IN THE CIRCLES AND ON THE NETWORKS

The Internet use by women of popular movements

Universidade Livre Feminista

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In the Circles and on the Networks: the Internet use by women of popular movements

Organization_ Sophia Branco and Cristina Lima

Review_ Sophia Branco, Cristina Lima e Nina Madsen (English translation proofreading)

Illustrations and graphic and visual design_ Isabella Alves

Execution_ Universidade Livre Feminista, through Centro Feminista de Estudos e Assessoria – CFEMEA, Cunhã Coletivo Feminista and SOS Corpo – Instituto Feminista para a Democracia.

Team of Popular activist women and the Internet use diagnostic research Antônia Henriqueta Carvalho, Beth Ferreira, Bibiana Serpa, Carmen Silva, Cristina Lima, Deborah Guaraná, Denise Soares, Francisca Maria Rodrigues Sena, Jéssica Barbosa, Milena Barroso and Sophia Branco.

Groups of women that participated in the diagnostic research

Amazonas_ Associação Parintins Cidadã-AM.

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Foreword

Larissa Santiago*

*
Black feminist, communicator,
coordinator of Blogueiras Negras
and member of the Universidade Livre
Feminista Collaborative Network

We are facing the greatest pandemic crisis this century has ever witnessed. It is in this context that I receive the invitation to write about this research. In social isolation, we are now immersed in the intensive use of devices and tools that allow us to keep in touch with people, with our work, with our affections and our activism. We have watched life out there through the screens, more intensely than before.

If until now we were enthusiastically thinking about what the boom of the Internet, social networks and related issues did with our activism, now the feeling is that it is all falling apart. WhatsApp messages, meetings, video calls and e-mails sprout as if they were gremlins (yes, those animals that multiply), creating a sensation of complete drowning amid newscasts, blog news, as we are increasingly bombarded by information and fake news.

Meanwhile, philosophers, technicians, theorists and PhDs are studying solver technologies, post-neoliberalism, artificial intelligence, digital schools, and mass surveillance. Applications created to map cases of the new disease mixed with data leakage with video call applications. Live stream presentations and more online conversations. Zillion pieces of information on the micro-blogs and social network pages. Algorithms.

How many new words make a technology agenda? How many Californian ideologies develop delivery applications? How many neologisms build the digital divide?

Despite the need for connection in the face of a new-old world, the romanticization of universal consumption of technology also delimits and exposes inequality: Who are the ones who have full access to tools and devices? Where are the products and productions from this full access concentrated? Whose are the (still) hegemonic narratives?

This research tries to answer some of these questions. And what a joy to have access to it!

It was last year that I witnessed the energy in the eyes and bodies of the women of the *Universidade Livre Feminista* (Free Feminist University) Collaborative Network when presenting their fruits. It was in Recife – the capital of the struggles – that we got emotional and felt the embrace of the companions interviewed, of those who took part in the

workshops, of those who debated and exposed difficulties and challenges, joys and tears. It was at that time – as it continues to be today – that we confirmed the unique perspectives of Black Women from the peripheries, rural and urban areas of Amazonas. To paraphrase Professor Milton Santos, we have been fighting exactly for another technology.

And this is what you will find in this research: a presentation of data on access at the peripheries, in the cities of the north and northeast of this country, from the forest to the coast. But not only that! This feminist research presents the sensitivity of the data, remade in the women's speeches, theories and practices, and their territories. It reveals the truth about broadband policies, about inventions and intentions of digital cities, with a very specific perspective on the black, riverside and peripheral women's actions and their activism.

The research also points out paths and new-old debates from those women's experience: from the application that does not fail, from shared information and communication technology, from the use and disuse and, above all, from the relationship between technology and mental health. Together, we realize that the reflections presented here go beyond the old cliches about access; instead, they describe resistance and reinvent ways of using the Internet, devices, tools; they denounce the precariousness of the political system and the hegemony and centrality of territories other than the North and Northeast of Brazil.

This research reveals who we are: women in their territories, who, with their knowledge and skills, understand much more about speed, connection, satellite and radio distribution, network, and about the colonizing and totalitarian political projects of "bringing progress" to Amazonia, to Ceará's rural areas, or to Recife metropolitan region: it is the techno-totalitarianism experienced.

From here, we left behind the concept of digital divide and, just as at a digital security workshop when women renamed the password manager from KeyPass to "keypest," we have now coined a new term: digital break-in.

Together we, whether able or not, want to reinvent, propose solutions, because we already do so. This research is the proof, not that cold scientific or methodologically distant one, but corporeified, that we, black, peripheral and riverside women, from the countryside and the city, are the vanguard of the world. From our territories.

I am grateful for walking alongside with you in these times.

Presentation

Over the past ten years, the *Universidade Livre Feminista (Free Feminist University)* has dedicated its energy to strengthening feminist struggles and movements through continuous online, face-to-face and semi-attendance educational processes, stimulating collective knowledge production and promoting communication and articulation between feminists from different regions in Brazil. This has been a journey of many discoveries and challenges, in which we have deepened our reflections on how to build a feminist pedagogy online.

Since the emergence of the *Universidade Livre* until now, feminism has increasingly gained space on the Internet, and the Internet has also started to occupy more strategic places in political disputes underway in the country and around the world. Blogs and social networks were the gateway for many activists to feminism, especially for the generation born in the 1990s. At the same time, activism has also been a stimulus for many women, previously excluded from this universe, to embrace the Internet, driven by the need to use social networks and e-mails for political mobilization and articulation.[01]

The Free Feminist University is a political pedagogical initiative dedicated to explore the possibilities opened by the expansion of internet access. While recognizing the limitations of this tool, we are interested in understanding the role it plays in our experiences of political mobilization and organizing and in exploring it as a resource for our counter-hegemonic struggles. Among the challenges found in our way, are the deep inequalities that cross women's lives and their access to technologies.

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[01] Many feminist researchers have been dedicated to the issue of the use of Internet by activists. Regarding the incorporation of the Internet into new practices of political articulation, we highlight the research carried out by Priscilla Brito, entitled ***"Primavera das Mulheres": Internet e dinâmicas de protesto nas manifestações feministas no Rio de Janeiro em 2015*** **[Spring of Women: Internet and protest dynamics in feminist demonstrations in Rio de Janeiro in 2015].** On the approach of the Internet based on activism by women previously excluded from access to digital technologies, we point to the article by Angélica Patrícia de Almeida and Márcio Simeone Henriques, ***"A apropriação do Facebook por agricultoras que constroem a agroecologia e os feminismos em diferentes contextos socioambientais brasileiros"*** **[Appropriation of Facebook by agricultural workers who build agroecology and feminism in different Brazilian socioenvironmental contexts]**, published in the 2018 ICT report.

The Internet is often seen as a space for the democratization of knowledge, which opens up numerous opportunities for the dissemination of knowledge, access to information and freedom of expression. But, as Frederico da Silva and Paula Ziviani point out, in their analysis of access and the "cultural" use of this network,[02] if we look at the political and economic structures and relationships that rule the Internet, it is possible to see that it reproduces inequalities in access also found in other spheres of our lives. This occurs, among other reasons, because the Internet is a field of dispute between those who understand it as an essential service for the exercise of citizenship and the right to communication and those who see it as a universe of commercial exploitation. Since the Internet is also a product, it imposes several limits on the expansion of its access, causing it to be restricted by the logic of the market and the concentration of economic power.

Inequalities of social class, race, gender and education, as well as inequalities between rural and urban areas, are among the factors that condition the way we relate to the digital world. This imposes a series of questions for the construction of a political-pedagogical project that aims to combat inequalities and injustices. How to use a tool so unequal in access to connect and strengthen networks within the diversity of experiences of feminist activism in Brazil?

Although Internet access has been increasingly expanding in Brazil, mainly through the popularization of smartphones, the quality of the Internet to which we have access is also very uneven. It depends on several factors, namely: use of a cell phone or computer to access the network; data storage capacity of these devices; individual-use device or family-use device; contact and training we had regarding these tools; the Internet service we can pay, and also the service available in the areas where we live in. Internet access is also marked by lack of accessibility of many platforms for people with disabilities, which is another factor that excludes them from the digital world.

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[02] In the article ***"O campo da internet: acesso e usos 'culturais' da rede"*** **[The field of the Internet: online 'cultural' uses and access]**, published in 2018 ICT Households report. The ICT Households is a research developed since 2005 by the Brazilian Internet Steering Committee, which maps the Internet access in the country's households and the use of technologies by the population.

Olivia Bandeira and André Pasti,[03] in an article on the challenges posed to distance learning, claim that "according to the 2018 ICT Households, 85% of Internet users in classes D and E access the network exclusively by cell phone, and only 13% of them access via both the mobile device and the computer. In class A, the trend is reversed." These authors also state that "according to a study by Anatel (National Telecommunications Agency), 55% of mobile accesses in the country are prepaid. And it is known that most post-paid users are 'control' customers, who pay a fixed monthly fee, but have, in general, a very strict data traffic limit."

Gender inequalities and the stereotypes historically constructed about women are also factors that accentuate the difficulties of our access to the Internet. The distance from the technological and digital universe that, in general, marks female socialization, the lack of resources to access information and communication technologies (ICT) and the overload with the accumulation of domestic chores and care work are presented as some of the elements that mark access inequality between men and women. According to the analyzes of Frederico da Silva and Paula Ziviani,[04] the group that least accesses the Internet is predominantly made up of black women, aged 45 to 59 years, outside the economically active population (EAP), and who have not finished their studies. This data reflects the overlapping of race, gender and social class inequalities that mark this social group's life and its access to technologies.

The questions presented so far reflect some of the challenges we face at the *Universidade Livre Feminista* and motivated the performance of the *Popular activist women and the Internet use Diagnostic Research*, which aimed to contribute to overcoming the difficulties we found in carrying out educational and communication processes with women from different regions of the country.

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[03] In the article ***"Como o ensino à distância pode agravar as desigualdades agora"*** **[How distance learning can aggravate inequalities now]**, published in Nexo Newspaper on April 3, 2020.

[04] In the article ***"O campo da internet: acesso e usos 'culturais' da rede"*** **[The field of the Internet: online 'cultural' uses and access]**, published in 2018 ICT Households report.

The differences between access to the Internet by cell phones and computers, for example, greatly alter the engagement in the training processes through distance learning. The quality of the connection and the data storage capacity are also crucial for the content to be accessible. These are challenges present in the daily lives of activists with whom we speak and with whom we articulate politically, in virtual and face-to-face training processes.

Aiming at better understanding these realities in order to outline creative coping strategies, in June 2018 we carried out a qualitative exploratory research with activities in three Brazilian cities, in the North and Northeast regions. In Parintins, Amazonas (AM), we carried out the research with urban and rural women from popular classes. In Pacajus, Ceará (CE), with women from indigenous communities, quilombolas, fisherwomen, and agricultural workers. And in Recife, Pernambuco (PE), the interlocutors are feminist activists from different peripheries in the Metropolitan Region.

The research workshops had moments of dialogue circles or focus group and practical activities to access the *Universidade Livre Feminista*'s website and platform. In the dialogue circles, we discussed how the Internet is inserted in our daily lives, the difficulties faced to access the Internet and how we relate to the content we access using it. Practical activities were developed in order to assess the accessibility of our channels.

When composing the research groups, we seek to guarantee diversity of age, education and involvement with feminist movements, women's movements or other social movements. The workshops revealed points of approximation between the experiences of participants from different states, but each reality has its specificities. Within each workshop, the participants' trajectories also revealed the plurality of the relationships we established with the Internet, showing that differences in generational, educational, professional and family dynamics also interfere in the way we are inserted in the digital world.

Although in an exploratory way, the research showed us how the realities of Internet access among women in Brazil are diverse, which suggests that it is not possible to think about feminist training processes that do not consider the context specificities that cross our lives. The

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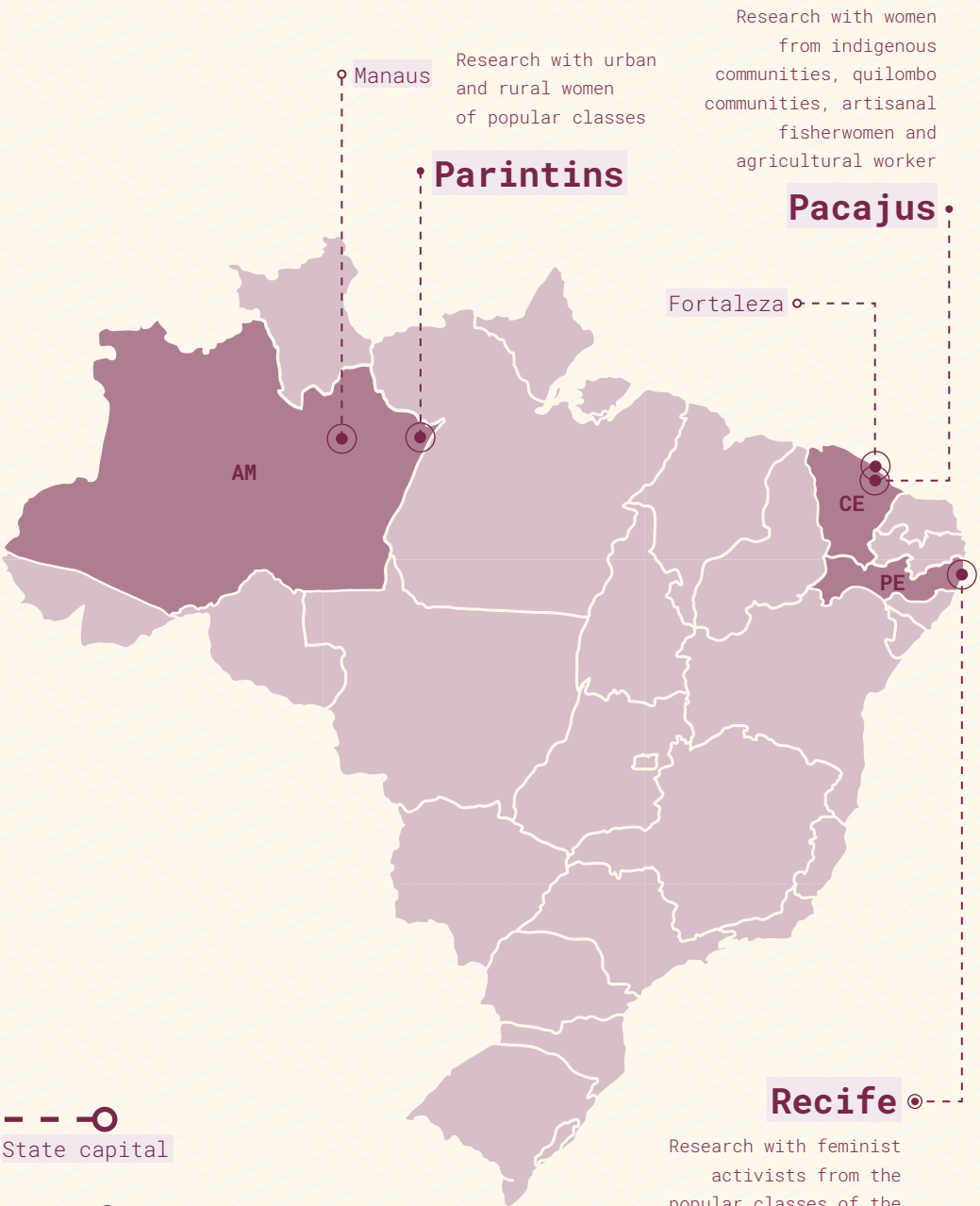

importance of talking more about the place that the Internet occupies in our lives and in our activism becomes evident, and also that we have a lot to learn by exchanging experiences and knowledge with each other; between generations and between regions and cultural traditions.

From the moment this research was carried out until the moment of its publication, many things happened on the Brazilian political scene. These events had an impact on the way we think about the Internet use in our activism, politicizing the discussions around access to ICT. The 2018 presidential elections were marked by the spread of fake news on WhatsApp and other social networks, which included a strategy of using algorithms to target messages built for each voter profile. Fake news had a great influence on the results of those elections. They were possibly decisive. With the victory of the extreme right-wing authoritarian government with which we live today in Brazil, discussions on digital security[05] have intensified and this has been altering the political debates we have about these technologies in our daily lives and in our political performance in social movements.

