, the objectivity of the data and the visualization of content in images and illustrative photos developed by Catarinas can provide social media users with the formation of a certain minimum repertoire about abortion as an effective public health problem and, crucially, without medicalizing or objectifying the female

body. Furthermore, we also note that there is a shift in the way the topic is framed, which is correlated to the positioning of the characters in question, this arrangement being explored by other profiles on digital platforms when developing this type of content, as it reinforces the importance of the lives of girls and women, their collectivity and their living bodies in struggle, constituting scenes of appearance that summon crucial meanings to the modes of struggle for rights.

On the other hand, it is worth emphasizing that in this visual model expressed in the report, there is no greater complexity regarding abortion, health, and sexual and reproductive rights as structural problems that victimize millions of women and girls every year in the country (BARBOSA; MOTA, 2020). The circulating images found focus the discussion on the performance or not of medical intervention, even creating an opaque zone about other possible complications of legal abortion itself, such as physical suffering, family support, psychological care, support from traditional knowledge, among others, as it is centered in favor of an institutionalized medical hospital discourse and model (RADL-PHILIPP, RM; CRUZ, Z. V, 2019).

Attention and consumption in images of feminist protests circulating on Instagram

Another aspect worth highlighting from this set of images is that all the slides emphasize women as central subjects of the content; they are the ones who show their faces and bodies, speaking out and carrying the messages with the demands required to ensure their survival. What we emphasize is that the photos used intentionally centralize the presentation of women in situations of public protest, in action. Therefore, they are subjects endowed with agency. United, they march, shout, gesture, face the lenses, use their bodies to occupy the space in which they find themselves to mark their predominant presence while they themselves are turned into images.

In the second visual report analyzed, we also observed that most of the photographs used by Portal G1 to cover the protests against the voting of Bill 1904/2024 emphasize women as central characters. In this sense, they are not composing content just to prove that these events occurred, nor to illustrate them, but to mark the political specificity of the gathering of bodies, each with its singularity, its experience, its way of understanding and thinking about its position in the public space.

Hence, the photos highlight the exhibition of all together, welcomed, united in a powerful relational arrangement that makes the protest and the right to appear in the streets effective, breaking the institutional spaces that usually restrict and normalize the control of their bodies, from circulation to behavior, such as churches and other spaces of appearance that normally function as articulators of acceptable and consumable gender visibilities, as analyzed by Casadei; Mendonça (2021, p.118).

Figure 2 – Women protest against the voting of PL 1904/2024



Source: Portal G1, 2024, captured by the authors.

In Figure 2, a group of women is depicted wearing the attire of handmaids, reminiscent of a fictional character from the work *The Handmaid's Tale*, created by the writer Margaret Atwood. This story also inspired the series broadcasted by HBO in 2017, becoming emblematic among young people. In the dystopia, still fertile women are enslaved, raped and forced to give birth to children for noble families who, due to high levels of toxicity, pollution and disease, need to maintain the reproduction of their species to ensure the status quo in a country under a fundamentalist and totalitarian regime that falls into civil, political and economic ruin. The story, however, is told from the perspective of one of the handmaids, June, who presents subtle and everyday ways of resistance and storytelling that weave new collective bonds between the women until the final outcome with the overthrow of the government.

By presenting themselves in front of the Chamber of Deputies, the protesters wearing the red handmaid outfits aim to denote that the reference to the character is part of an enunciative strategy that mixes fact and fiction, texts and bodies, reactivating a scene that emphasizes resistance and refusal to a destiny of imprisonment, slavery and death. Under a specific temporal and fictional management, the protest questions the State's participation in forced reproduction when conducted by lack of access, prohibition or, in this case, by the criminalization of legal and safe abortion, if there were a vote and eventual approval of PL 1904/2024.

