

## Introduction

The term “Woman Podcaster”, as an identification factor in Brazil, appears with the creation of the hashtag #mulherespodcasters (#womeninpodcast) by the podcaster producer Ira Croft, in 2017. For the hashtag creator, the initiative's purpose would be to generate buzz for programmes produced by women or with female guests. The launch of the campaign #OPodcastÉDelas (#ThePodcastisTheirs) comes in the same year, to encourage female participation in the media in the face of present inequalities, at a time when new feminist debates begin to appear in digital environments in the face of new forms of articulation and mobilization (Alvarez, 2014).<sup>1</sup>

There is a lack of knowledge about the context of Brazilian women's podcasts, as can be seen from research conducted by the Brazilian Association of Podcasts (ABPOD). With 16,197 valid responses, in 2014, only 12.59% of listeners identified themselves under the category of “sex” without mentioning gender identity. In 2018, a new public survey was carried out, in partnership with Brazilian Central News (CBN). The female audience rose to 16%, analyzing 22,691 respondents<sup>2</sup>. Also, in 2019, ABPOD had 16,713 valid answers and reported that the growth of female listeners increased to 27%, that is more than 1/4 of the national audience according to the statistical sampling. It showed that feminism is a topic pursued by new podcast listeners, with it appearing as a highlight when questioned about interests and preferences. So, it is possible to say that there is a shared path among feminisms, a recognized unity, even if experienced in diversity.

The reasons for the female public's interest are directly related to topics that draw in listeners in Brazil, with gender equality being more relevant to new users. This fact has possibly occurred due to the growth of women within the spaces of production of this content; in short, if there are no themes aimed at the female audience, they will not consume them.

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<sup>1</sup> For this moment, I used as a source the interview with the producer for Hysteria and Olhares Podcast. Available at <https://hysteria.etc.br/ler/a-nova-podosfera/> and <https://olharespodcast.com.br/entrevista-ira-croft/>. Accessed 18 Dec 2020

<sup>2</sup> Here, let me say that this research was originally conducted in Portuguese and relied on bibliographic sources originally in Portuguese or translated into Portuguese. For the present paper, all citations have been translated from Portuguese into English; All research conducted by the Brazilian Association of Podcasts can be found in its summary version at <https://abpod.org/podpesquisa/>. Accessed 08 Feb, 2022.

Speaking of Brazilian podcast producers, the first survey that closely focused on gender identity was in 2018 (ABPOD & CBN, 2019), revealing for the first time the number of women involved in podcast production, at 12% among the 1,405 responses.<sup>3</sup> This number shows a growth of 23.3% in the survey of 2020, with 626 valid answers (ABPOD, 2021). Today, there are more than 2,000 Brazilian podcasts registered with ABPOD (2021), and according to the Listen Notes platform, a total of 196,000 podcasts in Brazil, as well as 206,500 in Portuguese. In 2018, podcast consumption grew by 177% and 200%, according to the Deezer and Spotify platforms, leading Spotify to host more than two million podcasts globally.

When conducting this research, the main objective was to describe the profile of female podcasters in Brazil. However, defining this group led me to several questions that went beyond just drawing up a profile. These women's feminisms bring their programmes closer to various human rights topics and post-colonial issues, including ethnic-racial, class, and territorial struggles since they consider themselves feminists (Hack, 2024). Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that there is an ongoing interest among producers in the feminist political movement and network strengthening through the pursuit of safe environments for activism. (Hack & Lima, 2022).

## **Methodology**

To understand the gender agenda of podcast producers in Brazil, I designed a semi-structured survey (quantitative and qualitative), with four blocks of questions: the first, with closed questions and based on Brazilian populational research methodologies, intended to analyze the profile of podcast producers – analyzed within this paper; the second attempted to provide perceptions about how content created by them impacts and spreads in Human Rights field<sup>4</sup>; the third asked about the motivation for making a podcast; and the fourth attempted to ascertain the influence and offline political impacts of being a feminist podcaster (Hack & Lima, 2023).

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<sup>3</sup> Complete data on producers in this research were obtained directly from ABPOD (2020 management) since the data available on the site are incomplete.

<sup>4</sup> This part of the survey was presented at the Media and Communication in Global Latinidades Preconference of the ICA73rd Annual Conference (2023). Hack, A: *Feminist Contributions of Female Podcast Producers in the Field of Human Rights*. Research Presentation. The paper is being published as a book chapter (Hack, 2024).

Because of the growth of this female sector of podcast production in the previous six years, I intended to map the growth of women podcast producers in Brazil between 2015 and 2020 with a gender perspective, inviting only the producers who identified themselves as women (cisgender or transgender) or as non-binary persons to answer the survey.

The survey was applied between 03/10/2020 and 04/01/2021, through an electronic survey, and 511 responses were considered for this research. Based on the responses, a filtering system was performed, given the long period of application. Incomplete answers with duplicate names were excluded, maintaining the most recent answer or the answer in its completeness. Likewise, responses from women who pointed out that they only participated as guests or who started podcast production in 2021 were excluded.

The answers to the questionnaire allowed us to draw the demographic profile according to criteria established from an ethnic-racial perspective, of sexuality, territoriality, income, and level of education. This beginning defines important concepts to understand how social constructions occur in the category of gender analysis. Likewise, they allow the identification of possible recognitions of oppression due to these epistememes, considering that most of Brazil's population is concentrated in the Southeast, in urban areas, and that 56% of its population are people of colour. Here, we can already reflect on intersectionality when analyzing women's struggles considering ethnic-racial and class issues, for example.

This research focuses on the emergence of women as podcast producers between 2015 and 2020, coinciding with pivotal feminist events like the Feminist Spring, Marcha das Vadias (Slut March), and the #elenão (#NotHim) movement in Brazil. The study investigates the factors that motivated women to enter podcast production during this period. Additionally, the research explores the influence of roles such as senior producers and other factors, including the pre-existence of podcasts, groups, and digital influencers, on women's involvement in podcast content creation. The analysis encompasses individual podcasts, women-led teams, and mixed groups to comprehend the diverse contributions of women in this digital content landscape.