We are finalizing this publication at a time of social confinement due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many challenges are posed for our lives and for our activism in this context. And little is known about how the world will reorganize itself from now on. Regarding the Internet, it is no different. The context of social confinement has intensified our Internet use in several ways, in our ways of working, leisure and sociability. It also intensified the debates on distance learning strategies. These are discussions that bring to light these inequalities and the challenges that lie ahead, as well as the limits of the digital world. There is something constitutive of human experience that is evident with social isolation: the importance of social relationships and face-to-face interaction. This is one of the important lessons learned to continue reflecting on how we want digital technologies to be inserted in our lives.

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[05] Reflections on digital security were made in the publication *"Comunicação de Guerrilha e Cuidados Digitais: estratégias de resistência feminista"* **[Guerrilla Communication and Digital Security: feminist resistance strategies]**, which shares experiences of political formation of the Pernambuco Women's Forum/Brazilian Women Articulation.

In relation to our political organization, confinement has also forced us to use the Internet in a much more intense and creative way for the discussion and deliberation of actions, dissemination of information and analysis of the situation. This intensity has shown us the importance of reorganizing spaces for political interaction in WhatsApp groups and virtual meetings, also integrating into the online space principles that are important in our face-to-face performance, such as the distribution of speaking times and attentive listening to everyone's contribution. In the case of feminist movements, the moment has impelled us to reinvent practices of care and self-care among us, such as the self-reflection circles and attention to the duration and pace of our political debates. We are also looking for ways to reduce inequalities between us, in the search for an increasing expansion of the participation of activists in virtual processes, which need to be increasingly inclusive.

Between the publication of this material and each reading, how many other things will not have transformed the way we relate to these technologies? This publication presents exploratory reflections on the challenges that lie ahead. It is an invitation to continue thinking together about how we can face the challenges that are posed to our political performance and to building a better world to live in.

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“If I can learn this here, I won’t have to do only household services anymore”: the Internet (non) use by popular women in Parintins-AM

Denise Soares*
Milena Barroso**

*
Feminist, social worker, specialist in Law and Social Protection, master’s degree in Social Work and Sustainability in the Amazon.
debebsoaresh@gmail.com

**
Feminist, social worker, Universidade Livre Feminista collaborator, professor of the Social Service course at the Federal University of Amazonas, at the Institute of Social Sciences, Education and Animal Science – ICSEZ, and of the Post-graduation Program in Social Service and Sustainability in the Amazon (PPGSS).
mibarroso@yahoo.com.br

Research team:
Denise Soares and Milena Barroso

This article is the result of a meeting held in June 2018, in Parintins, promoted by the *Universidade Livre Feminista* (ULF), aimed at understanding, through dialogue with popular women, how Internet access occurs in the Brazilian Amazon – particularly in contexts far from large urban centers – and pointing out the differences and inequalities present in educational and communication processes mediated by the use of this tool. Twelve women, from different generations, were present, including students and city and forest workers.

The meeting took place at the Federal University of Amazonas, Parintins campus, in ***three moments***. The *first* had the purpose of welcoming the participants and filling out a short questionnaire about their profile and the Internet use. The *second* was for group discussion on Internet access, based on three guiding questions: how does the Internet use occur? what are the access difficulties?, and what is the participants' relationship with the information? The *third* moment was a practical activity with basic instructions for handling the computer and the Internet at the computer lab. Women were guided on a step-by-step basis to access the ULF platform, where they could explore the tools and courses available. Those who were having their first contact with a computer were guided in a practical way, from turning on the equipment to researching content that interested them on the Internet. At the end of the activity, the meeting was evaluated, based on each participant's statement Audiovisual records were made at the meeting, and they contributed to the transcription of some statements and systematization of the process.

1. Amazonas' "digital city"

Parintins is the second most populous city in Amazonas, with 114 thousand inhabitants, according to IBGE 2018 data. It is located at the far east of the state, on the left bank of the Amazon River, about 369 kilometers from Manaus. This distance is relativized by the paths of the largest river in the world. Depending on the movement of water – "floods" or "ebbs" – going from Parintins to the capital can take up to twenty-four hours by boat. The municipality is known for the *Festival Folclórico de Parintins* [Parintins Folk Festival], a cultural event held annually on the last weekend of June, which has the presentation, for

three days, of the *Boi Caprichoso* (blue and black) and *Boi Garantido* (red and white) folk associations. The party, which is marked by presentations that involve life in the forest, environmental preservation and the indigenous issue, moves the municipality economically and socially during much of the year, and it is, with fishing and commerce, one of the population's main economic sources.

In addition to the Folkloric Festival, in 2006, Parintins became known as the ***Amazonas' digital city***, with the deployment of broadband connection in two public squares.[06] Despite this initiative, until the beginning of 2020 – fourteen years later –, the period of final systematization of this research, the Internet access occurred in a restricted way through local providers by means of radio frequency, mobile data (3G and 4G) provided by large telephone companies, and through communications satellite.[07] Currently a basic radio Internet plan with 5Mbps costs an average of R$ 200.00, and until 2018 this amount was charged for 1Mbps packages. In other regions of the country, however, there are Internet services with much more accessible and popular technologies (fiber optic cable), with connections up to100 times faster and with a much lower value.

In this sense, Lucas Milhomens Fonseca, in an article on the challenges of cyberactivism in the Amazon,[08] states that "broadband service has not yet truly arrived for the majority of the population in the Amazon." We know that the quality of navigation or the ability to download, upload, watch videos online, share files, among other operations, depends on the speed available and, in order to have a fast connection, it

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[06] The city was one of the first in Brazil that had implantation of wireless technologies by the city hall and private initiative, through the Cidade Digital (Digital City) project, in 2006.

[07] For more information on the history of the Internet in Parintins, refer to: http://portalsamauma.hospedagemdesites.ws/2019/06/11/da-ilha-para-o-mundo/.

[08] *"Ciberativismo na Amazônia: os desafios da militância digital na floresta"* **[Cyberactivism in the Amazon: the challenges of digital activism in the forest]**, by Lucas Milhomens Fonseca. It integrates the Cultura, política e ativismo nas redes digitais [Culture, politics and activism on digital networks] collection, organized by Sérgio Amadeu da Silveira, Sérgio Braga and Cláudio Penteado, and published by Fundação Perseu Abramo Publishing House in 2014.

is necessary an effective telecommunication infrastructure. According to IBGE data, until 2008, only 20% of the population in the North region had broadband Internet service. According to Fonseca, this has consequences for all types of insertion in digital social networks, websites, blogs, etc., especially with regard to the frequency of people's participation within these virtual spaces.

Broadband service in the squares worked at the beginning, but between instability and suspensions, the service has stopped operating in recent years. In this sense, Parintins is far from being a digital city, a reality that is similar to other municipalities in the North Region. As Fonseca points out,

> historically, the north of the country has the least coverage of telecommunications, that is, landline phone, cell phone, fiber optic and Internet access services. The deficiency is due to the idea of high technological cost of investments for the consolidation of the sector in the region. This argument is presented, above all, by private telecommunications companies that operate in the Amazon with the authorization of the federal government and the National Telecommunications Agency (Anatel).

In his reflections on the production of knowledge on the Internet from blogs, Fabio Malini[09] points out that this conjuncture directly interferes in the North region residents' relationship with the production and development of content on the web.

This is the geopolitical context in which the women who participated in the research in Parintins are inserted. An expression of regional inequality, the "long distance" between Parintins and other small- and medium-sized municipalities in other regions of the country is the result of the development historically marked by predatory exploitation

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[09] *"Cartografia da blogosfera no Brasil: perspectivas amazônicas"* **[Cartography of the blogosphere in Brazil: Amazonian perspectives]**, by Fabio Malini, published in the annals of the XXXII Brazilian Congress of Communication Sciences, held from September 4th to 7th, 2009 in Curitiba, by Intercom – Brazilian Society for the Interdisciplinary Studies in Communication.

and wild violence.[10] After all, the regions where nature is rich and abundant are privileged locations for exploitation, and this is the case of the Brazilian Amazon.[11]

The region is considered a subcontinent, due to its *dimension and socioenvironmental diversity*; it is the largest socio-biodiversity in the globe due to the presence of various ethnic groups and different languages, in addition to being the largest humid tropical forest in the world. In spite of this, the more the Amazon is seen by this diversity, the more yesterday's and today's contradictions gain complexity at the local level.[12] This finding comes from the majority of the population's precarious living conditions, and from the deficiency and lack of various public and private services, with the policy of *digital inclusion* being one of them. This leads us to consider that the "digital exclusion,"[13] considered in its various dimensions, is yet another expression of the inequalities present in the region.

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[10] Some reflections on the exploitation and violence that mark this model of predatory development can be found in the book "Amazônia: expansão do capitalismo" [Amazônia: expansion of capitalism], by Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Geraldo Muller, published by Brasiliense Publishing House in 1977.

[11] Nádia Socorro Fialho, Sandra Helena Ribeiro Cruz, Solange Maria Gayoso da Costa, Jurandir Santos de Novaes and Maria Elvira Rocha de Sá discuss this issue in the text ***"Exploração mineral na Amazônia brasileira: o estado do Pará em questão"*** **[Mineral exploitation in the Brazilian Amazon: the state of Pará in question].** Available at: https://bit.ly/3f6bUnL.

[12] Marilene Correa Silva discusses these contradictions and complexity in her PhD thesis in Social Sciences, entitled ***"Metamorfoses da Amazônia"*** **[Metamorphoses of the Amazon]**, defended in 1997, at the University of Campinas (UNICAMP).

[13] Sergio Amadeu da Silveira, in the article ***"Para além da inclusão digital: poder comunicacional e novas assimetrias"*** **[Beyond digital inclusion: communicational power and new asymmetries]**, states that "in Brazil, the expression" digital exclusion" started to characterize the phenomenon of socioeconomic barriers placed for the majority of the population to using information technologies since the late 1990s. It was also in Brazil that the idea of digital inclusion was denounced as consumption of technologies," expanding "the discussion about the autonomy of society, the appropriation of technologies and the expansion of cultural diversity."

2. Differences and inequalities in Internet access and use by women

What are the particularities of Internet access and use in this region? What are the differences between the use and access by Parintins' women and by those who live in other regions of Brazil? What brings them together regarding that issue?

As Marilene Freitas[14] points out, the Amazon is not a homogeneous socio-cultural space. The populations of the region are composed of heterogeneous urban and rural social groups, from the point of view of the economic situation; of indigenous societies and communities of different and diverse ways of adaptation and historical-cultural articulation; isolated groups remaining of interethnic friction and their own survival arrangements with national society; and also of groups and population contingents displaced to the region by governmental mechanisms or due to flows of economic exploitation or institutional readjustments in the region.

Such processes were decisive for the Amazon's environmental and social diversity. Parintins' population profile reinforces this heterogeneity and allows us to understand important aspects to analyze inequalities in relation to Internet use and access. According to the 2010 census, 52,304 inhabitants were men and 49,729 were women. Also according to the same census, 69,890 inhabitants lived in the urban area (68.50%) and 32,143 in the rural area (31.50%). In the rural area, there is a predominance of riverside population and indigenous people of the Sateré-Mawé and Hixkaryana ethnic groups.

It can be said that the official data does not present the ethnic-racial diversity of Parintins' population, since, despite being constituted as a region formed mainly by indigenous peoples, it has only 1.01% of indigenous people registered as such. Also according to IBGE (2010), Parintins' population is also composed of 13,216 white men and women

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[14] The article ***"Políticas públicas, territórios, populações tradicionais e ambiente na Amazônia*** **[Public policies, territories, traditional populations and the environment in the Amazon]** is part of the ***Amazônia: territórios, povos tradicionais e ambiente*** **[The Amazon: territories, traditional peoples and the environment]** collection, organized by José Admir de Oliveira and Elenice Scherer, published by EDUA in 2009.

(12.95%), 2,364 black men and women (2.32%), 356 yellow men and women (0.35%), and 85,063 brown men and women (83.37%). The data are illustrative of the myth of "browning" so present and reinforced by Brazilian institutions.

The twelve women who participated in the meeting were from the urban and rural areas, from different age groups and levels of education, including students and workers from different segments, with or without involvement in social movements and who access the Internet by cell phone, mainly WhatsApp and Facebook, as summarized in the Figure 1 (next page).

The participants' profile and their statements showed great closeness to the particularities of the region. In their statements, it is possible to find limitations regarding access to electronic devices, difficulties in handling such instruments, obstacles to access due to the cost of using the Internet in the municipality, and the city's precarious structure in relation to the services rendered by telephone and Internet providers. These questions were listed as obstacles to access diverse content and the Internet use as a tool for work and activism. Regarding how they access the Internet, they highlight:

> *"Most people opted for cell phones here. There is no access via the computer, because the computer is a little old, you know. No, not everyone has it. So, using the cell phone is easier. It is a device that you can have at all times, it is on the street, it is in your pocket, it is in your bra, if you go somewhere, you've got it, right. So, we like to see the images on mobile, you know, the Internet, the images that most people said they like to take pictures [sic], like to see their pictures, improve with the apps, send to the family".*
> Participant 1, Parintins, 2018.

> *"We kind of mixed our two realities. Here it is more about us who are the youngest, right, and the other colleague who is not old, but her reality is a little different from ours. We put the devices we use, which are the cell phone and the laptop*
> Participant 2, Parintins, 2018.

FIGURE 1 **PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS - PARINTINS**

TOTAL 12 women

AGE GROUP

- 5 **under 30 years old**
- 2 **30-45 years old**
- 5 **over 45 years old**

PLACE WHERE THEY LIVE

- 10 **Urban area**
- 2 **Rural area**

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT WITH THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

- 2 **None**
- 2 **Low**
- 6 **Intermediate**
- 2 **High**

EDUCATION

- 2 **Elementary School 1 incomplete**
- 1 **Elementary School 2 complete**
- 1 **High School incomplete**
- 3 **High School complete**
- 3 **College education incomplete**
- 2 **College education complete**

SOCIAL NETWORK USED

- 7 **Whatsapp**
- 1 **Telegram**
- 0 **Signal**
- 6 **Facebook**
- 4 **E-mail**
- 2 **Instagram**
- 0 **Twitter**

OCCUPATION / SEGMENT

- 1 **School nutrition technician**
- 2 **Craftswoman and domestic worker**
- 1 **Craftswoman, domestic worker and attendant**
- 1 **Craftswoman**
- 2 **Student and domestic worker**
- 2 **Student**
- 1 **Domestic worker**
- 1 **Craftswoman and masseuse therapist**
- 1 **Nursing Technician**

Source: Data prepared by the authors (2019).

> *"Nobody has a computer, nobody has laptop, tablet, nothing, just the cell phone. And there are these apps we have: clock, Facebook, phonebook, messages, music, pictures, search, camera, radio, video, YouTube, the calendar and WhatsApp."*
> Participant 3, Parintins, 2018.

When asked about which devices have access to the Internet, the responses were unanimous in relation to cell phones, as a means of communication and entertainment. How they use it is also different when considering the age groups of the participants. Older women use cell phones as a means of communication via telephone calls. The youngest, in turn, reported that they use the cell phone as a means of communication via apps and other functions that the cell phone has. With regard to using the computer, only university students use it, to watch movies and do academic work.

For the majority of the world population, cell phones are also the main way to access the Internet. However, although mobile and Internet connectivity has spread rapidly, its distribution does not follow this trend. The so-called "virtual world" reproduces the inequalities of the "real world," including gender inequality. The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2108[15] estimates that more than 1.2 billion women in low- and middle-income countries do not use mobile Internet. In addition, on average, women are 26% less likely to use it. The latest estimates from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) suggest that women around the world are 12% less likely than men to have access to the Internet and that, in countries considered "less developed," women are 33% less likely than that.