It is also worth noting that the reference to the fictional character of the handmaid is often contrasted with another character from the same story, Serena, the lady in blue, when the demonstrations are of a conservative nature, titled "pro-life", and support the prohibition of abortion under any circumstances. This kind of image duel based on references from a media pop culture (MISKOLCI, 2021) could also be seen in the streets and on the networks. In the images that make up the content of feminist actions put into circulation, the association between the media, the fictional and the concrete reality come together as in a playful game typical of a performative language that does not neglect a

generation that is much more accustomed to the consumption of cultural signs. In this perspective, it is worth remembering, consumption is not understood as a practice solely related to the act of purchase, but in adherence to modes, appearances, experiences and lifestyles immersed in an active cultural field (FEATHERSTONE, 1987).

However, we emphasize that this disruption of the state of things (fact and fiction, present and future) that appears in the image is instigated by political protest. It is not the women themselves, but the collective group in protest – subjects in a relationship of encounter and action, in assembly – that is the central agent that articulates texts and bodies, real and fictional. In a complementary manner, Marques (2022, p.12), when analyzing the developments of the concept of scene in Rancière (2005), points out that images capable of disorganizing or disrupting meanings, perceptions and visibilities can materialize a contraposition of forms of manifestation and enunciation before others. This productive relationship between fiction and politics, therefore, is underlying the field of images, specifically those observed here, because they seek to constitute a scene of appearance articulated to feminist action.

As Calderón (2020, p.35) points out, depending on the context, images do not respond only as a plane of representation, reproduction or projection, but as a plane of connections, of operations that open, articulate, relate, creating other configurations between elements (signs, sensibilities) not previously seen. Fiction and image are important to the production of a scene that is intended to be political, because they put into circulation other frames of thought, imagination and meaning, interrupting the consensual media flow that insists on framing facts and events (CALDERÓN, 2020, p.104).

The images observed in this small set of visual reports propose being together, suggesting that there is a plural flow of shared affections that permeates feminist actions regardless of each individual story. As Calderón (2020, p.85) highlights, images today need to be thought of as events within a broader cultural field, which also implies necessarily seeing what does not explicitly appear in the exhibition and, for that

very reason, provoke other arrangements to perception, meaning and political imagination.

Images of women exposing their bodies in public actions, often naked, offered as canvases or posters written with slogans, drawings and symbols seen in marches, protests and occupations, have also frequently circulated in different media outlets, through the press and social networks. For Paula Sibilia (2013; 2015), this form of manifestation can also be understood as a type of performance, particularly used by contemporary feminist activism. In her research, she discusses how the nudity of female bodies, in these cases, is handled as a poetic, aesthetic and political resource in the formal composition of most of the actions that comprise current feminism. Although nudity is no longer something unprecedented, displaying the naked body in support of a cause still shows a certain effectiveness due to the way it draws attention, especially through the media.

Reinforced more by the unusual situation in which it can be exposed, the body presented as a living canvas still resonates, in the media, with different feminist agendas. Hence, public demonstrations such as the free nipple, topless protests, baring witness, among other examples, are still phenomena with a certain attentional force, as they function within a specular regime, that is, modeled for a gaze that consumes, putting into discussion the acceptable, consumable, qualified and/or legitimized modes of seeing in society. Through a genealogical approach, Sibilia (2015) discusses how the exposure of real women's bodies, contrary to the idealized and regulated bodies by advertising, fashion, among others, when they emerge in feminist claims in the public space, generally assume a mobilizing political configuration, since it becomes difficult to accommodate them in the historically constructed visual schemes of stereotype, cliché or objectification. This type of phenomenon of performed gender visibility is called "de-pornification of the gaze" by the author.

In this search, an eventual de-pornification of the gaze seems to be insinuated, as a promise of important changes that could affect the

current regime of visibility. This opening would be capable of reversing – towards new, still unthinkable horizons – that trend initiated at the dawn of the modern era: the pornification of the gaze that has spilled over naked silhouettes after the ‘disenchantment of the world’, with the consequent sexualization and medicalization of body images in the midst of the secularization process. (SIBILIA, 2015, p.196).