## **Literature review**

In the context of this study, a critical examination is offered concerning the formation of this group, which is intricately linked to interdisciplinary feminist studies. The objective is to explore, based on existing literature, the burgeoning presence of this group. However, it is noted that the challenges confronted by women in the media are often diagnosed within the framework of pre-existing social gender issues.

Intersectionality emerges as an analytical framework rooted in Black and Latina theorists situated in North America, aiming to destigmatize epistemological and social analyses of women of color. It introduces fresh perspectives on the uneven development of human rights concerning race and gender criteria (Crenshaw, 1991, 2002). This theme is also explored in the intersections of oppression by Brazilian and Latin American authors or alternatively framed as "latinidades" (Segato, 2022), "amefricanidades" (Gonzalez, 2020), miscegenation, and borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1999).

There is a tendency to unify the class-race-gender triad as if they were a single structure of analysis in the field of intersectionality, but here, I intend to analyze them separately. When dealing with files released in audio format (podcast) and talking about ethnic-racial issues in the Brazilian context, it is important to consider what Carneiro has termed "the wall of silence" around the place and presence of black Brazilian women in public life (2011, 10). Carneiro's highlighting of this erasure is pertinent as it addresses the experiences of women of colour and how these facts intersect with these places of speech, digitally located. As in environments considered offline, the podcast production environment protects its codes of behaviour and, consequently, microaggressions and silences, even more so when it comes to women.

Therefore, it is necessary to carefully treat the feminist identity of these producers as non-universalizing, that is, as crossed with a range of intersectional issues, respecting the ethnic-racial, regional, income, and academic training aspects, to allow understanding of their social roles and identities in the promotion of human rights from their contents, within the so-called hierarchy of the axes of social differentiation. From a Brazilian viewpoint aligned with Critical Race Theory, I have contextualized my analysis using Latin American perspectives (Anzaldúa, 1999; Cusicanqui, 2010; Lugones, 2014; Segato, 2022) particularly those of Brazilian authors (Carneiro, 2011; Gonzalez, 2020; Matos, 2017; Ribeiro,

2017; Simões, 2018), to address challenges encountered by women of colour and those from marginalized areas. These challenges persist due to post-colonial issues, shaping their experiences within complex social and political intersections (Alvarez, 2014; Crenshaw, 1991; Cusicanqui, 2010; Hirata, 2014; Lugones, 2014; Matos, 2010). These multiple feminisms inherently influence all audio content produced by these women.

Defining themselves as feminist creators while exploring broader themes like gender, sexuality, and human rights, within Brazilian feminist theories and epistemology, Brazilian podcasters dialogue with subaltern public spheres using territorial analysis and discursive activism related to cultural identities. While this study centres on self-definitions of female podcasters, it underscores the importance of acknowledging and discussing intersecting factors like race, class, and political influences that shape their content creation and production. It is important to note though that even when some of this podcast content did not necessarily have an avowedly feminist scope, from the content analysis obtained by the empirical and ethnographical approach (Hine, 2015), we can see some modes of feminist performance at play (and which I detail later).

I would also add that in my place as a Brazilian cisgender woman (many times in this territory understood as a white person), I need to be careful not to put women in the place of "others", or only in places of subordination or subalternity as seen through my gaze.<sup>5</sup> This is a challenge for researchers like me when dealing with groups to which I do not belong in contexts of social reality. Although I do not belong to the group of women of colour (in Brazil), as a woman and producer I constantly witness other women close to me claiming the right to be heard and to have space in the media. Therefore, for this point, I reserve to mention a fact defined by Djamila Ribeiro (2017, 41), when the author warns: "[I]f a reality is not named, improvements will not even be thought of for a reality that remains invisible".

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<sup>5</sup> The choice to use the expression "woman of colour" comes from reading the works of María Lugones ([2018] 2021) who in her book on Gender Coloniality points out in a footnote that it is not a racial marker or a reaction, but a linguistic construction to point out subaltern women, victims of various dominations. The author Rafia Zakaria (2021) in her book *Against White Feminism*, criticizes the use of the terms "non-white" and "racialized", since these terms place white people as central to the debate, marginalizing races and ethnic groups. As much as this terminology is more used in the United States than in Brazil, I chose to use it from the reflections made by Lugones: using this term is a linguistic strategy with an intense intercultural interaction, something I develop in this work, although in Brazil we do not use this nomenclature, but rather "black women", "indigenous" or "oriental".

Feminism as a political practice is a field under construction that holds much of the discomfort that we women face in decolonizing the way the entire social context has been thought of, legislated, and silenced throughout our history; these points are also observed by the podcasters in their anti-colonial and territorial practices. That's why it's up to us feminists to question, complement, and present new perspectives in a critical and constructivist way for the spaces we want to occupy, beyond hegemonic dictates.

### **Results obtained**

Women have organised themselves to build collective awareness works, inside and outside the digital environment, allowing a participatory and representative democracy, based on feminist tendencies that emerge as new forms of organization and political participation, such as the Feminist Spring (Matos, 2017), the emancipation by popular and transversal feminisms in debates of egalitarian feminisms and feminisms of difference (Matos, 2010), transnational feminist flows in discursive fields for feminist actions (Alvarez, 2014) and new feminist frameworks (Sarmiento, 2019).

Rayza Sarmiento (2019, 100) defines framing analysis as a vital tool for mapping feminist epistemology within specific contexts, aiming to analyze events through “interpretative frames”. The growth of adherence of women producers of *podcasts* in Brazil and their interaction with feminism, including as a factor of interest to users (ABPOD, 2020). These frames aid women in making their feminist perspectives understandable through their practices, shaping the content intended for their podcast listeners. This strategy, often unconscious, involves engaging with these concepts within audio content and discussions that reflect the producers' realities. Understanding the feminisms expressed by female podcast producers requires identifying these women and conducting a detailed gender analysis of those creating content in this format.

### **Being a feminist woman and being a podcaster: gender perceptions and feminist digital identities**

Recognizing gender as a critical analytical factor is imperative. Simply highlighting the increasing interest of women, both cis and trans, in podcast media without accounting for gender oversimplifies the statistical analysis, neglecting crucial social factors and oppression (Scott, 1995). By focusing on

gender identity, we avoid universalization, acknowledging the diverse attributes and stereotypes linked to inequality.