For Parintins' women, the use of cell phones stands out compared to other equipment due to the low cost and greater availability in the local market. However, not all women have a cell phone that allows them to access the Internet, and others do not even have a cell phone. Regarding the twelve participants, two said they did not have the device, as they were unable to afford the product at that time. The narratives below highlight how women feel about not having a cell phone:

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[15] Available at: https://www.gsma.com/latinamerica/w20-superando-exclusao-digital-genero/?lang=pt-br

> *"I already had it, but then it fell, the screen broke, it did not work anymore. Ah, it's difficult, you know. Because sometimes we want to talk to colleagues, watch series, do other things, or even to do research work."*
>
> Participant 4, Parintins, 2018.

> *"To tell you the truth, when I was without a cell phone it seems that we are uninformed about everything that is happening, then when we get it again it's a bomb ... different thing, right, we didn't even know what was going on around the world, even in our city."*
>
> Participant 5, Parintins, 2018.

> *"Because being alone I did not talk to people. Then, my friend called me: look, at that day there will be a meeting; come to my house; come to watch a movie with me. Then, here I go. Now I don't know what's going on [And if someone wants to talk to you, how does this person can do it?] They call my son, or another daughter, then she comes from the countryside, comes to the city and brings news so I can communicate."*
>
> Participant 6, Parintins, 2018.

The participants emphasize that, without a cell phone, they feel isolated, and that without a cell phone and without the Internet they feel uninformed and had difficulty establishing professional or family contacts. This is because the information arrives on the cell phone quickly, instantly. The device ends up performing the function of receiving and interacting with information at the moment it happens, in addition to enabling the mobilization of activists to participate in meetings and other activities. However, this growing technological advance also tends to leave those who cannot access it increasingly excluded, a latent reality in the state of Amazonas. The coverage of the mobile phone signal and the Internet connection is available in most municipalities, but in precarious, unstable conditions, as pointed out in the previous item.

In Parintins, women stated that the difficulties go beyond access to the Internet, since access to technological equipment is limited by the lack of financial resources and the city's own difficulty in guaranteeing the necessary structure to enable this access. Thus, the precariousness of telephone and Internet services in the municipality is emerging for ever greater difficulties in enabling the digital inclusion of its inhabitants.

> *"Lack of knowledge for the most here, right, because in today's society whoever has a cell phone has so much information, has so many apps, there is so much for us to handle, even more now that it's just a finger-swipe and a lot of things appear, and we get lost. And in our city the signal is terrible, sometimes it's there and sometimes it's not. You have to go to where there is signal, right. And the main thing is that to use the Internet you need credit. We don't have money, right, we purchase 15 reais in credit and when you realize you don't have it anymore, everything was spent. And there is no Internet anymore. I think it is for everyone."*
> Participant 1, Parintins, 2018.

> *"And the difficulties are that, sometimes, our cell phone has no signal, right. Even here in the city, there are places with no signal. For example, we are here at UFAM, there are some places here in the room that "hi, hi, hi, are you listening to me?", the person is not listening to me. So, the signal [sic]. And the cell phone Internet plan, it is also difficult, you know, as the girls have said, it's not always that we have money for purchasing credit, and then we do it, the Internet connection doesn't last that long, we don't even know how it ended so fast."*
> Participant 2, Parintins, 2018.

> *"Our difficulties: in the case of our colleague is that she does not have a cell phone. Helena's is that her device, you know, it doesn't have these technologies, hers is very simple, you can only make calls and answer calls. And also lack of credit, if there is no credit, you don't have Internet. So, this is one of the greatest difficulties."*
> Participant 3, Parintins, 2018.

According to Helena Martins,[16] in an article on obstacles to access to telecommunication, developed based on the report of the Brazilian Internet Steering Committee (CGIBR)[17], "inequalities per socio-economic class and urban and rural areas demarcate differences in relation to Internet access. The World Wide Web is in 30% of class D/E households (proportion that was 23% in 2016) and 34% of households in the rural area (in 2016, it was 26%). In classes A and B, the proportions reach 99% and 93%, respectively." According to the author, the data indicate

> that access has increased, but that it is still far from being comparable to what is experienced by wealthier people living in urban centers. In addition, 19% of connected households do not have a computer, which represents 13.4 million households. This proportion was only 4% in 2014, which also shows that access is occurring in a precarious way, mainly by means of mobile devices.

In this sense, Sergio Amadeu da Silveira[18] argues that, due to the "failure of the market to ensure basic broadband infrastructure where there was not enough income to remunerate the business model born from the Brazilian privatization program," in 2009, the Brazilian gov-

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[16] ***"Telecomunicações: universalização segue distante, limitando o exercício de direitos"*** **[Telecommunications: universalization remains distant, limiting the exercise of rights]** by Helena Martins. Article that integrates the Direito à comunicação no Brasil 2018 [Right to communication in Brazil 2018] collection, organized by Intervozes – Coletivo Brasil de Comunicação Social and published in the same year.

[17] "The Brazilian Internet Steering Committee has the task of establishing strategic guidelines related to the use and development of the Internet in Brazil and guidelines for the execution of the registration of Domain Names, allocation of IP Address (Internet Protocol) and administration pertinent to the BR First Level Domain. It also promotes studies and recommends procedures for Internet security and proposes research and development programs that allow the maintenance of the level of technical quality and innovation in the Internet use." Available at: https://cgi.br/

[18] In the article ***"Para além da inclusão digital: poder comunicacional e novas assimetrias"*** **[Beyond digital inclusion: communicational power and new asymmetries]**, which is part of the Inclusão Digital: polêmica contemporânea [Digital Inclusion: contemporary controversy] collection, organized by Maria Helena Silveira Bonilla and Nelson De Luca Pretto and published by Edufba in 2011.

ernment launched a National Broadband Plan. However, the author states that

> the telephone service providers began to act to block any attempt by the State to act directly in the provision of connection or even to implement more rigid price and quality controls. Accused of being inept in the construction of this infrastructure, the providers turned to changing the broadband expansion plan to increase the economic benefits for their activity.

In summary, the State was unable to organize a coherent and minimally articulated public policy of "digital inclusion," which can be comparable to the Unified Health System (SUS) or to educational policy.

Parintins is an example of ineffective and low impact attempts at digital inclusion in the North region. Even today, there is no quality Internet in the city and the access to the network is made predominantly through mobile data acquired in the local commerce more easily. Satellite Internet is generally used in large companies, government bodies, universities, etc. (with restricted access). Regarding the radio frequency Internet, the service is made available by small- and medium-sized providers in the region, serving a limited number of households and Internet Cafés that can pay for the installation of an antenna and basic package through a monthly fee of around R$ 200.00. In the case of Internet Cafés, common spaces in the city, the service is outsourced and sold per hour of access.

This reality has implications for the entire population, but particularly for women who, due to the sexual division of labor, assume responsibility for the care of the family and end up, for the most part, directing their income to household expenses, and then payment for Internet access or purchase of secondary items is something considered secondary and of sporadic use. Furthermore, time to use the Internet in spaces such as Internet Cafés, due to the overload and accumulation of work – which also constitutes a barrier to women's' skills development in relation to technologies –, is reduced for the poorest women.

If problems in the urban area are recurrent, access to these means is almost non-existent for women living in rural communities. The two participants who live in the municipality's rural area exposed the limita-

tions and showed the reality of people living in the riverside communities in relation to using technological devices. For the majority of indigenous and riverside communities, the main means of communication is the public telephone booth (known as "orelhão"). As women point out,

> *"Over there the signal is bad, so we use the "orelhão." Then, we know we have to buy a phone card, or you can make a collect if the person answers, right. The signal is good but only between the tower and the church, in this place the cell phone receives signal."*
> Participant 7, Parintins, 2018.

> *"The church is the main center of our tower, which is the communication corner [sic]. Only there the signal is good. If you want to keep a secret, stand with your back to the colleague that is talking and you can talk, and then you go away as if nothing has happened."*
> Participant 8, Parintins, 2018.

In some communities there is equipment that allows telephone access, however, access to the Internet is not possible. Communication towers, in most cases, do not work, keeping riverside populations increasingly distant. It is a question not only of digital inclusion, but of the violation of the right to communication, which has implications for other dimensions of these populations' lives, imposed by the non-voluntary isolation and the even greater exposure due to the resulting lack of protection. In this context, the overexposure of women to domestic violence (when unable to access the safety net or denounce the violence suffered through remote channels) can be mentioned as an example of this situation.

In addition to these difficulties, some women report the fact that they do not know how to handle electronic devices, especially older ones, who sometimes depend on other people to access certain content or even to send a text message.

> *"Mine is the lack of knowledge to access the Internet, do research, because when I want to do research, I use it with my daughter. I didn't learn*

it because I don't have a cell phone that access the Internet, because mine just receives and makes calls."
Participant 6, Parintins, 2018.

"I read the message, but I don't know how to answer it. For example, this chip that is in this cell phone here, which is mine, the device is mine, but the chip is not mine, it belongs to my 15-year-old daughter, because of the research she does. She stays at school all day, when she arrives she comes to get it. Because my children, they already have more knowledge of the Internet, then they use it. But, if I didn't learn it... I think I am not interested, you know? Seek learning. Because, today, if I look for it, I think I can do it, right? Then it's just like that, when sometimes I need to see some fabric they show me. But, even if she accesses the Internet for me, I am not able to do the work, you know. Only looking at the magazine. I am used to it."
Participant 8, Parintins, 2018.

"Sometimes it is like this, as I work, there are some colleagues who have Internet, you know, and sometimes I purchase credit for their cell phones, and then they can get what I want. So, if I want to see some crochet stitches, then I purchase more credit for their cell phone, and they get it for me from the Internet. Then I learn from there. One stitch ... these ribbon embroidery stitches, I also do it, then I do this way."
Participant 9, Parintis, 2018.

"I don't know how to send a message. I can write it, but I don't know how to send it. So, to download some crochet videos, as she is saying, I can't do it either. I am more used to see crochet on the magazine. I have more than 25 magazines, with different models of rugs and fabric with string. I just buy more string and other threads. Then I can get it from the magazine."
Participant 10, Parintins, 2018.

The statements show that women are mainly recipients of content and that the digital obstacle is not only the absence of infrastructure and equipment, but of access to information about their use. Despite the limitations, women have created strategies to minimize difficulties by seeking support from their children and/or friends to access certain content and interact on social networks.

The practical activity became, for the participants over 45 years old, a moment of personal fulfillment when accessing a computer for the first time. The emotion in the face of the experience of contact with the computer and Internet access through it endorsed the importance of spaces for reflection on technology for women.

> *"For me it was a great emotion, because not a single day in my life did I stand in front of a computer like this [And how is it going?] I have a little bit of difficulty to know, I know I'm a little afraid... Of doing something and it suddenly ends up being something different and then I don't know how to undue it, that's all."*
> Participant 6, Parintins, 2018.

> *"Wow! I'm thrilled, so many beautiful things on this computer that no one knows they are out there, only I know, sitting here and watching. [So, is it that hard?] It is... when we don't know it, right! If I can learn this here and pay someone else to do it, I won't have to be in the pan bunch anymore."*
> Participant 8, Parintins, 2018.

> *"Hard, but you can handle it, right. Because we already had a computer at home, but I have never been interested, it was just for them to study. Then, before my husband died, he sold it, and we didn't have it anymore. Nobody bought another one. They use it because they studied and needed it, right."*
> Participant 9, Parintins, 2018.

> *"It seems to me that I was born yesterday. Because, my mom says: – I didn't expect to see these things here today. One thing that is so difficult for me, now I'm here with her, it's been so easy to look at and see all of it. And I see that it isn't so difficult, it depends on us having it so as to do it, right. Having this opportunity to learn."*
> Participant 10, Parintins, 2018.

For the participants, the encounter and the contact with these issues were surprising, due to both the exchange of experiences and knowledge and the opportunity to have contact with another technology other than cell phones. The difficulty in handling a cell phone from the simplest to the most advanced, a computer or tablet, despite also revealing itself as a generational issue, was not only the older women's prerogative. Some of the youngest mentioned little contact with technologies other than cell phones due to the lack of opportunity to access equipment.

Another point highlighted by women was they are careful with sources and news. At the same time that they recognize the importance and positive possibilities of the Internet, they showed distrust in its use. In this direction, they realized the control over people, schedules, itineraries, privacy. The dissemination of images without authorization was also highlighted, reproducing violence against women on the network.

Thus, despite the difficulties having an important generational profile to be considered, in general, they demonstrate the municipality's precarious infrastructure with regard to telephone and Internet services provision. These issues point to a digital exclusion that is characterized by non-access to technology and non-information and permeates structural issues such as social class and regional inequalities. For Sérgio Silveira19, it is noticeable that political leaders and public managers do not understand the importance of inserting the set of social layers in network communication to break the process of reproducing misery.

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[19] In the article ***"Para além da inclusão digital: poder comunicacional e novas assimetrias"*** **[Beyond digital inclusion: communicational power and new asymmetries]**, which is part of the Inclusão digital: polêmica contemporânea [Digital Inclusion: contemporary controversy] collection, organized by Maria Helena Silveira Bonilla and Nelson De Luca Pretto and published by Edufba in 2011.

3. From the real to the virtual: yesterday's and today's inequalities

The use and access to information and communication technologies by Parintins' women reflect the historical and structural inequalities in the region. Thinking about this topic only through the lens of use of cell phone and Internet access could limit the apprehension of the issue and even distort conclusions such as that Parintins' popular women are not digitally excluded. However, a qualitative analysis of this issue – which presupposes, in addition to the consumption of technology itself, discussion about the autonomy, knowledge and appropriation of technologies, socio-cultural diversity, and the sexual division of labor – reveals that the inequalities of the "real world" are reproduced in the "virtual world".

The research confirms the obstacles and difficulties in accessing the technologies and points out that the computer is a technology little accessed by Parintins' women, whether they are older or young. Also noteworthy is the difficulty in producing content, with women assuming the role of recipients as a priority. Facebook and WhatsApp are the most accessed applications, which places social networks as the main communication resource mediated by the Internet. In regions furthest from the city's urban area, the (non-voluntary) isolation is even greater, and the public telephone booth is the only channel for communication.

The study reveals that there is a huge inequality in the participation of society in the telecommunications sector in Brazil and that there is still a long way to consider Internet access as an essential service, although, according to Helena Martins,[20] this concept was established in the Brazilian Civil Rights Framework for the Internet in 2014. In this sense, it is possible to affirm that the limitations to women's access to technology also result from the lack of investments and public policies in this field, which makes the North of the country the region with the worst levels of Internet quality and distribution. In this sense,

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[20] In the article ***"Telecommunications: universalization remains distant, limiting the exercise of rights"***, which is part of the Direito à comunicação no Brasil **[Right to communication in Brazil]** collection, organized by Intervozes and published in 2018.

women's statements indicate that it is not only about digital inclusion/exclusion, but also about the absence of opportunities, due to both the lack of social policies aimed at reducing inequalities in the region and the obstacles experienced by women because they are women living in the Northern Region.

Finally, it can be said that, for most popular women, information and communication technologies access or use is still a distant reality. Therefore, if in fact the means of communication are essential for maintaining or changing the strategies of power, including these women in the digital networks use will tend to make political disputes more complex.[21] Even if contradictorily; after all, they are not a common good, since such technologies can promote tension in inequalities, with emphasis on gender inequalities, which crystallize the women's destinies and continue to reinforce the sexual division of labor. As one of the study participants highlighted, **"If I can learn this here, I won't have to do only household services anymore".**

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[21] As Sergio Amadeu da Silveira points out, in the article ***"Beyond digital inclusion: communicational power and new asymmetry"*** **[Beyond digital inclusion: communicational power and new asymmetries]**. This article is part of the Inclusão Digital: polêmica contemporânea [Digital Inclusion: contemporary controversy] collection, organized by Maria Helena Silveira Bonilla and Nelson De Luca Pretto and published by Edufba in 2011.