The play with united and exposed female bodies in protests seeks to break sociocultural schemes by negotiating different relationship with the public gaze. The bodies in assembly seen in the two reports aim to produce new counterpower images, breaking hegemonic moral and political orderings. As Gago (2020, p.194) highlights, the assemblies manifest a popular sovereignty that challenges state faith as a monopoly of politics; they are insurgencies that renew the dynamics of decision and autonomy, care and reproduction, self-defense and collective knowledge. Thus, what is emphasized as images are bodies in action, agent bodies endowed with power and will, seeking to establish another arrangement with the public gaze, breaking schematism. This is an eminently visual political operation; a set of images understood here in a *broad sense*.

According to Judith Butler (2018, p.31), the intensity of these bodies that are now seen in alliance and evoked in images of protests would also operate a negotiation with another type of right: the right to appear. As a performative exercise, Butler says, the right to appear emerges from the expression of a joint bodily demand, even if it is under improvised or non-institutional forms of a collectivity, “*the bodies in assembly speak*” (2018, p.32). For her, this right is established because it presumes the recognition of an induced, normalized, and, mainly, shared precarious condition by certain social groups. Thus, the performative in this encounter of appearing bodies, says Butler (2018, p.35), would be related to the power that language has to produce a new situation or to trigger a set of effects through the way it names or enunciates things. In the images presented here, the collective appearance of women is not restricted to the mere representation of a protest because it inscribes,

from the bodies in alliance, the materialization of a socially produced, vocalized demand. In agreement with Butler, we argue, then, that there are two intertwined dimensions of the performative: the alliances of bodies and the images of bodies in alliance.

Women who gather in protests, whether characterized as handmaids or waving green scarves for legal and safe abortion, recognize that their bodies are daily subjected to structural violence and oppression, to a condemnation that can effectively result in their deaths. Therefore, we see in both visual reports that the use of their bodies even displays their own catchphrases as a kind of embodied voice that stamps the posters: “A child is not a mother,” “A daughter is not a girlfriend,” “My body, my rules,” “Neither dead nor imprisoned.” For Butler (2018, p.31), this aspect is a cultural mark of the political practice of certain contemporary groups that centralize, in bodies and images, their ways of claiming the right to public appearance; by gathering together in public to be seen and heard as a political presence and as a plural force, women in assembly perform a bodily demand for a set of more livable lives.

“So, let us assume that performativity describes both the process of being the object of an action and the conditions and possibilities for action, and that we cannot understand its operation without these two dimensions” (BUTLER, 2018, p. 70). It is worth observing how it reverses the sense of the relationship between appearing and exposing to, by its reverse, argue that the complementarity between these aspects is assumed negatively by a ruse of the hegemonic power that imposes cultural norms in a patriarchal and heteronormative society that tries, at all costs, to capture its signs and demands. In practice, only those who consider themselves exposed to conditions of inequality, precariousness, discrimination and violence claim their appearance.

If we accept that there are norms that condition who is recognizable in public space, we can question how the unrecognizable can constitute themselves as a group developing ways of becoming visible to others so that this common appearance can become the basis for resistance in political action (BUTLER, 2018, p.45).

Following the author's thought, we understand that in our Latin, Westernized society, the field of appearance is regulated by recognition norms that are hierarchical and exclusionary, so that the image composes an element of performative language that is linked to the differential ways in which subjects become recognizable in the public space. Thus, oppressed groups are left with the production of a kind of embodied statement or an embodied speech act, properly political, so that they can appear publicly and thus affect, engage, suffer, move other bodies, promoting new dynamics of dispute, rupture, solidarity, and joy under the constant risk of disappearing. "It is not just a matter of needing to live in order to act, but of having to act, and act politically, in order to ensure the conditions of existence" (BUTLER, 2018, p. 65).

In the context of images that aim to condense body, word and feminist action, we understand that, conceptually, speaking and acting constitute language operations whose performative character is realized in interface. Both require presenting linguistic and discursive forms as well as material and corporeal, affective, and aesthetic forms.