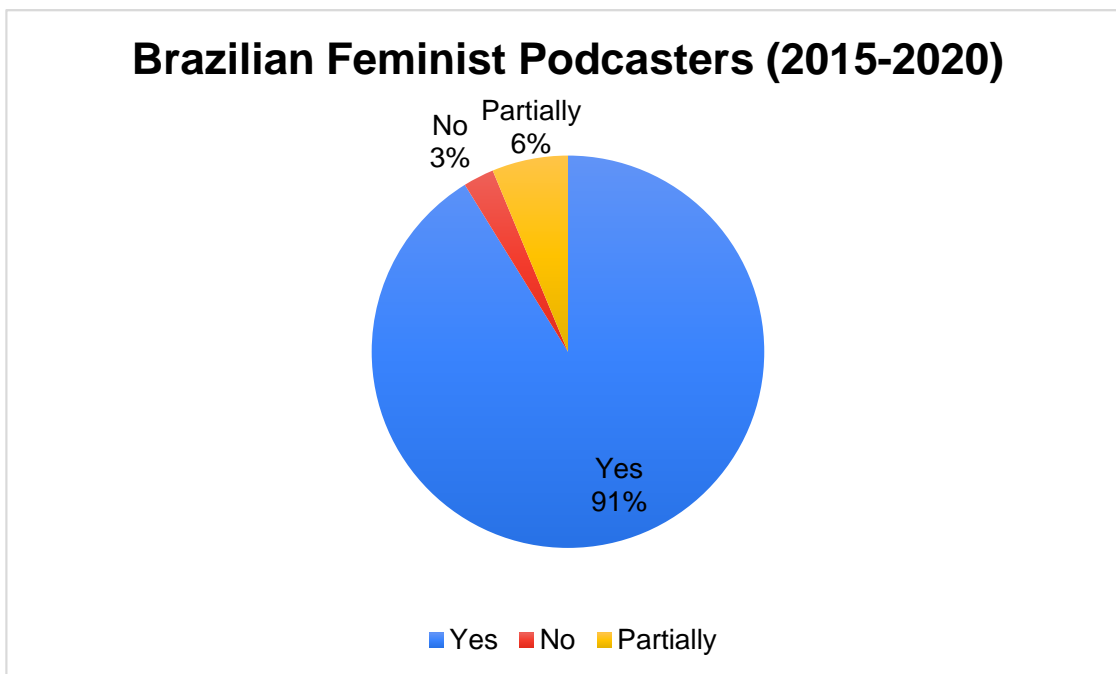


Chart 2: Division of producers by the feminist self-identification criterion, considering the totality of valid answers (511), in the field "Do you consider yourself a feminist?" (Elaboration by the author)

It was not defined which critical theory (epistemology), social movement, or method of action in feminism was chosen, with only one criterion of self-identification applied, and 91% of the respondents declared themselves feminists. So, Feminism, is the starting point for this analysis, since it reflects on the content produced by these women, their political participation, and their self-identification within a digital space.

Considering that women named themselves feminists in such a high percentage, the concept was chosen as a vector for all the analysis. This is because identification is where the notion of sociological subject begins, but also the recognition of existing systems of oppression. For the author Stuart Hall (2007), there are three ways of thinking about identity: from the individualist perspective, from the historically defined cultural systems, and from identities based on political constructions.

By mapping identities from the narratives of women, I sought to identify ideological entities and emancipatory processes that began in the production of content made by feminists. These processes are called by Hall (2007, 112) as "suture effects" to direct "a description of the effectiveness of the junction of the subject to the structures of signification". Gayatri Spivak (2014) also defines it as the opportunity to be able to speak and know his subaltern conditions, within a circuit marked by epistemic violence and marginal life.

I considered the "partially feminist" response in my inquiry, prompted by insights from Solange Simões (2018) regarding the diverse interpretations of Brazilian feminisms within National Conferences of Policies for Women. Rita Segato's (2022) observations on decolonial feminism, influenced by María Lugones (2014), further emphasized the need to address cultural and anticolonial concerns within pre-established feminist movements. This approach serves as a strategy to identify women who may hesitate to identify as feminists due to negative perceptions or a sense of incomplete alignment with mainstream, universalizing feminism, since "feminism has been both theory and praxis that encompass competitive views, dispute strategies, and the interaction of various actors and political organizations – all enabled and constrained by structural and historical/political factors (Simões, 2018, 7).

Out of the total respondents, 8 identified as non-binary, and 1 did not respond to the gender question, resulting in 98.24% identifying as women. Among the 12 transgender respondents, 50% identified as transgender women, 50% as non-binary, with 2 non-binary individuals not providing an answer. Not all feminism should focus only on gender, and not every gender discussion is necessarily feminist. Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter caution against universalizing gender identity (1993, 3).