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Women involved in the real and virtual world: the fight for rights in the context of traditional communities in the State of Ceará

Francisca Maria Rodrigues Sena*

*
Social worker, Master's degree in Public Policy, member of the Negra do Ceará Institute.

Research team:
Antônia Henriqueta Carvaho, Beth Ferreira, Cristina Lima and Francisca Maria Rodrigues Sena

Criar meu web site. Fazer minha home-page.
Com quantos gigabytes, se faz uma jangada.
Um barco que veleje, que veleje nesse informar.
Que aproveite a vazante da infomaré.
Que leve um oriki do meu velho orixá.
Ao porto de um disquete de um micro em Taipé.[22]

Gilberto Gil

Self-organization and struggles for the rights of women in rural areas, cities and forests in Brazil have always been permeated by processes that involve access to information, communication, and production and the dissemination of traditional and non-traditional knowledge. Over the past twenty years, between the permanence and the various transformations that have occurred in the unequal Brazilian reality, it is possible to observe changes in relation to these aspects, which alter the notion of time and space, in addition to breaking borders, favoring the women's political articulation.

However, after almost thirty years of the arrival of the Internet in Brazil (late 1980s) and more than two decades (1995) of its commercial diffusion, despite important advances in access, the indicators show that there is still a long way to go for the service to be democratized.

According to research by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics – IBGE (2016), 64% of the Brazilian population, over the age of ten, has access to the Internet. This data is not homogeneous and varies from one region to another, as well as within the same region or

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[22] Free translation: "Create my web site./Make my home page./With how many gigabytes, you make a raft./A boat that sails, that sails in that information sea./ that takes advantage of the leaking info tide./ that takes an oriki from my old orixá./To the port of a micro diskette in Taipé." Lyrics by Gilberto Gil.

state, reflecting a situation of injustice that led, for example, states in the North and Northeast to have less access: 54.3% and 52.3%, respectively. Meanwhile, in the Southeast, this percentage was 72.3%.

Regarding the age group, this research revealed that in the country the vast majority of Internet users are young, and the amount of people aged between 18 and 24 years old who access the virtual network reaches 85%. Among the elderly population, over 60 years old, this rate is 25%.

The research also revealed a slight advantage for women in accessing the Internet – 65.5%, while for men this rate was 63.8%. We do not know to what extent this aspect is the result of women's higher level of schooling in Brazil, but this is a plausible hypothesis.

According to the study, Internet access was predominantly performed by cell phones, reaching 94.6% of Internet users, while by the computer this percentage was 63.7%. Regarding the main purposes of Internet access, the research revealed that people use it to exchange text messages, voice and images, through applications that allow chatting.

Having access to this general data gives us some parameters for our research. But, in addition, this analysis considers the country's inequalities, especially those that directly affect subjects historically submitted to injustice: women from traditional peoples and communities. Thus, we sought to unveil the realities of women within these contexts not covered by official research or contemplated, only quantitatively.

This research, therefore, aimed to elaborate a diagnosis that would contribute to overcoming the challenges of the *Universidade Livre Feminista* in relation to the access and use of Information and Communication Technologies – ICT and Internet tools by women from the popular classes and communities, with the purpose of indicating ways to approach these segments in educational and communication processes.

In this article, we will describe the main data and carry out analyzes resulting from this process with women from traditional communities in the state of Ceará.

1. Women's profile

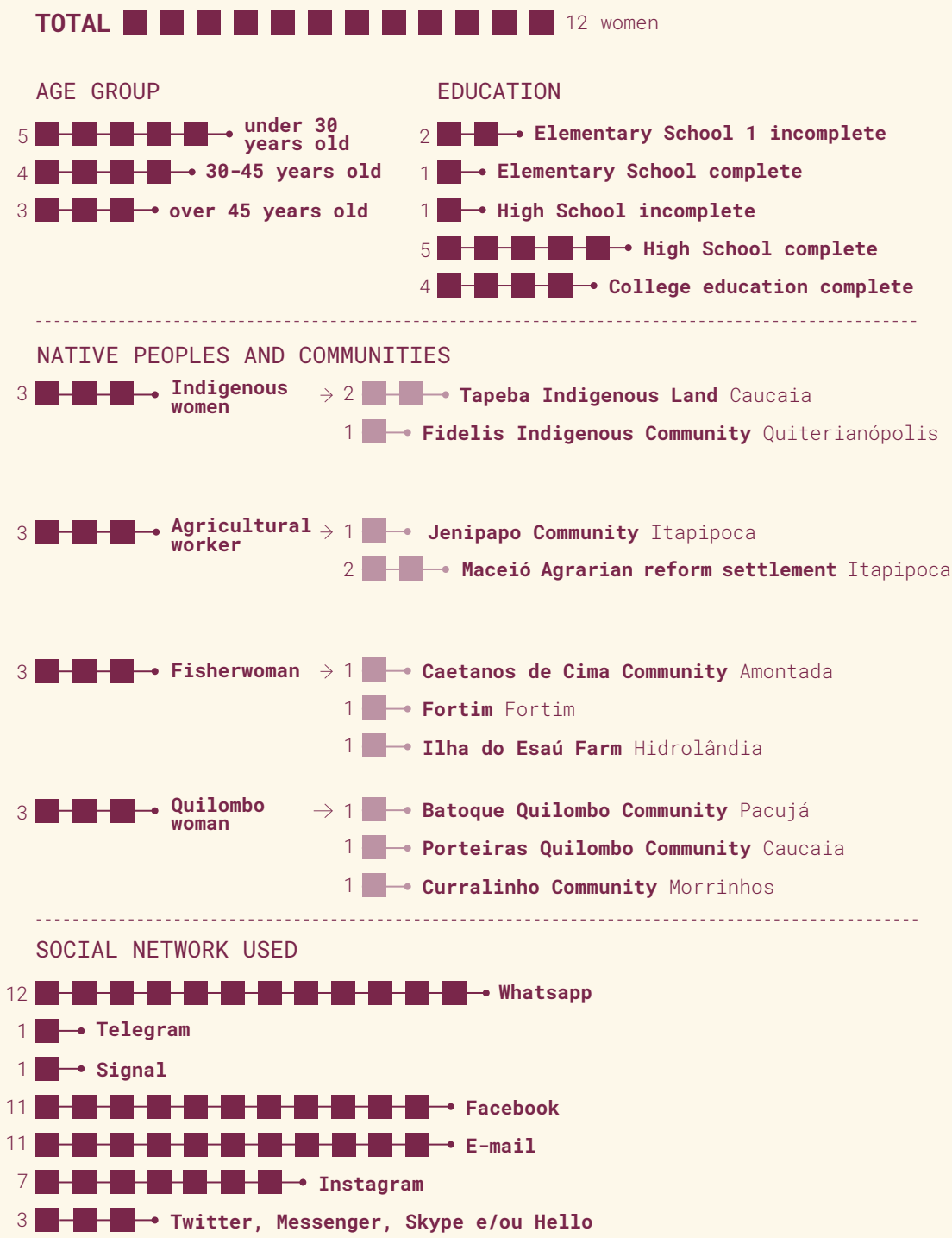
In delimiting the universe of our research in Ceará, we set out to investigate the level of Internet access by **women activists from traditional peoples and communities**, who fight for their rights and the rights of their peoples and territories. Among the participants, only one revealed that she did not have an organic link with community organizations, social movements or other groups.

The twelve women who participated in the workshop held in Pacajus – Ceará, in June 2018, come from traditional peoples and communities: indigenous (3), quilombolas (3), back-country women (3) and artisanal fisherwomen (3). They are young and adult women: five were under 30 years old; four were between 30 and 45 years old; and three were over 45 years old.

This classification, based on women's self-recognition and their common experiences, however, does not mean that they share a homogeneous reality. It is important to highlight the diversity between these peoples and traditional communities defined, for example, by the fact that they are indigenous of: a territory geographically located in the Metropolitan Region of Fortaleza; the rural area of a municipality in the Ceará back-country; a fishing community located on the coast of the state, and another community located around a reservoir in the countryside.

As for schooling, two women had not finished elementary school and one had finished it; one had not finished high school and five had finished it, and four had attended college. That is, most of them are educated and that it may influence their relationship with the Internet. It is also important to note that they had different experiences in the schooling process. Some of the women studied in indigenous schools, in principle, characterized by a specific, differentiated and intercultural education.

FIGURE 2 **PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS - STATE OF CEARÁ**



Source: Data prepared by the author (2019).

2. Contexts

According to the Institute for Research and Economic Strategy of Ceará – IPECE, the state, located in the Northeast region of Brazil, has a total area of 148,886.3 km . IBGE estimates that in 2019 Ceará had a population of 9,076,426 inhabitants, being the country's eighth most populous state. It has 184 municipalities and the north of the state is bathed by the Atlantic Ocean. The vast majority of municipalities in Ceará (95%) compound the so-called Brazilian semiarid region. The state has a coastal strip with an extension of 573 kilometers, representing 7.8% of its territory.

Considering the diverse reality of Ceará, we focused on a qualitative analysis of the object in our research, that is, reality, living conditions and access with regard to women from traditional peoples and communities. According to Decree No. 6,040, of February 7, 2007, Traditional Peoples and Communities are:

> culturally differentiated groups that recognize themselves as such, that have their own ways of social organization, occupy and use territories and natural resources as a condition for their cultural, social, religious, ancestral and economic reproduction, using knowledge, innovations and practices generated and transmitted by tradition.[23]

This means that talking about these traditional peoples requires that their identity, their culture, and their territory be considered. And each of these women made a narrative permeated with memories and feelings of their place and ways of life.

Regarding *indigenous women*, the following was shared:

1. The history of the formation of peoples and communities;
2. Existence of sacred spaces, such as the lake of the Tapeba indigenous community, where the people celebrate rituals and perform various activities,

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[23] Excerpt from Decree no. 6.040, dated February 7, 2007 Available at: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2007-2010/2007/decreto/d6040.htm.

especially in October, when the Carnaúba Celebration and the Indigenous Games take place;

3. These peoples' political organization, which has an expressive presence of women, especially in the 30-year struggle for land and territory;
4. Indigenous women's traditional practice in creating and producing handicraft, which ensures monetary income;
5. The way of life based on family farming;
6. Experience of differentiated indigenous schools, as a symbol of resistance and struggle;
7. Access to public policies, through Projects such as History and Afro-indigenous Culture of the Inhamuns, developed by the Regional Development Coordination of Education – Crede 15/Education Secretariat of the State of Ceará-SEDUC-CE in high schools and the Paulo Freire Project, developed by the Secretariat for Agrarian Development, ensuring continuous technical advice and support for productive investment plans for agricultural and non-agricultural activities.

In the case of *quilombola women*, the highlights were:

1. The way of life based on family farming;
2. The strength of the oral aspect in the people's culture and memory and in the dissemination of ancestral knowledge;
3. Situations of racism experienced by the community, practiced by the society in the municipality of Pacujá and the police institutional violence, including subjecting quilombola members to constant approaches;
4. Cultural expressions, such as the Quilombola de Caucaia Cultural Caravan performance to strengthen and spread these peoples' culture;
5. The effective engagement of women in community organization and struggles for rights;

6. Difficulty of communication by cell phone, due to the low signal quality.

The *fisherwomen* described their territories as follows:

1. The way of life around artisanal fishing, agriculture and community tourism;
2. Performance of dance, music, audiovisual, women and youth groups in the Caetanos de Cima community;
3. Strong participation of youths, especially women, in the communities' political and cultural initiatives;
4. Presence and performance of various movements in the communities, such as the Movimento de Trabalhadoras e Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra [Landless Rural Workers Movement] (MST); Movimento de Pescadores e Pescadoras Artesanais [Artisanal Fishermen and Fisherwomen Movement] (MPP); Movimento de Mulheres Trabalhadoras Rurais do Nordeste [Northeast Rural Women Workers Movement] (MMTR-NE); Levante Popular [Popular Upraising]; Culture Movement; Community Museum;
5. Prejudice and discrimination on the part of the National Social Security Institute (INSS) in not recognizing fisherwomen as professionals and, consequently, denying their rights;
6. Easy access to the Internet by some women due to the fact that the municipality of Fortim is part of the Ceará Digital Belt (CDC);24
7. Fisherwomen's difficult and heavy lives.

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[24] "The CDC is composed of a fiber optic backbone containing rings, subrings and derivations (branches that come out of the ring) with points that allow interconnection to it, measuring 4,150 km maintained by the Government (Etice) and 3,910 km maintained by partners, totaling 8,060 km, which makes it possible to serve around 90% of the urban population of the state of Ceará. Its purpose is to enable high-quality Internet access to all public bodies in the state and to enable the population to have access to digital services such as Internet, videoconferencing, Digital TV, cell phone etc., constituting an indispensable tool for economic development of the State." Available at: https://www.etice.ce.gov.br/cinturao-digital-do-ceara/.

The *agricultural workers* revealed in their statements:

1. The experience of agroecological family farming;
2. Participation of women in agroecology, based on public policy initiatives for Technical Assistance and Rural Extension (ATER) and agroecological fairs;
3. The routine of waking up and going to sleep early;
4. The process of dismantling the community struggle, despite resistance from the Maceió Settlement (in Itapipoca);
5. Engagement of agricultural workers in social movements such as MMTR-NE and MST;
6. Experience of being an activist and mother, with need to take her daughter in several trips, moving between the countryside and the city and dealing with the cultural shock of these two realities and the political culture of education in the MST and the day care center in the city;
7. Contact and reflection on feminism through training and other activities related to their struggles.

In addition to the aspects described so far, we decided to highlight women's recurring statements that their experiences and coexistence occur in territories marked and crossed by inequalities, and crossed by environmental conflicts, which constantly threatens the communities. From 2006 to 2010, the Osvaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz) and the Federation of Organs for Social and Educational Assistance (FASE), with the support from the Department of Environmental Health and Occupational Health of the Ministry of Health, carried out a project for elaboration of the National Environmental Conflict Map. At the time, around 300 conflicts were identified across the country, 20 of which were mapped in Ceará. This map reveals the reality of the conflicts repeatedly reported by the women who participated in this research in their territories.

In line with what Henri Acselrad proposes[25], we understand environmental conflicts as those that involve:

> social groups with different ways of territory appropriation, use and significance, originating when at least one of the groups has the continuity of the social ways of developed environment appropriation threatened by undesirable impacts – transmitted by soil, water, air or living systems – resulting from the exercise of the practices of other groups.

The referred Map indicates, as one of the main characteristics of the conflicts, the violation of the rights of ethnic groups, traditional populations and communities discriminated against because of their origin or their color. This situation is configured as environmental racism, understood by Selene Herculano and Tânia Pacheco[26] as "the social and environmental injustices that fall disproportionately on vulnerable ethnic groups."

Citing the Declaration of the Brazilian Network for Environmental Justice, these authors claim that environmental racism has an intrinsic relationship with environmental injustice, defined as:

> the mechanism by which unequal societies, from an economic and social point of view, allocate the greatest burden of environmental damage from development to low-income populations, discriminated social groups, traditional ethnic peoples, working-class neighborhoods, marginalized and vulnerable populations (Declaration of the Brazilian Network for Environmental Justice).