Final considerations

Ana Maria Mauad (2016), when analyzing the trajectory of one of the few Brazilian photojournalists between the 1980s and 2000s, highlighted how much Cláudia Ferreira's immense collection constitutes a fundamental work to understand the importance of political protests led by women in the democratic reconstruction of the country. According to her, observing these images also establishes a dialogue with the constitutive diversity of class, race, gender, religion and ethnicity, which complexified the feminist demands and agendas present in a country rediscovering itself as Latin American, with a colonial, Eurocentric and patriarchal matrix. In addition to creating a visual record of their time, Mauad (2016, p.272) states that Ferreira's photos present a diversity of women who strained the public space with the emergence of their bodies in protests. And today, how and which images are capable of challenging the space of the gaze and the feminist political public imagination?

When confronting images that are not historical archives circulating in albums and galleries, but that circulate daily on digital platforms and social networks of various agencies, institutions, and collectives, often even setting the agenda for the mainstream press, we inquire what happens with images of feminist actions today. If, from Mauad's (2016) perspective, archival images compose the cultural and historical legacy of feminist actions, to what extent could we consider that today the circulating images on digital platforms and social networks constitute a certain dimension of the feminist political experience? What implications does this new nature of circulating images bring us?

As we have seen, images still put the trajectory of these struggles into perspective; "which calls us to think of images as subjects, as agents of historical transformation" (MAUAD, 2016, p.273). Thus, we understand that thinking about the field of visual culture also means understanding the participation of media images in the array of social struggles, particularly feminist ones. Photographs and videos of demonstrations and protests are not elaborated for documentary cataloging or for the historical record of a political theme, but for the configuration of a recognizable image of feminist activism.

Observing the active images that circulate between platforms, on different pages and profiles, is a way of analyzing a possible mode of access to understand the articulation of a feminist performative language that currently operates between the dimensions of affection, voice, body, reality and fiction. The images aim to reveal how the scene of appearance of vulnerable groups has been articulated both from the performativity of alliances (of their bodies exposed under the risk of violence) and from the performativity of images.

Finally, the relationships between communication and gender issues in Brazil have expanded the scope of their analyses on stereotypes, social roles and representations of women to audience/reception/consumption studies and the gradual inclusion of themes about LGBTQI+ identities in the media; about the use, especially, of forms of alternative and independent press in promoting feminist struggles to an emerging attention on activism, particularly of young people in the media and on digital social networks, engaged [...] (ESCOSTEGUY, 2020, p.137)

When examining the content of Catarinas' visual report, we saw that the journalism portal with a gender focus turns its images into a subsidy for the thematic discussion of sexual and reproductive rights, which is important for the reflection of the social and epistemic category. It is a political perspective on the pedagogical treatment of images that constitutes the practice of the specialized journalism portal. It is known that journalism participates in the mediation of chains of affections that validate lifestyle and the delineation of the field of discursive possibilities (CASA DEI, 2017, p.22). However, in the other case, even without coming from a specialized portal, we noticed that, in G1's visual report, a similar strategy appears, as it is also related to the association and reference to feminist action when carried out in the public space to draw attention to an everyday event on the same topic. In both, the images appear less related to the composition of a record or document of the actions, because they are more focused on the constitution of a visuality consistent with the conditions of production and circulation of the platform that become part, extensively, of feminist protests. In this context, we cannot affirm that the use of images would precisely guide political, participatory engagement, as they are intertwined in media and communicative practices.

There is an urgency to rethink ways of sensitizing young people to the conventional political process, making it go through arguments that contribute to strengthening institutional spaces of democratic participation, spaces that currently remain in progressive distancing from youth cultures in Brazil. (MACHADO, 2011, p. 219).

In both cases, however, we saw that, in the images of the protests, the female body appears as a great spokesperson that resists the State's regulatory practices regarding the right to reproduction and sexuality. Resistance and claim are two expressions of a performative language, specifically visual and affective, as Butler (2018, p. 14) states, and which are increasingly used as a resource in the visual translation of these bodily battles for recognition of rights today.

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