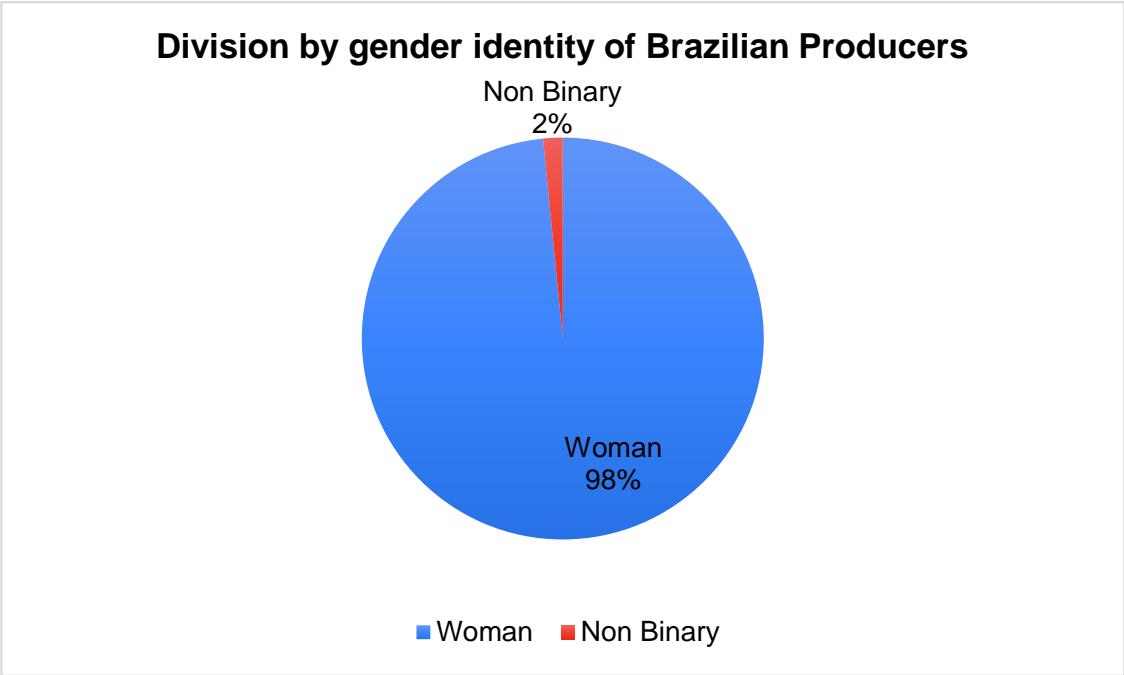
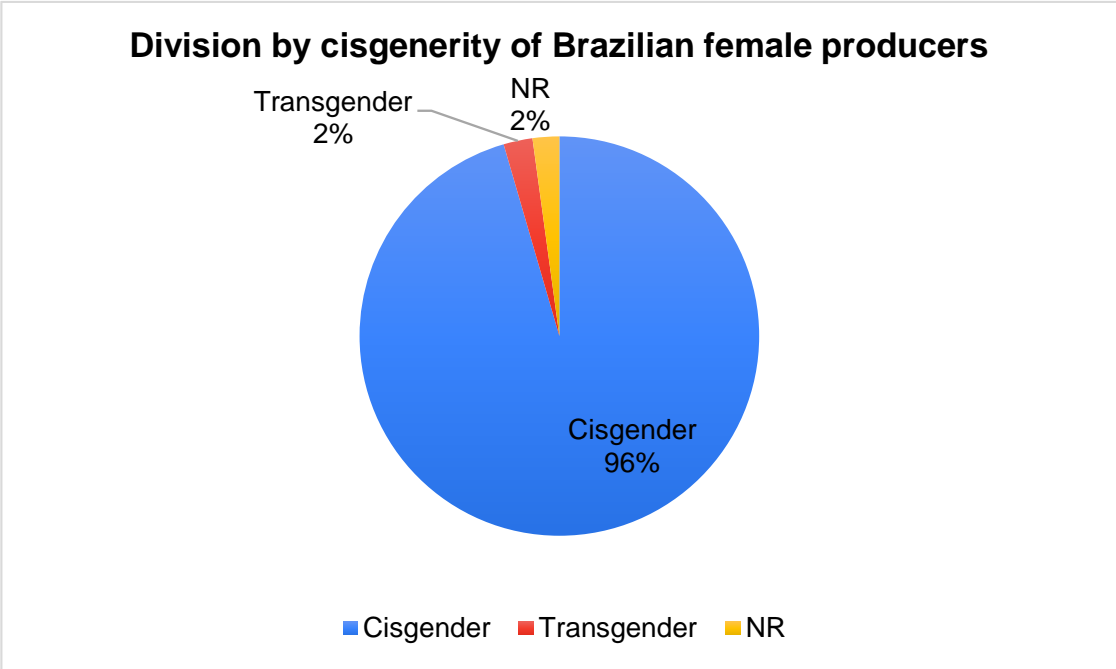


Chart 3: Division of producers by gender identity from the totality of valid answers (511), in the field "How do you identify yourself?" (Elaboration by the author)



Graph 4: Division of producers by the cisgenderism criterion from the totality of valid answers (511), in the field "Do you consider yourself trans?" (Elaboration by the author)

The presence of transgender women and non-binary people require more care outside the cisgender centrality, with attentive dedication to any analysis that is intended to be built in this research. In essence, the gender category is a category that challenges me, as a researcher and cisgender woman, because it involves facing my own issues related to the production of digital content.

Characterizing gender helps identify social roles in mixed podcast groups, revealing power dynamics. Gender serves as a tool to indicate social constructions and subjective identities in mixed social groups, defining relationships by power, not just sex (Scott, 1995).

Self-identification helps understand themes concerning feminism, revealing power positions in podcast production. The digital environment's status as public or private is unclear. Luis Miguel and Flávia Biroli (2011) stress caution in analyzing women's presence in media for effective feminist agenda insertion. Fighting women's under-representation in media spaces is crucial for respect of individual political trajectories, challenging hegemonic feminism. Viviane Freitas (2019, p. 115) reveals that women in the public arena can be vocalized by all who believe in social justice, not just women themselves.

### **Feminisms in production: an intersectional approach**

After understanding feminisms and gender, dialogue with the intersectional feminist is necessary. Not only because of the presence of women of colour producing podcasts, but because the presence is necessary in the place of narrative speech (Ribeiro, 2017), in a process of decolonization of knowledge from these speeches and these identities (Alcoff & Potter, 1993; Spivak, 2014).

The need to work with the interdisciplinary and intersectional perspective of gender reflects the epistemological needs and the way of studying and understanding Brazilian feminisms and the Global South. The characteristics of Brazilian feminisms, which consider factors of coloniality and patriarchy as silencers of women, especially women of colour and marginalized women, are the starting point for what is intended to be discussed in this topic, to understand the processes of recognition of identities for the promotion of political action.

The fact is that experiences are narrated to criticize universalism and the application of rights from universal contexts, but, with women of colour, other interpretations should be applied. That is, intersectionality should be used here not only as a theoretical tool, but also as a political tool, to contextualize facts and

stories of these podcast producers within their life experiences, which are influenced by oppressions, symbolic constructions, and silences (Coacci, [s.d.]).