Women highlighted the unjust and violent conflicts in the territories and the rights violations associated with it. In most cases, the rights violations reported relate to land rights, access to water and the defense of their territories, where they reproduce their ways of life,

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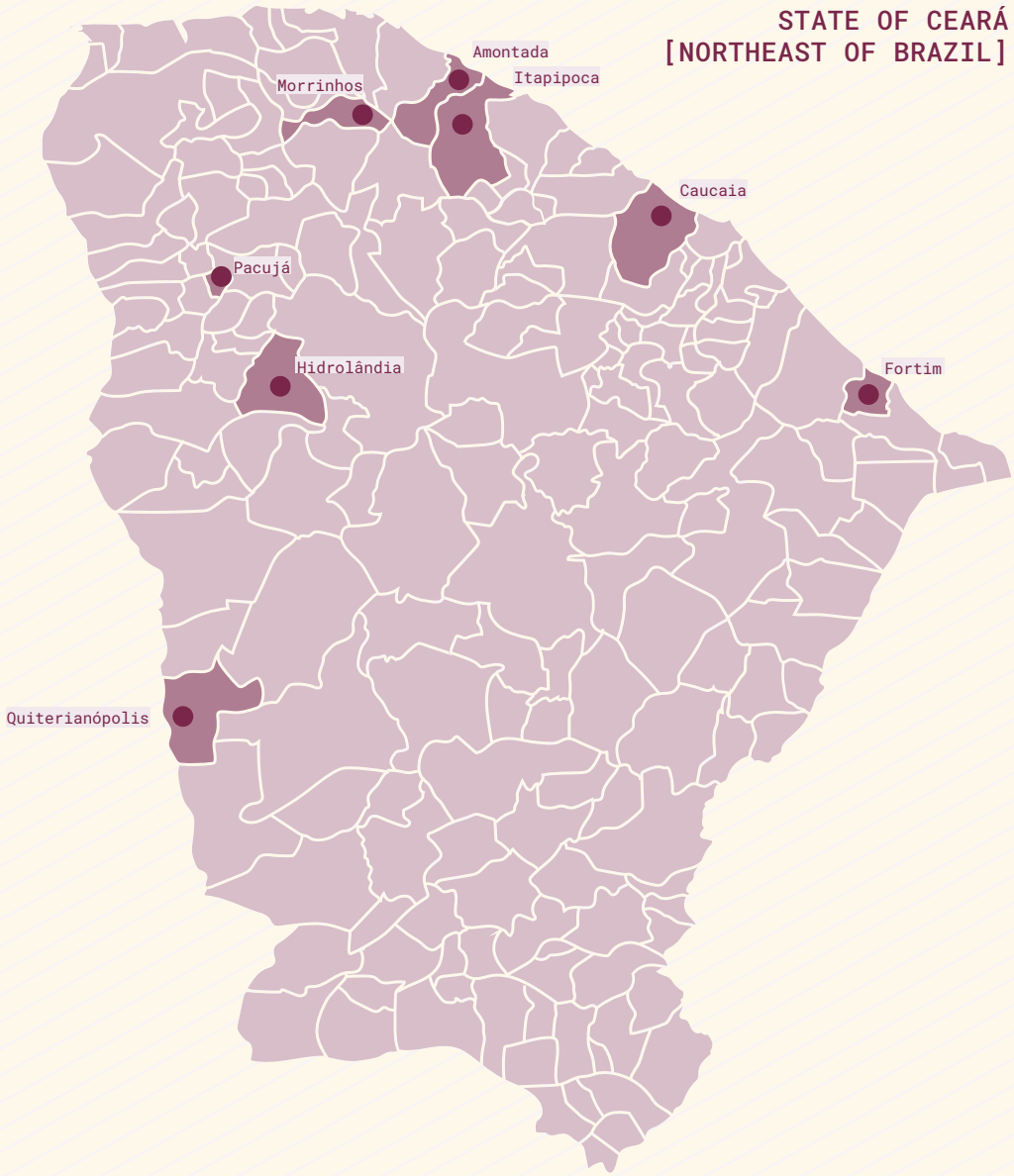
[25] In ***"Política ambiental e discurso democrático. O caso do Conselho Nacional de Meio Ambiente"*** **[Environmental policy and democratic discourse. The case of the National Environment Council]**, article published in the Annals of the 20th ANPOCS Annual Meeting, in 1996

[26] In the ***"Introdução: racismo ambiental, o que é isso?"*** [Introduction: environmental racism, what is it?], which is part of the Racismo Ambiental [Environmental Racism] collection, from the First Brazilian Seminar against Environmental Racism, held by FASE in 2006.

PEOPLES AND COMMUNITIES OF ORIGIN OF THE PARTICIPANTS

STATE OF CEARÁ
[NORTHEAST OF BRAZIL]



Caucaia
Tapeba Indigenous Territory
Porteiras Quilombo Community

Quiterianópolis
Fidelis Indigenous Community

Itapipoca
Jenipapo Community
Maceió Agrarian reform settlement

Amontada
Caetanos de Cima Community

Fortim
Fortim

Hidrolândia
Ilha do Esaú Farm

Pacujá
Batoque Quilombo Community

Morrinhos
Curralinho Community

manage and preserve biodiversity, extract and produce food, work and generate their monetary income.

In the case of quilombola[27] and indigenous[28] communities (even if in different bureaucratic and political dynamics and processes), the struggle is for the cultural identity recognition of their people, the long and arduous path to officially identify, delimit and demarcate indigenous lands, and the struggle to identify, recognize, delimit and determine the ownership of quilombola lands. The experience in their territories and the production and reproduction of ancestral ways of life are marked by situations of violence by land invaders and large economic enterprises. As a result, their struggles take place, especially in the defense of land and territory, based on local, state, national and, at times, worldwide articulation.

In the case of coastal zone territories, women denounce real estate speculation, mass tourism, installation and operation of wind farms and shrimp farming (creation of shrimp in captivity), which directly affect the lives of families living on the mangrove and the sea. Together, they denounce the violations and have experiences of affirming their rights, such as that of the Community Tourism Network (Rede TUCUM), the production of handicraft and commercialization based on the solidarity economy.

Women who live of family farming lead struggles for access to water and land, against the use of pesticides in food production, for access to techniques and technologies for living in the semiarid region and for access to public policies, which almost never reach rural families. In September 2019, as we concluded this article, we became aware of an arbitrary action at the behest of the capital that directly affected the life of one of the agricultural workers participating in this research. The Agroecological Experimentation Space, located in the municipality of Itapipoca and managed by the Network of Agroecological and Solidary Farmers in the Valleys of Curu and Aracatiaçu, was invaded and

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[27] In Ceará, there are 50 q***uilombola*** communities certified by the Palmares Foundation. But the ***quilombola*** movements in Ceará claim at least 85 communities. Regarding these communities, only 15 have been processed at the National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA). None of the quilombola lands in Ceará was given ownership (INCRA Portal).

[28] In relation to indigenous peoples, Ceará has 14 peoples, occupying areas that are from the coast to the back-country, in addition to mountain areas (State of Ceará Portal, 2019).

destroyed in a truculent way by Sobral & Palácio Company, destroying trees, native plants, worm farm and the building structure, killing the biodiversity of that place, so important in the production of agroecological knowledge and coexistence with the semiarid region.

From this description, we find that women of traditional peoples and communities live in territories marked by racism and environmental injustice. This picture is structured by racism, patriarchy and capitalism, which end up generating violations of the rights of women and their communities.

In addition, the "arrival" in the countryside and in the coastal zone of a type of violence and the action of organized crime, which until recently was considered a reality typical of large cities, was present in the women's statements. These phenomena generate fear and end up causing changes in the sociability of the communities.

It is important to note that, in the face of these oppression, women have not silenced or been submissive. Together, they have built up resistance, hampering, delaying or hindering the advance of ventures that violate its rights.

3. Research findings

3.1. Engaged Women

In our research, we chose to take a look at the reality of activist women from traditional communities in Ceará. However, we were not aware of the degree of their engagement in women's/social movements. When talking about their activism, most (9) of these women (indigenous, quilombolas, fisherwomen, agricultural worker) declared a high degree of engagement. Only one revealed that she was not involved with women's/social movements.

Some of them are engaged in specific women groups/movements, such as Articulação das Mulheres Indígenas do Ceará Mulheres [Ceará Indigenous Women Articulation] (AMICE), Movimento de Mulheres Trabalhadoras Rurais do Nordeste [Northeast Rural Women Workers Movement] (MMTR-NE), Articulação Nacional de Pescadoras [Fisherwomen National Articulation] (ANP) and the women groups in the com-

munities. One of them is part of the MST Gender Sector. Among these, even if they do not identify themselves as feminists, they bring in their speeches references to identity, struggles and feminist movements.

With the exception of one, the others are engaged in local, state, regional and national organizations. The social groups/movements mentioned were the MST, the indigenous movement – specifically the youth movement (Ceará Indigenous Youth Commission – COJICEA), solidarity economy groups, Youth Ministry, Ecclesial Base Communities (CEB), quilombola movement, union movement, and cultural movements.

From these spaces, women play an important role in taking up struggles, denouncing the oppressions experienced and claiming rights. When in specific women groups/movements, they contribute to discussions on sexism, the rights of rural, indigenous, quilombola and fisher women, feminism, women's work overload, women's contribution to agroecology. In mixed spaces, women's rights are put on the agenda, in addition to fighting for community strengthening and facing the effects of the environmental conflicts described above.

Bringing these references of engagement is relevant to situate that, even before any virtual performance, women who participated in the research are engaged and involved in the resistance and struggles of their people and communities. Even though some of them started their engagement at a time when the Internet is more present in the communities' lives, it is from the face-to-face articulation that their political trajectories are created.

3.2. Women involved in the virtual world

The research revealed that women in the traditional communities in question have a good level of Internet access on a daily basis. Most of them revealed to have identification with the Internet and familiarity with the use of applications that connect them with the family, community and the world. Even those who have some resistance or difficulty in handling cell phone features, do it when it is necessary. This does not mean that there are no limits to this connection.

Internet access tends to occur mainly from home, work, civil society organizations and college. The type of connection that ensures access

is radio frequency Internet, broadband connection and, to a lesser extent, the mobile Internet.

Some reveal that the current easy Internet access is related to the structural changes that occurred after the government's investment to expand this service. One of them stated that the expansion of communities' Internet access is justified by the location of their municipality, which is within the "Digital Belt." They also state that the Internet service is present in most communities, unlike what happens with the cell phone, which has less coverage.

Currently, according to the Brazilian Association of Internet and Telecommunications Providers (ABRINT), 86% of Ceará municipalities are covered by optical fiber, which favored the expansion of the Internet service. When compared to other states in the Northeast, Paraíba reaches 39.5% of coverage, while in Piauí this percentage is only 18%.

The possibility of using the Internet in the community is directly related to the investments made by the government to expand the Ceará Digital Belt (CDC), and by the private sector, which in the state has more than 300 companies providing the service. The great motivations for these investments are clearly aimed at creating favorable conditions for the proclaimed economic development in the various regions of the state. In this context, private companies seek to seize market shares in order to guarantee their profits.

Contradictorily and indirectly, these initiatives end up favoring the communities' Internet access. Although this has a cost for rural families, the investments made have enabled provision of cheaper, better quality and more comprehensive services.

3.3. It wasn't always like this....

In this context of structural changes that favored the expansion of Internet coverage in the state of Ceará, the women who participated in the research were invited to describe what they remembered from their first access to the Internet. We sought to identify in their narratives the circumstances, motivations and feelings experienced when diving into the virtual network for the first time.

The spaces for this first access were their homes, the workplace, in computer courses, school, the union, and the culture space. According to the statements, the first access was made mainly by computer. Few of them had their first access on a cell phone. Three of them said that they had already taken a computer course, which, in a way, favored greater familiarity with the computer when accessing the Internet for the first time.

Not all of them remembered when exactly they had the first experience, but some of them indicated that it happened in the mid-2000s, about 15 years ago. The most recent first access indicated was in 2017, therefore, just one year before the data collection of this research.

The reasons for the first access are diverse: participation in the electoral campaign of the then candidate Lula; access to the job data system; study; access to social networks; solution of pending issues of government-supported projects; activism.

Regarding feelings shared, curiosity, surprise, anxiety and emotion stand out. In view of the difficulties faced in the first access, it is also possible to identify frustration. Most of them reported having relied on the support from others to reduce or overcome initial difficulties.

3.4. The Internet in women's daily life

The women's way of life in communities and the relationships they establish with their people are marked by traditional foundations and practices but also by the dynamism of history, the incorporation of new elements in each context. Currently, the cell phone and the Internet are elements that have caused substantial changes in these peoples' behavior. With a cell phone at hand, and in some cases a computer and Internet connection, these women remain tuned in to the world.

Most of them do not need to leave their home for access to be guaranteed. Between the intense and invisible work of women in the fields, in the productive backyard, in fishing, in handicraft, in the domestic space and in formal job, they are accompanying and interacting on the virtual network. One third of the communities surveyed, in addition to the Internet service installed in part of the households, also have private, public and community facilities, such as Internet Cafés, digital islands and culture houses.

Much of the interaction between women and access to diverse content is done through social networks. Most of them use social networks effectively, and the main ones are WhatsApp, used by all, followed by Facebook (11 women), Instagram (7); Twitter, Messenger, Skype and or Hello (3); and Signal and Telegram (1). In addition to social networks, they also use e-mail (11).

In the case of using WhatsApp, they indicated participation in family, community and movement groups in which they are members. In relation to these virtual groups, part of them expressed the inconvenience of receiving the famous chain messages, which they usually do not pass on to other people. One of them reported that she participates in a group where they established the rule of sending a maximum of three pictures per message. Still on these groups, part of them considers that men of WhatsApp groups talk nonsense and post sexist jokes.

A relevant aspect in the use of social networks is the low or no cost when compared to telephone calls. As a result, women use, to a large extent, the WhatsApp app much more than telephone calls. The "zap," as they usually call it, has become a tool for everyday use, which favors communication with families and with people inside and outside communities.

In traditional communities, oral aspect stands out as a way of ensuring memory and dissemination of ancestral knowledge. This presupposes an intergenerational relationship where older people are often teaching references to younger generations. In the case of knowledge for handling and exploring digital technologies, as mentioned above, they are more commonly used and learned by the youngest ones. In this case, youth has played an important collaborative role in older people's learning, in digital inclusion processes, sharing what they know with the community.

Regarding the behavior on the network, it was identified that most women do not produce content for the Internet. They explained that this is due to the lack of familiarity in the use of tools and applications, as well as to challenges in interaction/participation.

Some younger women demonstrated greater ability in using devices and applications and producing content, and there are reports that, in

one of the communities, young people have this role of boosting the production of videos and other pieces of communication, managing channels on the Internet (YouTube) to disseminate information on the struggles of their territories against threats from predatory tourism and wind farms.

In the dialogue established with the research participants, no more in-depth analyses of the limits of the Internet were found, which, although may favor the expression of historically discriminated people and groups, can also reproduce a situation of injustices and control by large corporations, which hinder freedom and greater capacity in producing and circulating content.

When we presented the analysis developed by Free Feminist University on digital security, they revealed that they didn't used to think about it. At the moment, three publications of the University were presented and delivered, in partnership with other organizations that work with Internet security.[29] When reflecting about issues of digital security, some of them anguish and anxiety and an interest in reflecting and deepening this debate with their groups and communities.

Regarding the risks that the Internet can offer, one of them reported her concern for her son, when she realized that he was sneaking around content inappropriate for his age. Faced with what she considered worrying, even facing difficulties in accessing the Internet, she sought help from a community teacher to install an application that allows her son's Internet browsing to be monitored.

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[29] *Guia Prática de Estratégias e Táticas para Segurança Digital Feminista* **[Practical Guide to Strategies and Tactics for Feminist Digital Security]**. Available at: https://bit.ly/2xp00nX
Celulares & Comunicações: Nossa Batalha no campo virtual – Enfrentando a violência contra nós, mulheres, no espaço virtual **[Cell Phones & Communications: Our Battle in the virtual field – Facing violence against us, women, on the virtual space]**. Available at: https://bit.ly/3f1jIai.
Segurança na Internet: nossa batalha no campo virtual – Enfrentando a violência contra nós, mulheres, no espaço virtual **[Internet security: our battle on the virtual field – Facing violence against us women in the virtual space]**. Available at: https://bit.ly/2YnzI0D.

3.5. Internet for what?

From the women's statements, we classified three main motivations for their Internet access: activism, training, and entertainment.

The first observation that can be made from the women's statements is that the Internet represents for them a **potent instrument to fight for your rights!** In addition to communication aimed at mobilizing and articulating activities, they also seek to follow local, national and world news, visit social movements and Non-Governmental Organizations' websites, such as Geledés. They also follow pages, and profiles on YouTube, as *Papo de Preta*[30].

