

  <https://doi.org/10.56238/alookdevelopv1-128>

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ABSTRACT

The last decade has seen an increase in the articulation of social movements, using the media and especially virtual communication networks as a resource for the dissemination of their agendas. The feminist movement has also been occupying these spaces and showing the possibility of communicating and reaching audiences that they could not reach before. Through these new information technologies and dialogues, which allow the production, access, and dissemination of information between subjects, even if they are physically distant, it was possible to strengthen activism during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, when social distancing and isolation became mandatory.

Keywords: Feminism, Cyberspace, Cyberfeminism, Social media.

1 INTRODUCTION

Cyberfeminism is a social and political phenomenon that in Brazil has as a milestone in the year 2015, being an unfolding of the struggle, resistance, and organization of plural women, widely known as the feminist movements, having a time frame from the 1970s. According to Mayorga (2014), the idea was introduced that information and communication technologies (ICTs) would have the power to change society, as well as conventional gender positions and technological means themselves. To create a communication network among women in fostering the struggle for space of speech, cyberfeminism was only possible from ICTs, which emerged in the second half of the 1980s, and since then has expanded throughout the world.

During the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, which began in 2020, these new technologies have become essential as they have favored communication between people and the strengthening of political activism in cyberspace, in a context of mandatory distancing and social isolation.

Also during the pandemic period, it was possible to observe problems such as the intensification of social inequalities, since Covid-19 caused economic, political, and social impacts, in addition to the effects on the health of the world population. Thus, social movements have accentuated their organization in cyberspace, intending to denounce the neglect of governments amid the health crisis,

in addition to propagating information on various topics, acting in the dissemination of the agendas of their interest, and articulating manifestations. It is possible to lose in this way, that just as in 2015, once again cyberfeminism stood out in a scenario of militancy.

Considering all the difficulties touched by the pandemic context, it is necessary to highlight that there has been a greater impact on the lives of women, especially poor, black, and indigenous women. It is with this in mind that this work aims to discuss the organization and articulation of the feminist movement in cyberspace in the face of the problems presented in contemporary times.

2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This discussion begins by presenting a brief historical context of feminism and cyberfeminism. The first wave of feminism began to emerge in the last decades of the nineteenth century, at first in England, followed by other countries in Europe, North America, and other localities, seeking equal rights between men and women. One of the main goals of this mobilization was women's suffrage, first achieved in 1893 in New Zealand. In the following years, this achievement was also achieved in other countries, such as England, which in 1918 granted women the right to vote.

In Brazil, the female vote was provided for in the first Electoral Code instituted in 1932, but during the government of Getulio Vargas, this achievement was annulled due to the suspension of elections, a consequence of the military coup. Between the 1930s and 1960s new feminist approaches and currents began to emerge in Europe and North America, especially after the release of Simone de Beauvoir's book *The Second Sex* in 1949. These new strands had in common some central ideas, such as the fact that women occupied "subordinate social places about the masculine worlds" (PISCITELLI, 2001), but it is possible to observe different reasons that explained the cause of this oppression and consequently, different mechanisms were presented to end it.

In the mid-1970s the feminist strand that stood out in Brazil was the Marxist, considering that "an expressive part of the feminist groups was articulated with organizations of Marxist influence, clandestine at the time, and strongly committed to the opposition to the military dictatorship, which gave the movement its characteristics" (SARTI, 2004). In 1975 Brazilian feminist movements had greater visibility and some women's political groups managed to exist openly, due to the declaration made by the United Nations (UN), considering the International Women's Year.

The institutionalization of the movement could be observed in the 1980s when some feminist groups became non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and in this way, feminism gained a more technical and professional perspective. Still, in this period it is possible to notice that black feminism began to gain visibility, providing a struggle for black women to be seen as political people who had singular demands because, unlike white, cisgender, and heterosexual women, they were heirs of

slavery and carried the stigma of subordination of both men and white women themselves (MOREIRA, 2007). In this way, feminism begins a process of transformation to a more plural movement, no longer representing only white, heterosexual, and middle-class women, and intersectionality is considered essential for the solidification of this movement.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, new communication technologies began to have more presence, being notorious for the perception of a patriarchal character and strong masculinization of these media, resulting in the under-representation and/or total exclusion of women in these media. With the growth and development of internet access, women began to appropriate more of these new technologies, ensuring their self-inclusion since they could create and share content without having to go through any prior evaluation as is the case of traditional media.

From the use of these more democratic platforms, cyberfeminism emerges through feminist techniques and practices shared on the internet. In this way, countless women, previously on the margins of political and scientific production, among other areas, can make their voices heard, understood, and supported, even though they are geographically distant.

3 METHODOLOGY

The methodology used is the narrative bibliographic study, based on the virtual libraries: Scientific Electronic Library Online – Scielo and Google Scholar. The following descriptors were used to select the articles: youth, feminism, cyberfeminism, technology, virtual environment, and cyber activism. The works were analyzed from the Critical Discourse Analysis method since they propose to interpret the contexts in which they were produced.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Cyberfeminism is a multifaceted movement – therefore, cyberfeminisms – that acts both in the theoretical field and in the practical sphere, with interventions of a political, social, and cultural nature. [...] Connected in networks established through digital media, feminist positions have produced an interaction between the fields of political science and activism (SCHWENGBER et al, 2020, p. 312).