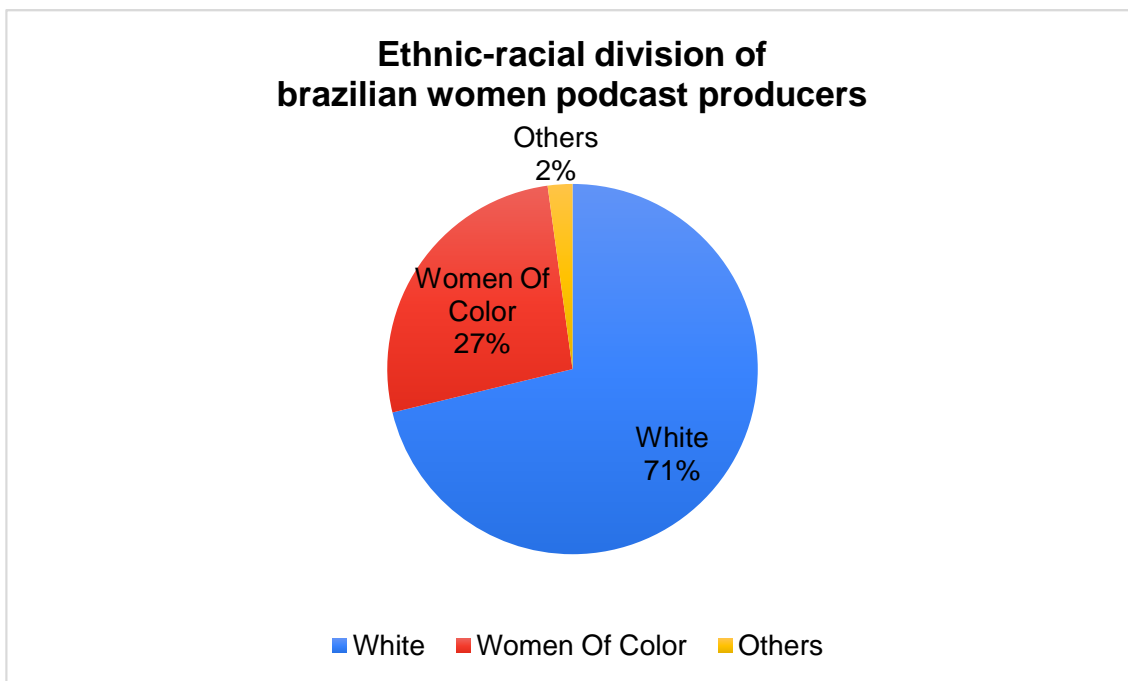
To obtain answers to the importance of narrative disputes, intersectional analysis is a starting point, but it is not a single path. For Rafia Zakaria (2021), several issues cross women of colour, especially when we talk about feminism and human rights. For the author, there are constant disputes over the boundaries of feminism. And in this case, feminism, singular, is understood as a version of white women, making it understood as a universal and sufficient hegemonic agenda.

In this context, I start from the plurality of women within the Brazilian geographic space and the historical struggle of women who are discussed here. Sueli Carneiro (2011) has shown that after the Regional Conference of the Americas, held in 2000, there was much work done by black Brazilian women to raise the visibility of discriminatory practices, including by those who fall under the label of so-called African-Latin American feminism. The author adds that after the 2002 National Conference of Women, the feminist struggle in Brazil was repositioned, to collectively include black, indigenous, northerners, northeastern, urban, rural, quilombolas, young, elderly women with special needs, lesbians, different religious and party ties (Carneiro, 2019).

This milestone is important because it directly reflects on the data of the producers and how they have organized themselves in the gender political agenda. To analyze this sample of podcast producers, I need to focus on women who represent 28% of the Brazilian population in their entirety, that is, they are considered the largest demographic group according to the continuous PNAD sample (IBGE, 2019). If I compare the number of women declared by IBGE surveys and consider that almost half of these correspond to black women, there is an ethnic-racial disparity, which allows us to identify phenomena outside the media field for the promotion of human rights in this research.

Therefore, this representativeness does not approximate the same way in the responses obtained, since in the collection, 71% of the respondents declare themselves as white; black women (black and brown) represent 25% of the

sample, while bi-racial, Asian descendants, indigenous and Romani women represent less than 5%<sup>6</sup>.



Graph 5: Division of producers by ethnic-racial issue considering the totality of valid answers (511), in the "Race or Ethnicity" field (Elaboration by the author).

Talking about content produced by coloured women can also be a way of criticizing hegemonically constructed feminism, in an attempt to make “the vocalization coincide with the devaluation of what is said and who says it” (Miguel & Biroli, 2011, 12), even in an attempt to build the so-called “pretuguese” defended by Lelia Gonzalez (2020, 61), placing black women in places of discursive struggle while fighting their social struggles, as police violence, unemployment, women’s labour, inferiority and modernized functions of slave because of the colonialism. The author recalls the place of the coloured woman

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<sup>6</sup> It is important to consider that in the data collected to prepare the table above, I used the criteria prescribed by the IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), the agency responsible for the Brazilian census. Therefore, where it says "Women of colour", for Brazilian population standards, the groups are subcategorized not only by the racial aspect, but also ethnic, such as the bi-racial groups, descendants of gypsies (Romani), indigenous people, and those Brazilians descended from people of Asian origin.

in a historical Brazilian rescue that currently locates her, and that today they are not very different in systems of oppression.

Tarcizio Silva (2020), draws on psychologist Chester Pierce, defines microaggressions as “subtle and paralyzing” acts, however, they are “brutal and physically violent” actions. The author warns not only about verbal offences present in networks but also about how such practices lead to the evasion or insufficiency of disputes in digital spaces. The author highlights that the denial of social realities from the distorted idea of “racial democracy” is a microaggression and adds acts such as the assumption of intellectual inferiority, the pathologizing of cultural values, the exoticization or denial of citizenship, exclusion, and misinformation – this is characterized mainly by online violence (Silva, 2020).

Language holds power dynamics shaped by speaking subjects in ongoing exchanges. These linguistic features, as Foucault (2000) notes, both reveal and shape origins while identifying individuals, often with exclusionary traits that convey symbols of power. This contextually situates and displaces gender from orality.