The Internet represents a tool that favors the **access to information and new knowledge**. On the Internet, they have access to materials (texts, videos, images, audios, etc.) for further studies and reflections on content (themes, methods and methodologies) addressed at college, work, or activism. In the same direction, they report the possibility and their experiences with distance learning courses (EaD).

The third motivation is the use of the Internet as **entertainment,** searching for and listening to music, watching movies, getting makeup tips, watching humor channels, learning culinary recipes, among other experiences.

In addition to the motivations described above, one of the participants (indigenous woman), who is an artisan, uses her cell phone and applications, such as WhatsApp, to advertise and market her products. Even if she considers her writing/reading difficulties, as the application allows recording and sending voice messages, it facilitates her communication and helps her in selling her products.

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[30] Available at: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvu2MvWjNozGxCdRlY1034Q. Access on September 20 2019.

4. Final considerations

The research revealed that women live in territories marked by injustice and environmental racism, generating conflicts between traditional communities and people/companies that have interests in their lands and territories. These situations result in the violation of the traditional peoples' and communities' rights. Even if all the people in these territories are not engaged, there is political organization, resistance and struggles in defense of their rights in all of them.

Women have a critical analysis of the situation of injustice in which they live. Those who are engaged in specific women's organizations denounce sexism, the injustice experienced by women and the struggle for greater recognition of their rights. Jan Marie Fritz[31] highlights the importance of listening to women's voices in the fight for environmental justice. For her,

> many community members may not have seen women in the roles of analysts and activists. Women generally lead neighborhood groups that fight against environmental racism and, very often, are the strongest support in these groups, fighting for the good cause in defense of their children, their families and their homes.

The research on women's political engagement indicates that they represent this support. Their performance and their voices are fundamental to end the invisibility and the historical silencing of traditional peoples and communities. In this exercise, they build spaces of coexistence, reproduction and construction of ancestral knowledge and practices in the territories, articulation of the struggle and resistance.

The dialogue with women and further analysis reveals that an unjust reality still exists in relation to access and its quality when we consider traditional peoples and communities. Despite the statements on the limits to this access, such as the lack of mobile Internet signal or poor

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[31] In the article *"Confrontando o Racismo Ambiental: boas ideias, vozes femininas, perspectivas globais"* **[Confronting Environmental Racism: good ideas, female voices, global perspectives]**, which is part of the Racismo ambiental [Environmental Racism] collection, from the I Brazilian Seminar on Environmental Racism, held by FASE in 2006.

quality and high fees, in general women have been able to access the Internet on a daily basis.

The arrival of the Internet to communities, with greater coverage than the landline and cell phone signal, has caused, among other things, strengthening of struggles for women's rights. Internet access has provided navigation on social networking applications that keep these women connected with their families, communities and the world. From these applications, they make articulation and political mobilization, give visibility to their reality and their culture, denounce rights violations and claim their rights. They also have access to new knowledge, which contributes to their personal, political and professional training.

The women from traditional communities in Ceará who participated in our research are potential students and, some of them, collaborators at the Free Feminist University. Getting closer to these women allowed us to realize some of the limits and possibilities of their Internet access, but, much more than that, that their experiences and reflections point to the need for the University to address specific content and themes related to the ethnic-racial identity of women from traditional peoples, the reality of their territories and, particularly, their experience.

Most of them do not have a feminist identity but have shown an interest in learning more about feminism. It is recommended that the Free Feminist University should consider the knowledge produced by the women from traditional peoples about their own realities and feminisms. This should reflect on the choice of materials (texts, videos, images, music, poems...) and produced by these women as well as on and their involvement as collaborators and educators at the University.

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& FEMINISTA
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The Internet and the inequalities that cross our lives: a debate on the use of Internet by Recife's popular class feminist activists

Sophia Branco*

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Sociologist, activist at the Pernambuco Women's Forum and collaborator at Universidade Livre Feminista.
sophiabranco@gmail.com

Research team:
Carmen Silva, Déborah Guaraná, Jéssica Barbosa and Sophia Branco

In the last decade, the Internet has become a space for intense political debates. Its use has also been an important tool for organizing street acts, has led to the emergence of new forms of resistance and transformed the way of organizing social movements. Internet access, however, is still profoundly uneven in Brazil. According to the report by Intervozes – Coletivo Brasil de Comunicação Social, *Marco Civil da Internet: violações ao direito de acesso universal previsto na lei* [Brazilian Civil Rights Framework for the Internet: violations of the universal access right provided for by law], in 2018, Brazil had only 54% of households connected to the Internet and, in the Northeast, this number dropped to 40%.

Internet access is marked by social class inequalities and between urban and rural areas. According to this same report, "nationally, the percentage of households connected to the Internet in rural areas is only 26% and the percentage of households connected in classes D and E is 23%, according to the ICT Households 2016". The Intervozes report reveals that the expansion of 3G and 4G services has been the response of the Brazilian government to the low access to broadband connection services in the country. In this way, many people have access to the mobile connection (on the cell phone) before they have access to the connection at home.

Regarding the Internet use in Recife, Pernambuco, the most recent data are from a survey by *Datamétrica Consultoria e Pesquisa*, carried out in 2015. It points out that, in 2015, 69% of the city's residents used the Internet, either through broadband connection or mobile Internet. Among this group, the majority were young people. The survey revealed that 94% of the population aged 16 to 24 years used the Internet in 2015 and that 43% of these 94% remain in the digital environment for five hours or more a day.

Like the Intervozes report, our research in Recife also shows that Internet use is proportional to the population's income. That is, the higher the income, the greater the use. In the capital of Pernambuco, while among classes A and B the use in 2015 was 84%, in class C this percentage dropped to 73% and, in classes D and E, to 43%. In line with what Intervozes points out, according to Datamétrica, although the difference between social classes is great, the increase in the In-

ternet access of classes D and E was understood as a reflection of the popularization of smartphones and, at the time, of 3G Internet offered by telecommunication companies.

These inequalities bring some questions related to our activism: who are the people engaged in activism on the Internet? How is the Internet use inserted in the activists' lives? How and with whom does the Internet activist dialogue? What kind of engagement does it generate? In order to debate these and other issues, we conducted a dialogue with 17 feminist activists from popular classes from different women's movements in the Metropolitan Region of Recife.[32] We aimed to discuss how the Internet is present in the lives of women participating in the research, how they position themselves politically online and their assessment of this use.

In the diversity of experiences and statements, something has become noticeable: technology is a continuous flow. People are inserted in the history of technology in the same way that technology is inserted in their stories. A situation reported by one of the participants to the dialogue circle, exemplifies this observation:

> *"This week my daughter said, 'Mom, did you know that when Grandma was born there were no cell phones yet?' I said, 'Daughter, when Mom was born, there were no cell phones.' She looked at me very shocked. 'Wow, it should be difficult'."*
> Participant 7, Recife, 2018.

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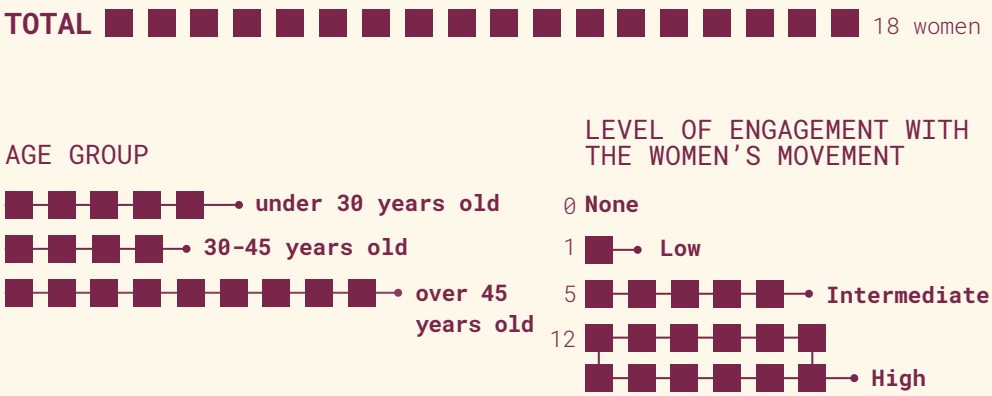
[32] Women who participate in the following activism spaces were present in the activity: Grupo Espaço Mulher [Women Space Group], Grupo de Teatro Mulheres Madalena [Mulheres Madalena Theater Group]; PartidA; Sindicato das Empregadas Domésticas [Housemaid Union]; Fórum de Mulheres de Pernambuco [Pernambuco Women's Forum]; Coletivo de Mães Feministas Ranúzia Alves [Ranúzia Alves Feminist Mothers Group]; Rede de Mulheres Negras de Pernambuco [Pernambuco Black Women Network]; Grupo Liberdade Vamo Simbora [Liberdade Vamo Simbora Group]; Rede de Feministas Antiproibicionistas [Counter-Prohibitionism Feminists Network); Cepas (Santa Luzia), Movimento de Luta dos Bairros e Favelas [Neighborhoods and Slums Struggle Movement] (MLB); Coletivo Faça Amor Não Faça Chapinha [Faça Amor Não Faça Chapinha Group] (FAFNC), Coletivo de Mulheres de Jaboatão [Jaboatão Women Group].

FIGURE 3 **PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS - RECIFE**



Source: Data prepared by the author (2018).

Technology changes the way we live. But when we enter this flow, we are not passive receivers. We make different uses of these technologies, which connect to and are influenced by our broader context of life. The participant who told us this story is less than thirty years old. At the same time that she sees that her relationship with the Internet is different from that of her seven-year-old daughter, she also realizes that her relationship with the Internet is different from the relationship that her mother and grandmother establish with this universe. These generational differences were one of the important aspects that emerged in the statements shared in the circle, but we could also note that this is not the only factor that influences our use. Other elements that influence the ways we use the Internet are how long we have been accessing the Internet, the moment in life when we had contact with this universe and the reasons why we started using these tools.

1. The Internet use

Most of the activists who participated in the circle affirmed that their Internet use has intensified as a result of their access to smartphones. Cell phones are much more present in our daily lives than computers and this also defines the way we use the Internet. This information can be a significant to think about, for example, the greater familiarity that some activists have with WhatsApp than with e-mail.

E-mail is a tool that many have known for a long time, but that has not entered their daily lives like WhatsApp. According to Priscilla Brito, in dialogue with what Karen Kohn and Cláudia Herte de Moraes[33] propose, tools such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, "had a great impact on our ways of sociability, as they produce new ways of publicizing, sharing and organizing more accessible and intuitive infor-

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[33] In her dissertation, entitled ***Primavera das Mulheres: internet e dinâmicas de protesto nas manifestações feministas no Rio de Janeiro de 2015***, **[Spring of Women: Internet and protest dynamics in feminist demonstrations in Rio de Janeiro in 2015]**, Priscilla Brito discusses this impact in dialogue with what Karen Kohn and Cláudia Herte de Moraes discussed in their article ***"O impacto das novas tecnologias na sociedade: conceitos e características da Sociedade da Informação e da Sociedade Digital"*** **[The impact of new technologies on society: concepts and characteristics of the Information Society and the Digital Society].**

mation on the network." Even with Internet available on a daily basis, many activists said that they continue to access e-mail and the computer "from time to time," as we can see from the following statements:

> *"Sometimes, at home, I turn on the computer because my brother keeps saying that if I don't turn on the computer I will find it full of cockroaches. The cell phone is easier [sic]."*
> Participant 2, Recife, 2018.

> *"I rarely access my email. But there are things that, once in a while, once a month, I access. Because there's the singing group...We are in the group and the people ask your email. Then, from time to time, I access it."*
> Participant 13, Recife, 2018.

It was possible to observe that, among the participants who were less familiar with digital technologies, computers and cell phones are seen as different universes. Although e-mail can also be accessed by cell phone, it was not mentioned among the frequent accesses to the Internet.

WhatsApp and Facebook were identified as the most used tools, mainly as a means of communicating with people (who are distant or present in our daily lives), getting information (through the exchange of texts and websites that are passed on), and exchanging photos. Some of the participants consider social networks a space to disseminate information on topics important to feminism and to debate political issues. But many also stated that they feel unmotivated to raise controversial debates in these spaces because of the stress it generates.

YouTube was the third application/website most cited by participants in the circle. Its most common use was for listening to music, followed by the search for videos and films. Many also use Netflix, which has emerged as the primary medium through which they watch movies. Thus, YouTube is more used for the consumption of shorter videos, in general, to get information about some theme, such as political content, feminist content, cooking recipes and various tutorials, including understanding how to use the devices and applications that involve the Internet use.

The understanding of the Internet as a space to seek information and training was shared by all of us. We use the Internet for formal studies, in Distance Learning (DE) courses or to study content related to face-to-face courses we are taking. And we also research subjects of our particular interest, following an expanded understanding of what it means to study. These ways of using the Internet can be seen in the speeches of some of the participants:

> *"I attend college and there is sign language class. I am always late for the sign language class because it is at 8:00 am. Then, what did I do? I downloaded a sign Language app. I got 8.5 in the sign language test. I miss being in training on black feminism. So I do this training a lot on the Internet. Now I have my fair. And I don't know how to cook. I have learned to do a lot of things on the Internet,"*
> Participant 11, Recife, 2018.

> *"I really like researching what's going on in the world regarding the feminist movement. [...] I also took an EaD course already. But EaD is very difficult. We get home so tired. I prefer assimilating things by watching videos, online classes. I assimilate things better when I watch online classes."*
> Participant 6, Recife, 2018.

> *"What do I look for on the Internet? I look for everything. Today, the Internet is my biggest source of information. Everything I want to know I seek on the Internet. I am careful to check if it is reliable. I am careful, but it is difficult because lots of things appear. I don't share much, because I have difficulty trusting; the main content I seek is linked to my identity: being a mother, being black, being a feminist."*
> Participant 8, Recife, 2018.

> *"YouTube has a lot of cool stuff. Teach us in a didactic way. In a way very necessary for us to learn. And I showed my mom a lot of things. There were things I didn't know yet, I had no basis. I didn't know institutional racism, but I knew that when the*

police arrived, I knew it existed, but I didn't know the name. I accessed Youtube and posted it. And there are cool people. Who teach us things that we experience every day. People who are studying this and teaching us."
Participant 7, Recife, 2018.

"I participate in many WhatsApp groups. I don't participate in all of them, but I think it's important to be there, because I get information."
Participant 8, Recife, 2018.

Access to content available on the Internet and the popularization of videos as a source of information are important issues for thinking of our political activities. Who do we want to reach with the content we produce? How to do it? Many participants in the dialogue circle said that they prefer searching for content through videos. And, in fact, we have seen that videos, images and short texts have been the main ways of exchanging information on the Internet. If, on the one hand, the videos discuss a number of issues in a didactic and accessible way, on the other hand, they are habits that are increasingly distancing us from reading. As one of the young activist who produces content for the Internet stated,

"On Youtube we have the possibility to truly transmit information. On Facebook, it is text, people don't read text. YouTube is easier because people don't read text. So you can transmit information in a better way."
Participant 11, Recife, 2018.

We can make two distinctions in relation to the ways in which women who were present in the circle use the Internet to study and get information. (1) The first distinction is between (1.1) the Internet use for the study of formal (EaD or face-to-face) content and (1.2) the study of content that relates to the activists' own interest. (2) The second differentiation is related to how these contents reach activists. (2.1) Some participants search on the Internet more autonomously, using Google or YouTube search engine. (2.2) Others access information filtered by social circles on WhatApp or Facebook. In this second case, the relationship that is established with the content is more similar to the way

we consume traditional media (television, newspaper, radio), since the information "reaches" the activists, even if they are not doing specific search. In other words, it is a type of relationship in which we are not so active in choosing what we want to consume, even though on the Internet the content we consume comes from sources much more diverse than when we consume traditional media.