Cyberfeminism was able to connect women even those who were not inserted in this virtual space, because the denunciations, claims, and debates carried out on digital platforms highlighted those in a situation of vulnerability. "With this, digital spaces are presented as organizational resources and as places of activism, conquering a centrality never seen until then" (SCHWENGBER et al, 2020, p. 321). The actions of the movement in cyberspace are decentralized, with less hierarchy and more participatory, since it is a free environment for anyone to express their opinions, support, and indignations regarding the patriarchal and unequal system (SCHWENGBER et al, 2020).

The contemporary feminist movement is heterogeneous, plural, and anchored by various theories. Because of the struggle of black women, this social movement began to question Eurocentric theories, approached theories regarding intersectionality and postcoloniality, and the New Information and Communication Technologies (NTCI) to realize its political demands (FREITAS, 2018).

According to Carneiro (2011), the black feminism of multiracial, pluricultural, and racist societies, such as the Brazilian one, has as its axis of focus racism and the impacts on gender relations, since it defines the gender hierarchy in society. To articulate all the issues that permeate the lives of black women and girls, black feminism debates issues that would probably not be priorities of other feminist groups, such as:

[...] genocide of black youth and its impacts on black women, religious intolerance and the valorization of religions of African origin, interracial relationships and affective-loving relationships of black women, labor market, feminine aesthetic standards and the representation of blacks in the media, the impact of daily violence on the black population, etc. (MARTINEZ, 2017, p. 26).

Thus, to propagate the guidelines and debates on the aforementioned themes, the movement began to use ICTs, which emerged in the second half of the 1980s and have since been expanding throughout the world. These technologies are a set of tools that allow the production, access, and dissemination of information, as well as communication between subjects, even if they are physically distant (RODRIGUES, 2016). It is in this virtual environment that cyberfeminism emerges, a movement active in the networks. It is a diverse movement with demanding agendas, which can reach groups that were not so heard before, but that in a certain way is still exclusionary, since the people of these groups need to be digitally literate and have access to technological media devices and quality internet, thus "[...] converges new generations of thinkers, philosophers and journalists, who invite other women to leave the place of historical silencing to seek their place of speech, marked by intersectionality, empowerment and sorority" (FERNANDES; SAINTS, 2020, p. 5).

With these digital tools, the possibilities of sharing information and accessing feminist education are multiple, since more and more subjects are willing to manage virtual pages that present feminist debates and proposals. As stated by Freitas (2018), this dialogue claiming cyberfeminism takes place through blogs, websites, and content-sharing sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Black feminists seize these platforms to occupy a new space of struggle and fight the system that oppresses them. Such devices help these women in confronting racism, sexism, sexism, etc., causing significant transformations in the forms of communication at the national and international levels (FREITAS, 2018).

In this virtual environment, there is greater integration with black women, especially with young women, due to their proximity to technology. According to Martinez (2017), approximately

twelve years ago there was a greater attempt by young people to get to know feminist agendas. "The growing interest in feminist themes reveals both the increase in the spaces occupied by feminists on the internet and the extravasation of their concerns to international media spaces" (MARTINEZ, 2019, p. 4).

In Brazil, cyberfeminism has risen in 2015, during the so-called "feminist spring", a time when there is greater adherence of young women to the movement (RITTA, 2021). It was in 2015 that there was the "March of Black Women that took to the streets of Brasilia thousands of black women of all ages marching against racism, violence and for good living, bringing to the focus of the debate the place of speech of the black woman" (LEMOS, 2016 p. 63 apud RITTA, 2021, p. 63).

This act was articulated and had repercussions also in the virtual environment, the hashtag #MarchaMulheresNegras was disseminated, as a way to reach more people and information vehicles. In addition to this manifesto that took place virtually and in the physical environment, others were carried out, between 2015 and 2016, in combating violence against women, harassment, sexual abuse, racism, sexism, etc. Since that period and with the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic, cyberfeminism has gained even more space and visibility, bringing women together, articulating actions, and exposing their criticisms of the state and forms of oppression. All this directly and simply, through cyberspace.

5 CONCLUSION

It is important to highlight the use of new information and communication technologies as a marker phenomenon in the struggle of the feminist movement, which through cyberfeminism has contributed to the diffusion of feminist ideas, especially through blogs and social media. This movement provides an opportunity for countless women to access these technologies and use them to change different realities and oppressions.

Cyberfeminism enables the displacement of cultural identities when it promotes feminist campaigns through virtual space and consequently, uniting women from their experiences and demands in common. The appropriation of social networks as a space of struggle and resistance contributes to the empowerment of women, resignifying values and encouraging active and critical participation, in addition to subsidizing public policies that meet the demands aimed at inequalities and violence present in gender relations and their agendas.

In addition, it is necessary to emphasize the importance of effectively including these gender guidelines and themes addressed in these digital spaces, as acts of curriculum to be practiced in the daily education of women. Breaking, in this way, the logic of patriarchy, ratifying the legitimacy of cyberactivist movements as educational networks for transformative practices (FERNANDES, SANTOS, 2020).

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