Stuart Hall (2006, 2007, 2013) underscores the significance of analyzing race and identities within narratives challenging hegemonic ideas. This involves the experiential deconstruction of social stereotypes within interpretative codes, a point echoed by Djamila Ribeiro (2017).

In this context, it is important to differentiate, despite being included in the same question field of the applied questionnaire, that the concepts of race and ethnicity are different. For Hall (2006, 62–63), ethnicity “is the fear we use to refer to the cultural characteristics – language, religion, custom, traditions, a feeling of ‘place’ – that are shared by a people”, as a race “it is a discursive category and not a biological category [...] it is an organizing category of the forms of speech, of those systems of representation and social practices (discourses), which use a loose, often unspecific set of physical differences [...]”. However, for Sueli Carneiro (2011, 63), this identity recognition is something “historically constructed or destroyed”.

The rich tradition of Black American concepts of intersectionality, but in the Brazilian context, underscores the historical struggle for the recognition of black women in political debates, challenging the universalization of feminist analysis with a decolonial approach. Sojourner Truth's (1851) critique, as expressed at the Human Rights Convention, emphasizes the exclusion of black women from

gender and feminist discourse can be applied to the Brazilian context. This ongoing battle for inclusion is echoed in the podcast medium, where the voices of marginalized women not only convey struggles and resistance but also articulate affections, contributing to the reimagining of black sensory spaces (Cavalcante, 2021; Florini, 2015; Fox et al., 2020; Davis, 2016; hooks, 2020).

The presence of ethnic-racial diversity encourages women's experiences to direct the understanding that feminisms can have as a cultural practice the location of voices in social media structures to negotiate narrative spaces. These voices connect in central themes to identify social brands and negotiate them, articulating their perceptions that there is no universal sense for what is understood as feminism. This can be a way to create more empowered spaces by sharing content in audio format.

According to Sueli Carneiro, the diversification of political conceptions and practices introduced by women from subordinate groups into feminism results from a dialectical process. On one hand, it promotes the affirmation of women in general as new political subjects; on the other hand, it necessitates the recognition of the diversity and inequalities existing among these same women (Carneiro, 2019, 66).

There is a growing dedication of women from ethnic-racial groups who seek to treat communication to create new anti-colonial discursive forms, either in the form of representation or to enable and show processes of mobilization and struggles within the social markers of differences in an anti-capitalist perspective (Carneiro, 2019). In this sense, it is necessary to talk about a political practice of transformation by the narratives of women in their various ethnic-racial characteristics.

### **Narratives interrupted by social class and level of education**

I analyzed the income and education of women together, to bring in class reflections, something that is also inherent in intersectional studies. This criterion is necessary, as I realize that I know feminisms as a theory from the formative area, although it is not the only route to it.

Regarding income, 56.5% of women podcast producers fall within the income range of two to five Brazilian minimum wages, aligning closely with the ABPOD survey (2021), where 47.6% of respondents reported incomes ranging from one thousand to five thousand reais (approximately US\$200 to US\$1,000). In terms

of ethnicity, 39.3% of the producers identify as white women. Focusing on the ethnic-racial aspect, 17.2% of producers of colour fall within the two to five minimum wage income range, with less than 4% earning above that threshold.

The question was very broad, and did not consider family income, nor did it consider whether or not income was earned through formal employment. A fact that is known by my presence in the media as a producer and is also presented in ABPOD research (2019; 2020, 2021) is that podcast production is not yet seen as a constitution of income in Brazil. This fact is even criticized by the community that produces content in the country because it characterizes the production of content as a precarious way of working, where twenty to sixty hours are dedicated per episode released.



Table 2: Division of producers by income considering the totality of valid answers (511), in the "Income" field (elaboration by the author)

There are critics of the free-of-charge circulation of content by streaming services that do not pay their producers. A few shows often make some money from advertising or crowdfunding, which means most podcast production in Brazil is

still a hobby. When it comes to women producers, this struggle becomes even more highlighted by unpaid occupations assigned by gender (ABPOD, 2021).<sup>7</sup>

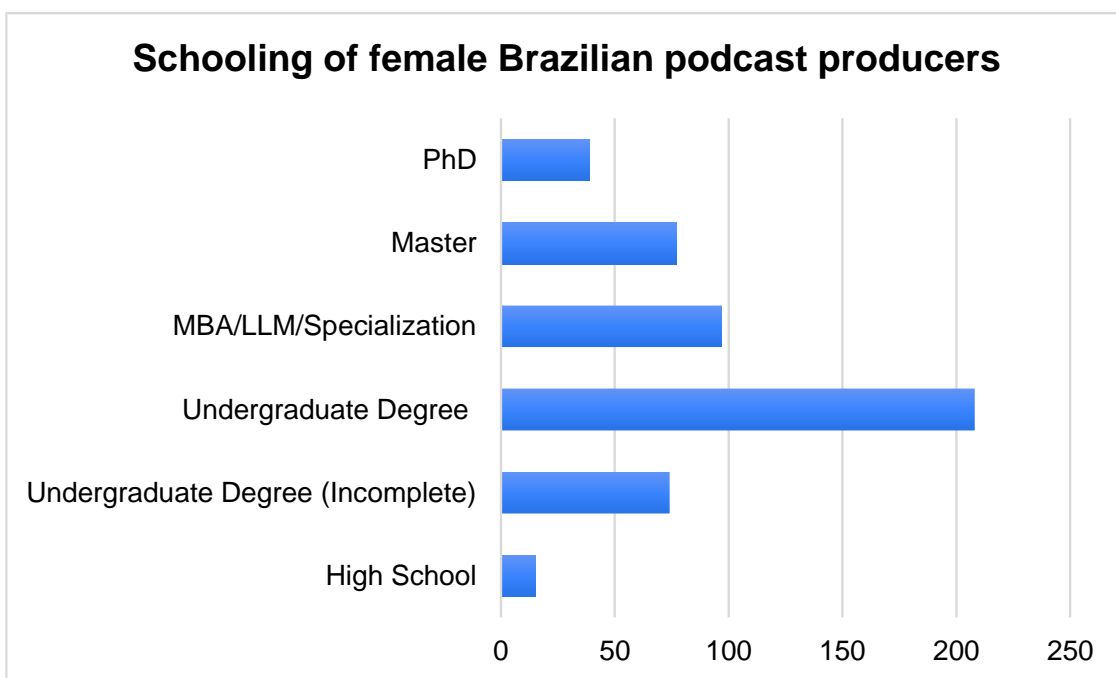


Table 3: Division of producers by schooling from the totality of valid answers (511), in the "Education level" field (Elaboration by the author)

For women producers, this becomes even more sensitive considering the gender-assigned responsibilities, especially unpaid tasks (Biroli, 2018; Federici, 2019; Vergès, 2020). Despite their education level, mirroring trends in Brazilian data (IBGE, 2020), women still struggle to achieve media prestige due to the additional burden of unpaid work, making their education insufficient for entry into this labour market.