We were also able to observe two different ways of (3) checking the reliability of the contents, which are related to the way the activists get information through the Internet. (3.1) The activists who search more autonomously begin to create a list of sites, bloggers and YouTubers that they trust. It is a relationship of trust that is established on the Internet and strengthens as they follow those pages and realize that they are aligned with their political thinking. (3.2) Activists who have less active consumption on the Internet, on the other hand, tend to check the reliability of the information according to the person who shared the information (on Facebook or WhatsApp). This is a relationship of trust that is established offline and that is transposed to online interactions. In other words, it is in the person or group of people (such as WhatsApp or Facebook activism groups) that these women trust and not the website, blog or video itself. This does not mean that there is also no critical sense in relation to the content they receive, but in these cases, the reference of the person who shared the information is the first requirement for thinking about the veracity of the information.

Other Internet tools that also appeared in the conversation, but less frequently, were: Skype, Hangout, apps that follow climate change, Uber, Instagram, Distance Learning (EaD) platforms, Cittamobi, bank apps, Tinder, Badoo, and Twitter (only one participant mentioned Twitter).

2. Our reflections on the use of Internet

Almost all research participants have a very close and daily relationship with the Internet. Many even reported exhaustion caused by such intense contact. But, although the participants' use is intense, most reported making a restricted (or almost restricted) use of WhatsApp, Facebook and YouTube. Several criticisms arose regarding the time that the Internet ends up taking in our lives. On the other hand, the crit-

icisms regarding the type of use have not generated much debate. This reveals how we still talk very little about this topic and about our security in this universe. The low depth of critical reflections on our Internet use is an even more intriguing fact if we think that the dialogue circle was carried out with activists who make a critical analysis in relation to various aspects of their lives.

The experiences and feelings shared at the meeting surprised us due to their venting nature. We realized how much we, women, have to talk about when it comes to the issues surrounding this universe, such as the time needed to use it and to learn how to use it, the challenges found, the embarrassment caused by not mastering the tools, the relationships of dependency that are created with our children and other younger relatives, the difficulties in access, the conflicts in political debates, among many other issues.

When we addressed the issue of security, the debate was permeated mainly with the concern with the contents accessed by children, especially daughters and sons. Three activists also shared with the group their concerns about access to their bank data and using the Uber app. These concerns revealed that not everyone in the group considered the Internet to be a safe space or that we can trust the applications, the connection networks and the people with whom we exchange information without face-to-face interaction. These participants' fear was related to their bank data being stolen. Regarding Uber, they were afraid that the app drivers were not reliable people.

Still in relation to security, another participant presented a reflection that disagreed with the other statements:

> *"One thing on the Internet that has attracted attention is also that if you look for something on Google, your email will be full of advertising. When I want to know someone's life, I access the Internet to look for it. But that also affects people's judgment. How far to be on the Internet ... We are not sure of anything. We know that our WhatsApp political groups are monitored."*
> Participant 8, Recife, 2018.

Her speech reveals the concern with the confidentiality of our data and a broader debate about our own privacy. This discussion, however, did not affect the group. There were also no reflections on the political dimension of access to communication through the Internet as a right of all and everyone, or on the possibility of looking for applications and social networks that are not so aligned with the large Internet companies and that have more secure confidentiality mechanisms. As an example of the absence of this strategic positioning regarding security, Signal, which is an application similar to WhatsApp, but more secure, was mentioned only by two activists in a very superficial way, not appearing in its daily use.

The low use of these applications cannot be thought of without taking into account the large companies' power of influence and access to technology, especially access to cell phones. Most people use WhatsApp, which is a reflection of the strength of large companies in the way we access technologies. Thus, for participants of the circle and for most people, it is difficult to completely switch from using WhatsApp to using other, safer applications. Although we were more secure that way, we would, in contrast, lose connection with many people who use WhatsApp only. Many of us do not have access to mobile devices with enough space to have many applications, since the files are getting bigger and our devices have become obsolete more and more quickly.

Another example in relation to the power that large companies have over our choices was the statements of two participants, who said they were registered on Instagram, had the application installed on their cell phones, but did not know how to use it. As in other spheres of life, the large Internet companies also create needs so that people are constantly consuming new products. We often adhere to these trends without questioning whether we really want or need it. Consumerism is a discussion present in the daily lives of the women participating in the research. It was a theme that appeared in the circle in relation to the unnecessary consumption we make of electronic products, such as televisions and cell phones. The absence of critical analysis when it comes to the Internet use reveals how this is a topic that still needs a lot of debate among us.

3. Access to technologies

The structural inequalities faced by participants in accessing the Internet are issues that concern their lives beyond the online universe. Long working hours, lack of time, poor services in the neighborhoods in which they live and the lack of access to some consumer goods are among these inequalities. The model and memory of cell phones, for example, were mentioned at various times as obstacles to accessing certain content and using different applications.

Several participants spoke about cell phones and computers being shared with their families. This issue was not necessarily posed as a problem when discussing Internet access, because, in general, the possibility of purchasing cell phones and computers was presented as an achievement and as something that arouses the interest of everyone at home. But, especially for mothers, sometimes this sharing was also seen as a factor of annoyance. These nuances can be perceived from some statements:

> *"From 2015 onwards the situation started to improve and I bought a laptop. It was general happiness. It was a war at home because of that. Everyone wanted it. Then, our Internet access started. We put Internet at home. The cell phone too. Nowadays, my family and I, we have a very intimate relationship with the Internet. Mom has Tinder, Badoo, everything. She makes video conference with the boys, I get shocked."*
> Participant 7, Recife, 2018.

> *"I use my cell phone a lot. I've just bought a computer. But it ends up not being mine. Whoever is a mother knows this."*
> Participant 6, Recife, 2018.

> *"Grandchildren use their cell phones a lot. They watch a lot of things on their cell phones. They discover things that I don't know how to handle. I ask for help and it's always 'mom, I'll see it in a minute.' When they get home, they don't let anyone see anything else. Early in the morning, when I wake up, I still watch [sic]."*
> Participant 13, Recife, 2018.

The price of the Internet is another factor that limits its access. Regarding the data package of cellular operators, some participants stated that they usually have credit and use their cell phones throughout the day, others said that they use more when they are in places with Wi-Fi, such as at home or at work, because they don't always have Internet available on their cell phones when they're on the street. We also talked about the difficulties in relation to the telephone service providers signal at the peripheries. Like so many other services, the providers are not concerned with providing quality services at the peripheries and give priority to improving services in central and more upscale neighborhoods.

Most of the time, the access to Wi-Fi in the suburbs is done through *gatonet*.[34] The use of *gatonet* is so widespread in the peripheries that one of the participants stated that she did not even know it was illegal and did not know that there were other (more expensive) Internet services. Another activist said that most people use *gatonet* in their neighborhood, but that is also because regulated Internet companies do not offer services in the region. The price of *gatonet* is approximately 25% of the value of a regular Internet. The speed connection and signal stability, however, are also usually lower than those of companies that provide regulated services, which ends up representing another obstacle to the use of Internet, mainly for downloading files and watching videos. One of the participants talked about the complexity involved in popularizing *gatonet* in the peripheries.

> *"There is one thing I want to talk about, which is the periphery Wi-Fi, the gatonet. I pay R$ 40 for the Internet. There are people who say it is corruption, but I see it differently, it has guaranteed a lot for us. Because if it didn't exist, I wouldn't be able to access other things in my life."*
> Participant 8, Recife, 2018.

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[34] ***Gatonet*** is an expression used to name clandestine companies that offer Internet services. In general, they are people who hire an Internet service and distribute that service within the community, profiting from the resale.

As with other services, the popularization of the Internet at the peripheries came largely through the emergence of unregulated ways of service provision. This reveals how access to various services has not been seen as a right.

We could see that the barriers are greater for older women. The activists' anguish in relation to the difficulties they encounter in using the Internet, computers and cell phones reveals the importance of mastering and access to these tools in their lives. In the statements that we present below, we can see how participating in the online universe contributes to the strengthening of women's self-esteem, autonomy and confidence, and it is important in their professional lives and sociability. And how not mastering these tools becomes an impediment to many other things.

> *"My sisters say that I am very fancy because I learned how to use these things. I've learned how to use the Internet a year ago. But on my cell phone I learned it about three months ago. [...] I make video conference. My daughter taught me, I taught Neném. I am learning to download, to upload files to the cloud."*
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> Participant 5, Recife, 2018.

> *"I started my internship last week and I'm having difficulties because I'm not so tuned in. People use Skype. I get lost, I have to ask for help. I have a computer at home, I have a cell phone, which I use a lot, but I haven't been able to master this tool. [...] I see the need to enter this world because of work.*
>
> Participant 3, Recife, 2018.

> *"I use it to study. I found difficulties at college. Because many teachers, in their arrogance, want you to access everything on Internet. They do not know how our reality is, the difficulties."*
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> Participant 9, Recife, 2018.

4. "An application that does not fail in my home is being a mother": Internet use and care work

Lack of time has great impact on women's lives, especially when we are talking about women from the lower classes, who face long working hours and often long ways to get to and from work. This is mainly because of the unequal division between men and women of care and domestic responsibilities. We women live an extended workday, which includes not only the work we do outside the home, but also domestic chores and care for children, the elderly or anyone who is in need of assistance with whom we have close ties. Amid these issues, we have little time for leisure and our own interests. This is no different in relation to the Internet use, as suggested by some statements we heard:

> *"Sometimes, when I want to see things, it is very early. Five o'clock in the morning I'm reading the messages."*
> Participant 4, Recife, 2018.

> *"I realized that we need time for the Internet. And women are much overloaded. One thing I realized is that I don't have time to figure out how to use the Internet. Because you go to one thing, then go to another. My finger goes this way and that way."*
> Participant 9, Recife, 2018.

The Internet also introduces a new responsibility for women in relation to the child care: monitor the content they access. As with several other needs related to care, this is another function that becomes, to a large extent, a mothers' responsibility. The participants in the circle who have children stated that sometimes other people observe that the child is accessing improper content, but even at these moments, they are the ones who are called upon to intervene. The Internet use by increasingly younger children, in this way, brings another task to the women's lives.

> *"I have a lot of problems with my son, [he] wants to be a YouTuber. The control of these things on the Internet has also been a problem, because we don't have time to monitor them. We have several rules, but we need to monitor. And our time is very short. We need to be on the Internet and we also need to monitor each other on the Internet."*
> Participant 8, Recife, 2018.

> *"In addition to the domestic education that we have to provide, in addition to education at school, we need to provide technological education."*
> Participant 10, Recife, 2018.

The activists showed great concern with the content that children access. It was interesting to see how the concern for the safety of children appeared on a recurring basis while the concern for our own safety on the Internet appeared only at very specific moments. In our analysis, this is also a reflection of how motherhood occupies a large space in women's lives, mainly because their responsibilities are not shared equally with the fathers and other caregivers.

The concern with the content accessed by children is accentuated in cases where mothers do not master the tools. There is an inversion of the power relationship and the educational process between mothers and children, which sometimes occurs when they are very young. We heard from some of the mothers present that their children explore tools that they do not know how to use, generating a series of concerns.

> *"One of these days I opened my e-mail and there was 'brother mocking.' What is it? I don't know how to use everything regarding email messages, but the boys do. I asked 'What is this about brother mocking?' 'Mom, you won't want to know.' So I keep chatting. Because these tools also have a lot of bad things. Besides being a mother, be careful to know what they are posting. And also know how to handle the tools that my children are using."*
> Participant 6, Recife, 2018.

The lack of time and opportunity to learn how to use some tools is added, in these situations, to the lack of availability of children and young adolescents to explain to mothers, aunts and grandparents issues related to the use of these technologies. Some participants said that they can count on the help of younger people when they have doubts and difficulties in relation to the basic functions of the computer and cell phone, but the majority reported that they do not find people who are patient and willing to help them. This context gives rise to feelings of frustration and lack of support. The women who are mothers said that they do not feel their care returned, because, in general, they dedicate attention and patience to the children's educational process, but that same attention is not returned when they need help. In relation to this, some participants vented:

> *"How come you don't have time to teach me? I had time to work to buy this computer, I had time to work to buy this phone, I had time to work to pay for your college and you don't have time to teach me?"*
> Participant 10, Recife, 2018.

> *"I have difficulties, but I have difficulties because I don't have time. So I need someone to stop and teach me."*
> Participant 9, Recife, 2018.

> *"When I ask the young people, I realize the difficulty they have in teaching us what they know. Sometimes they don't even answer. Thy have no patience. But we need to be patient when they need something. It's always like that. I said 'hey, we are not born knowing it, right.' [...] Because of the easy access they have today, it is much easier. But for us it is not. Sometimes I want to know how I make a short video to post. She doesn't teach me step by step. This is the great difficulty."*
> Participant 3, Recife, 2018.

5. *"The Internet consumes me"*: Internet and mental health

The intensity with which the Internet is present in our lives often generates a feeling of suffocation. It consumes a lot of time and energy, affecting our mental health, mainly because of the anxiety it generates. Almost all women present reported some type of exhaustion in relation to this use, whether as "abuse," "tiredness," expressing that it is necessary to be careful, expressing certain nostalgia for the times when there was no cell phone or exemplifying the ostensible presence of the Internet in your daily life, especially WhatsApp. Some statements reveal this exhaustion:

> *"I use the Internet a lot to answer Zap [WhatsApp] messages every day. There are times when you get sick of it. Even at night."*
> Participant 1, Recife, 2018.

> *"Sometimes I get sick of my cell phone. I think people are losing contact. To make matters worse, Union lawyers now decide everything on Zap [WhatsApp]. But they annoy me."*
> Participant 2, Recife, 2018.

> *"I think it is also important for us to resume direct contact, make calls, because people are losing it."*
> Participant 6, Recife, 2018.

> *"My relationship with the Internet is very intimate, very cool, but I have to take care. We have to take care of our sanity."*
> Participant 7, Recife, 2018.

> *"The Internet, I am on it 24 hours a day. I only disconnect from it to sleep. But when I wake up, it's the first thing I see. It's a kind of slavery. [...] I think we are dependent on WhatsApp."*
> Participant 8, Recife, 2018.

> *"I use my cell phone all the time. But it is not healthy. My anxiety gets much worse. Since I am connected all the time, people think I need to answer instantly. There is no working time, no activism time."*
> Participant 14, Recife, 2018.

> *"I use WhatsApp. I really hate it, but it is very necessary. But people think the world revolves around them on WhatsApp. People know that there are 500 messages posted on the group. They post millions of 'good morning.' And then you don't go to the meeting and people ask. And I say that I didn't know. 'Don't you watch the group?!'*
> Participant 11, Recife, 2018.

The acceleration of Internet communication, added to the issues that have already been discussed, such as the lack of time in women's lives, the excess of information, the difficulties to learn how to use the tools and the unavailability of the people around to help, end up generating anguish in the relationship we establish with these technologies. It is an ambiguous relationship. On the one hand, the participants reported many benefits that they realize in this use and the desire to learn how to use the tools better. On the other hand, there is frustration and exhaustion.

When it comes to politics, the stresses can be even greater. The activists talked about the clashes on Facebook and WhatsApp groups with friends, family and co-workers. Religion and elections appeared as some of the main themes that generate discussions.

> *"I have tried not to consider a lot of things from the Internet. I haven't used much the Internet to do activism, because of mental health issues. Because we get really upset with people. I stopped after I had a fight with a friend of mine about racism and I got really bad. Then, after that, I stopped. I use it more to socialize, post pictures."*
> Participant 8, Recife, 2018.

> *"I used Facebook a lot on my cell phone. But when Marielle died, people's behavior made me to give up. Then I uninstalled it. When I tried to reinstall it, my cell phone did not have storage space anymore."*
> Participant 11, Recife, 2018.

> *"At the time Lula was arrested, I removed Facebook so as not to fight with anyone."*
> Participant 4, Recife, 2018.

> *"I don't post much on Facebook, because I don't have the patience. Because on Facebook people want to express their opinion, but when you express yours, people do not respect it. Then I prefer not to speak. There is a lot of discussion."*
> Participant 3, Recife, 2018.

What we can see in the activists' statements is that there is a discomfort generated by the opinions we read, but there is not always willingness to enter the debates. Sometimes, we prefer leaving the social network than to "get into trouble." But if we are talking about women who are engaged in activism, we can assume that political disputes are, in some way, present in our lives. Why are some of us more willing to engage in disputes outside the Internet than on the Internet? One of the answers to this question may be related to the time and the way political debates take place on the Internet, which makes them more stressful. One of the participants' speeches illustrates this issue well.