Discussing class and education, I highlight the distinct prestige given to social groups with existing resources for visibility. Podcast media, like other forms, deal with inequalities, determining which voices are deemed legitimate. Media serves

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<sup>7</sup> The discussion about centralization in the distribution by certain applications or *streaming* channels with free transmission of content without due pay to producers, apart from the appropriation of this media by large conglomerates concerning the distribution of podcasts is the political agenda of the community of podcast producers in Brazil. However, it will not enter the analysis because there is specific research involving other criteria for collection and analysis, in addition to gathering data and discussions about, for example, the emergence of platforms that can fairly and collaboratively pay podcast producers. Available at <https://braziljournal.com/quer-ganhar-demheiro-com-podcast-pergunte-a-orelo-como-ou-ao-empresario-da-anitta>. Accessed 05 Apr 2024.



as a locus for political representation, legitimacy, and gender hierarchies. Beyond reproducing discourses, it is a central arena for acknowledging "legitimate speech" and naturalizing socially constructed distinctions (Miguel & Biroli, 2011, 12).

A high level of education is a trait not only of female producers of podcasts in general but also of those who consume this content (ABPOD, 2020; ABPOD & CBN, 2019). Although the position of women has assumed another social place due to the access to schooling, and as Flávia Biroli points out (2018, 22), "it is in the conjunction of gender, race, and class that relative positions are established".

Internet access in Brazil is closely linked to higher education, influencing digital literacy. Respondents without a high school education, predominantly found in the southeast region and comprising mostly white women, may be drawn to feminist podcast production due to increased access to universities, recognized as a key space for disseminating feminist thought (hooks, 2019, 8). Notably, 82% of respondents believe that podcast production encourages further study.

Despite challenges in podcast media related to access and digital literacy, its production contributes to a broad and emancipatory democratic discourse. Overcoming barriers posed by adverse social movements and media, podcasting enables a critical debate that can scrutinize social realities. As Ana Maria Doimo (1995) suggests, these interpretative polarities allow political subjects to present a democratic plurality, translating complex concepts into simplified language and fostering new participatory experiences and changes in existing class structures.

Lucia Santaella (2013, 22) urges a shift in perspective, emphasizing the need to recognize the constructive potential of technologies rather than solely focusing on their harms. This aligns with the idea that "thought enters through the door of perception and leaves through the door of deliberate action". These dynamics are pronounced for women, where vulnerability intersects with both colour and social hierarchy. Lower-income women navigate margins, reflecting class and territory-based knowledge, as outlined by hooks (2020).

Highly educated women contribute to broadening debates and introducing innovative approaches to knowledge production. These podcast producers aim to disseminate feminist perspectives on themes reflecting economic impact and societal reverberations. Their programs frequently address topics such as capitalism (130 occurrences), education (201 occurrences), female

entrepreneurship (82 occurrences), and poverty (104 occurrences), directly tied to class issues.

This aligns with the insight from Carmem Costa (2020, 223), who notes a progressive shift in access to communication and other realms as more women enter universities. The constitution of income and educational level plays a crucial role in various access points crucial for the advancement of gender and ethnic-racial equality.

### **Territories in dispute in the Podcastsphere**

Taking into account the methodology used here, I will try to stick to the theoretical surveys that already support some important provocations, such as analyzing the feminist division of the *podcastsphere* by region in Brazil. Considering for data analysis that groups were separated by region for a more complete evaluation of other factors, such as gender, race, income, and schooling, the issue of the region is pertinent for the research, as it allows bringing cultural identity, sociodemographic profile, kind of content produced, and agendas generated and growth of groups of women producing podcasts in each location.

According to the research, it is possible to observe that there are content producers inside and outside the Brazilian territory. Of the respondents, 8% reported not residing in the country, a total of 40 women. These epistemic places make us live with pre-established criteria, but they also allow places of rupture and appropriation, based on the technological needs that allow reappropriation (Martín-Barbero, 2004).

Of the residents, 57% are concentrated in the Southeast of Brazil, followed by 13% in the Northeast, 12% in the South, 9% in the Midwest, and only 1% in the North of the country. Here, I sought to make a comparison respecting percentages by region and not by number of respondents, bringing a standardization of these answers for better evaluation. I note that the highest percentage of women who do not name themselves as feminists is in the Midwest (8.51%), while in the North, 100% of women identify as feminists.