> *"It is a difficulty even for you to make your point. We don't have time to put all the arguments that we have on the Internet. It is all very superficial. And nobody is going to change their minds because of an Internet debate. So I prefer dedicating myself to something deeper. For you to explain everything you believe, you can't, it's very fast. It is all instantaneous. And sometimes it takes longer than it should. This creates anguish, because that is not something you said and passed on. It was registered. So it makes room for everyone to talk about what you said. The time of the Internet is different from the time of life."*
> Participant 8, Recife, 2018.

This participant's statement summarizes the complexity of the relationship between the time of the Internet and the time of life. On the one hand, they are debates that take place at a very fast pace, require readiness from those who are participating and need to be synthetic, since, as put by some participants, on Facebook people do not read much. On the other hand, the fact of being registered means that the debate does not end. Activism is no longer limited to specific spaces and times because, at any time, you can access your cell phone or computer and continue the debate or see the repercussion of the comment you made. What we could see is that the Internet has brought completely new questions to our activism, for which we often have no answers yet.

6. Internet and activism

From the experience of the dialogue circle, we can differentiate between two forms of activism on the Internet present in the lives of the women with whom we talk.

(1) The first way does not consider the Internet a space for political dispute, but a means of communication and mobilization that can enhance our networks, movements and groups and our face-to-face activities. This activism does not occur through debates and disputes in online spaces, but by sending invitations and records of events, through access to information, strengthening of communication between activists and deepening of our knowledge on the themes related to activism. The following statements are examples of this type of action:

> *"I like to divulge when we are in the movement, to divulge when we are on the street. I invite the companions in the Zap groups to the events."*
> Participant 2, Recife, 2018.

> *"The activism group I follow, I just read messages, I don't post anything. And what I realize that can be useful for my group, I talk about it."*
> Participant 3, Recife, 2018.

> *"I like posting pictures when we are at a meeting. I take a picture and send it to Zap group. Only on WhatsApp."*
> Participant 5, Recife, 2018.

> *"I divulge events a lot. That which will happen. I keep vibrating. Sometimes I can't go, but I keep talking to the girls. You are going? Go there!"*
> Participant 6, Recife, 2018.

> *"I divulge activism. I asked [my daughter] how it was. Then she said "You copy, go where you want and paste."*
> Participant 13, Recife, 2018.

The activists who act in this way on the Internet understand the online space as a place of dispute, but they are unwilling to participate in these clashes for considering it too much exhaustive. Thus, they use these tools to enhance the performance they develop in person.

(2) The other way of activism present in the statements refers to considering the Internet an arena for political debate. They are women who act on the Internet and see this space as a place of dispute for narratives and tension. In this group, we find a division between (2.1) the activists who pass on the content and (2.2) the activists who produce the content.

> *"I like passing on a few sentences to shock. Sometimes I post things on Facebook talking about racism, talking about violence against women. I create controversy among Christians. Who wants, 'likes' it, who doesn't want, doesn't 'like' it. This empowerment, I learned from my companions."*
> Participant 2, Recife, 2018.

> *"There's the family group. It's a mess. But family is family. Most are evangelical. It's difficult. When I post something about abortion, it's a mess. Because I am not able to hold debates yet. I think is difficult for me. [...] On WhatsApp I visualize more*

than I post. Because sometimes we post things and people don't understand. They get it wrong. So I'm afraid."
Participant 6, Recife, 2018.

We realized that the participants who only pass on the content do not usually participate actively in the political debates in WhatsApp groups of the movements they are members, except when they are smaller groups from their closer groups. There is willingness for political confrontation outside the movements, which is manifested when they review controversial content on Facebook or in a WhatsApp group. But there is insecurity among this group regarding the production of content. Thus, they usually pass on social media texts, events, phrases and images they receive from groups and people they trust.

The division between who reproduces and who produces the content reveals inequalities present in social movements that go beyond the Internet use. The security to produce content is often linked to differences in our backgrounds, which have an evident class divide, where some women have had access to training that is more valued than others. The initiative to produce content is also linked to self-assuredness to reveal oneself to the public and enter political clashes. In other words, it is related to the greater or lesser access we have to training and information, but it is also related to more subjective mechanisms of oppression present in a society as unequal as ours, where there is a devaluation of knowledge and the way of expressing oneself of a part of the population. These differences are related mainly to social class, race and gender. This has a huge impact on our self-esteem and self-assuredness.

In the face-to-face training spaces and distance learning experiences of the Free Feminist University, we have noticed that valuing women's experiences encourages our participation in the discussions. Sometimes, we feel safer to talk about our lives than to talk about certain topics more generally or theoretically. And when we talk about our lives, we are also having political debates and formulating ideas about the world we live in. When we reflect on our lives together, we are building collective knowledge about society. But how do we make ourselves realize all the knowledge we have? And how can we make

people feel more confident about public speaking and debating, inside and outside our movements, about these themes?

What we could see in the dialogue circle is that two ways are important to reduce the inequalities that exist in our political participation: internal conformation and our strengthening. The intertwining between these two processes is an important principle of feminist pedagogy. Access to information, when it is not accompanied by a process of emotional strengthening, does not necessarily guarantee our autonomy for political confrontation, because insecurity and low self-esteem frequently hinder our participation in debates.

The fight against inequalities within the movements is not only important for the way we operate on the street or on the Internet. It is important for the construction of our own political spaces, since the structure and guidelines of our movements will be defined by the activists who feel strengthened to make internal disputes. When we have serious class and race inequalities within these spaces, many issues regarding the most vulnerable women's lives end up being obscured, this is a serious impediment for us to be able to move forward in the achievement of important rights for all of us.

In our dialogue, the activists who said they produce political content on the Internet were a minority (only four participants) and all were under thirty years old. Three of them started their activism on the Internet and have an intense relationship of consumption and production of content. They stated that it was through the Internet that they expanded their activism network (it was even in the virtual space that they met each other) and that the content with which they came into contact on social networks, YouTube and blogs had a great impact on their personal conformation. They said that they used Internet content to chat with friends and family when they still didn't feel safe to discuss certain topics. Over time, they took ownership of the discussions and understood the importance of talking about their realities. Today, they write texts, produce videos, write poetry, publish illustrations. These issues can be seen in the following statements:

> *"Nowadays I use the Internet to do direct activism. In addition to the face-to-face activism, I use the Internet as an activist. But that*

was a whole construction, self-assuredness to build new narratives. So as to know that on the Internet we can expose what we live in everyday life. Build a new narrative as black, periphery women. Speak for ourselves. [...] I use Instagram a lot. For now I build our narratives. And denounce. I use Facebook a lot to denounce. Good things and bad things that we live and nobody knows. And as she said, there are a lot of those comments. There are people who feel entitled to say anything. Today I have tried to maintain my sanity, use the network in a mature way. And accept that today the network is a way of activism."
Participant 7, Recife, 2018.

"The group we are has started as a Facebook page. Groups that already existed started calling us to participate in events. So we formed on the Internet. Then we didn't want to be just a page, but a group that disseminates its actions on the Internet. So we started using other tools: Instagram, YouTube."
Participant 11, Recife, 2018.

In addition to making their own realities visible and disputing political spaces, these activists also understand that, by placing themselves on social networks, they have the possibility of taking debates to people who belong to their closest contact networks, but with whom they would not talk about certain topics. In this way, their online activities also cross Internet barriers and end up becoming part of their daily lives, since the things they post end up leading to other conversations between neighbors, friends and family.

"Sometimes there are people who come up to talk to me saying 'hey, I didn't even think about it.' Because not only people from the activism are on my Facebook. On Facebook, I have my cousin who has three children and her husband is in prison. My neighbor, whose son is in prison, thinks that the war is against drugs and not against our black bodies. So, it is a space where you can talk about these things."
Participant 7, Recife, 2018.

If the Internet has brought us new challenges, it has also created a series of facilities for our lives, allowing us to participate in debates and spaces that we would not have participated in before. These experiences make some of us have an optimistic view of the possibilities that the Internet brings to activism. Among its benefits, the participants mentioned facilities in relation to communication, reduction of time and cost to hold meetings (which can be held online) and savings in access to content (things that previously needed to be purchased and now can be found on the Internet).

> *"Now, what's important. In the back-country we had a lot of communication challenges before the Internet. Scheduling a meeting was a mess. I had to find a cell phone with credit. And not always there is a cell phone with credit. When there was no money to purchase credit, we went to find a partner, union, city hall. We said we were going to call SUS but, in fact, we were going to call our companions to schedule a meeting. Now, with Internet, it became much easier. It flows better. We end up doing this articulation and it is very important."*
> Participant 14, Recife, 2018.

> *"Before you had to leave home to go to a meeting, to an event. Now, what you would learn at that meeting or event you can find on YouTube in a very didactic way. [...] The Internet makes people see our daily lives and be moved in relation to us. So I, as a black woman, realize that the Internet brings me visibility. I can talk about the things that happen to me and I have visibility."*
> Participant 11, Recife, 2018.

This second statement also reveals an analysis of the Internet as a more democratic debate space. The Internet has been seen by some authors as an arena that enables historically oppressed groups to vocalize. This is an interpretation shared by these activists. On the Internet, they found content with which they identified and also found space to talk about their own experiences.

Priscilla Brito[35], however, draws attention to the importance of mastery of communication techniques and the understanding of the structure of functioning of social networks to make the content produced visible. This means that knowing how to record and edit videos, write texts that fit the models that are successful on the Internet, master design tools that enable women to produce memes and cards and understand the mechanisms of dissemination of posts on social networks are central issues for the success that a content may have or not on the Internet . The youngest women in the circle were those who showed confidence in this knowledge.

> *"And the important thing is that we try to talk not only about us to us. Because Facebook creates algorithms that only see people who always see [your posts]. So we have a strategy at the Agreste Forum. When we post it on the Internet, everyone accesses Facebook to share it."*
> Participant 14, Recife, 2018.

The mastery of these tools and the understanding of the functioning of social networks adds to other difficulties that were reported by some women, such as the fact that they do not feel comfortable speaking publicly or writing texts on certain topics, the lack of time to produce content and the lack of time to learn how to use the Internet better, to have access to cell phones and cameras that enable the production of quality videos, among other issues.

The Internet can, in fact, make our lives easier and expand our forms of organization and political participation. But, given the inequalities that are present in our lives, it can also be another way of exclusion. For example, if holding meetings can help us, reducing cost and travel time, other women have found impossible for them to participate in meetings that take place on the Internet because they do not know how to use the necessary tools. How to use the Internet to our advantage, understanding all the diversity that exists in our movements?

The expansion of the command and familiarity with the Internet tools is an important path, but we believe that this needs to be accompanied by processes of personal development and strengthening within our own

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[35] In her already mentioned dissertation.

movements, which seek to combat inequalities between us. We believe that different types of training processes can contribute to this strengthening. Distance learning appears as another available resource, which can expand our access to information and spaces for interaction. However, we also conclude that if the way online courses and platforms are designed is not aligned with the different ways we use the Internet, we are at the risk of colliding and reproducing the existing inequalities.

What we were able to conclude from this experience is that we still have a lot to talk about using the Internet and the impact it has on our lives This is a tool increasingly present in our daily lives, it brings good news, it has potentials that we can explore and it also presents new challenges for us to think about our political performance.

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Opening paths...

Far from generating conclusions, the conduction of the *Popular activist women and the use of Internet Diagnostic Research* opened a fertile field for new reflections on the political-pedagogical practices of the Free Feminist University. In this sense, we can say that we reached our initial objective, which was to raise elements that would help to overcome the difficulties encountered in carrying out educational and communication processes with women from different parts of the country.

Establishing dialogues and deepening questions about the structural inequalities present in the lives of women in the city, the countryside and the forests – based on well-defined regional cutouts – was an extremely rich experience. The challenges are immense, as many are beyond our governance. But, without a doubt, the lessons learned from this process will support our training and communication strategies for the future, especially with regard to the strengthening of feminist and women's groups, one of our goals and the very meaning for the existence of the Free Feminist University.

How to develop a feminist pedagogy that involves all women, considering the different asymmetries between us? What virtual spaces, technologies and methodologies can collaborate to expand participation in our formative processes? How can we prevent our courses from being another pressure factor for women in accessing the Internet? These are some of the questions that we have reflected on collectively throughout our educational and research pathways.

At the same time, this dive into the realities so diverse from the research participants helps us realize other angles regarding the use and access to information and communication technologies (ICT) by activist women from popular classes. Bearing in mind that innumerable social inequalities cross our lives, it is necessary to advance in the reflection on the processes experienced by these activists, from their groups and networks, in relation to the Internet access and technology use. Among some elements raised and that impact the relationship of activist women with the Internet, we highlight structural racism, gender, social class, territorial and regional inequalities, violence and threats to human rights defenders.

At the same time, it is necessary to deepen the analysis on the (new) practices of articulation, mobilization and communication of women in

the digital environment, individual and collective digital care strategies, and on political action in the context of COVID-19 pandemic in Brazil. In relation to this last point, we see how intensely women are working at the moment, using ICT in the construction of strategies in face of the threat of genocide of a large part of the Brazilian population – not by chance, black, poor and living in peripheral areas –, performing live broadcasts to mark public positions in the defense of human rights, denouncing violations and confronting fascist and ultra-liberal forces, not to mention solidarity networks and strategies, self-care and care among ourselves in this moment of extreme difficulty and loss of lives that matter.

Thus, presenting the results of the research precisely in the midst of a health, political and civilization crisis of unimaginable proportions in Brazil makes even clearer the need to take steps forward in the path of confronting these structural inequalities and injustices that cross the lives of us women and large part of the Brazilian population.

Universidade Livre Feminista

Universidade Livre Feminista [Free Feminist University] is a collective and collaborative action that promotes reflection, exchange of ideas and experiences between women of different origins, identities and fields of action, articulating subjects of the feminist, anti-racist and anti-capitalist struggle. Through face-to-face and virtual activities, it develops continuous feminist political training processes, aiming to strengthen the collective political action of women, so that they can be subjects of their lives and the struggle to build a just and egalitarian society. It uses a methodology that seeks to adapt elements of feminist educational praxis to the EaD (Distance Learning) environment, considering the different realities of women, valuing each person's experiences.

Until 2017, most of our training processes were carried out only online – through the Feminist Training Platform (Moodle). As of 2018, in partnership with collectives and women's movements from different regions of the country, feminist training processes were carried out in a blended format (with distance learning and other face-to-face stages). These processes have shown positive results, among which, a greater participation and involvement of students with the courses, both in their virtual and classroom activities; an increase of approximately 200% in the number of participants completing courses; and greater engagement and increase of activists in several of the movements and collective partners in the courses.

Another line of action is "Comunicação para fortalecer as lutas feministas" [Communication to strengthen feminist struggles], with website, video channels on Vimeo and YouTube and profiles on social networks (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter). In this line, we highlight the partnerships with Blogueiras Negras [Black Woman Bloggers] and Blogueiras Feministas [Feminist Women Bloggers]. In the past two years, we have also started to act more strongly in promoting care and digital

security for feminist activism, carrying out various activities, including the launch of the Feminist Digital Security Guide, in partnership with other women's groups, such as MariaLab and Blogueiras Negras, who work in the field of cyberactivism and digital technology.

Universidade Livre Feminista today is anchored in the Centro Feminista de Estudos e Assessoria [Feminist Center for Studies and Consultancy] – CFEMEA, Cunhã Coletivo Feminista [Cunhã Feminist Collective] and SOS Corpo Instituto Feminista para a Democracia [Feminist Institute for Democracy]. However, as a collaborative project, it is composed of women who are part of its Collaborators Network, a group of 32 feminist activists (educators, artists, NGO workers, professors, movement activists, communicators, among others), who work in several spaces and that, voluntarily or eventually contracted, carry out actions and activities of the projects of the **Universidade Livre Feminista**.

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