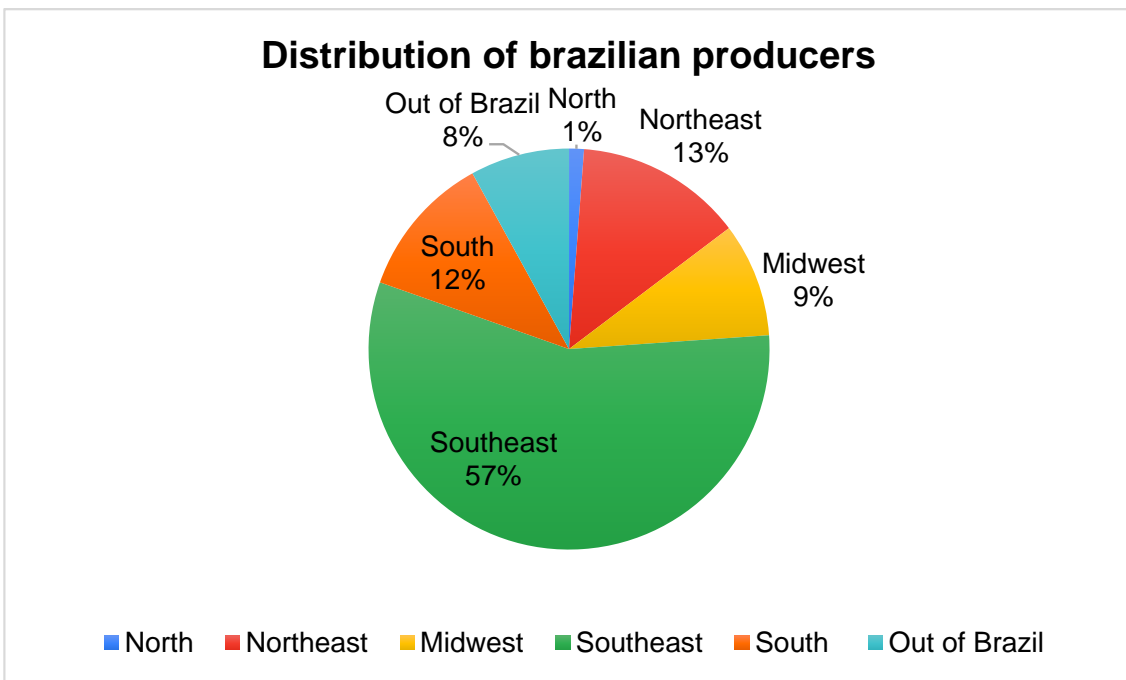


Chart 5: Division of producers by region considering the totality of valid answers (511), in the field "State/Brazil" and "If you do not live in Brazil, cite the location" (Elaboration by the author).

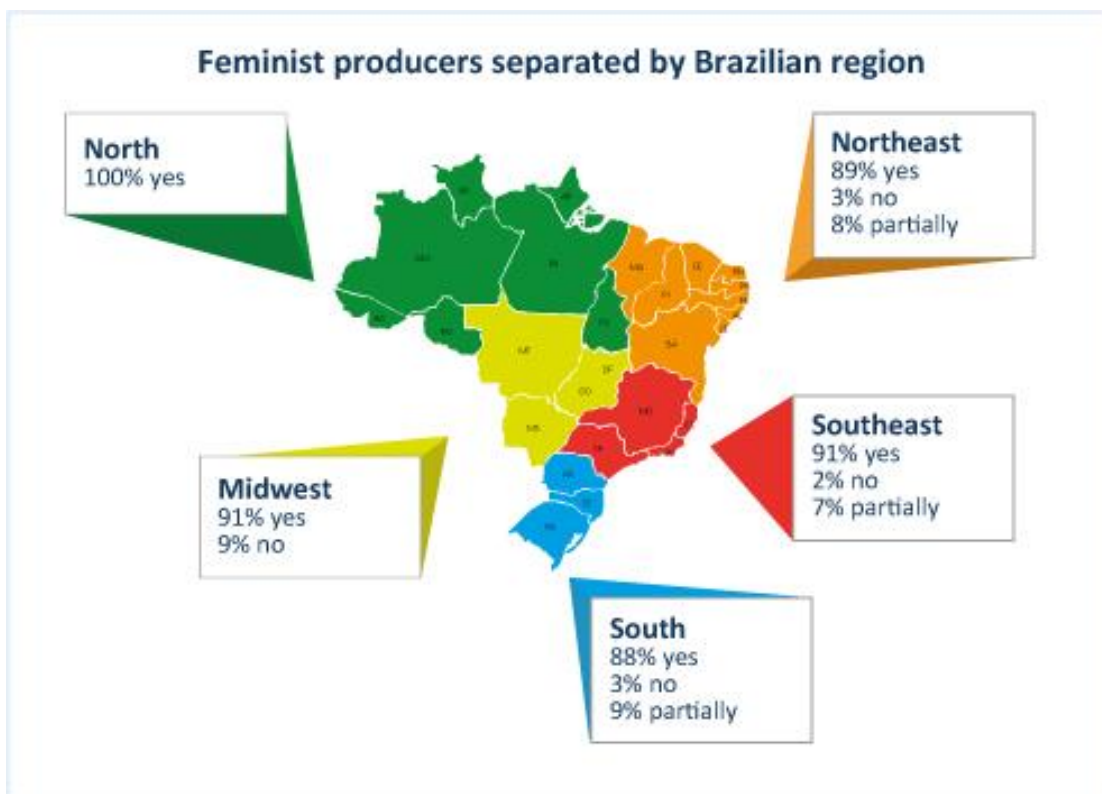
This is an important fact since many indigenous women are concentrated in the North (IBGE, 2011) and these women do not always stand for feminists. However, in the North region, out of the seven respondents, only one declared herself as indigenous, the others being white (four respondents) and brown (two respondents). In any case, geographically, each woman matures and names her feminism differently, in the local political aspects, which are strengthened by their localized political needs<sup>8</sup>.

Another important fact is that the highest percentage of women of colour is found in the Northeast (48.6%) and only one of them declares herself as non-feminist, while the others declare themselves as "partially" feminist (4) and feminist (31 respondents). This issue is important for the discussion of two other aspects: the first one, concerns the universalizing aspect of the media, while the second favors the exclusion of women in supposedly inclusive spaces. If I am not

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<sup>8</sup> Here, I highlight some episodes produced by Podcast Olhares that deal with this point as episodes on Indigenous Feminism, Kurdish Women's Movements, Gypsy Women, Daisy and Indigenous Women's March, Decolonial Feminism and Abya Ayala and episodes on/with Black Women. (*Olhares Podcast*, [s.d.] )

careful with these considerations, the racialized debate of these territories ends up being centred on the figure of the white woman.



Graph 6: Division of producers by the feminist self-identification criterion by region. From the inside out, regions: Midwest, Northeast, South, North and Southeast. Elaborated by analyzing the totality of valid responses (511), in the field "Do you consider yourself a feminist?" within the field "State/Brazil" (Elaboration by the author).

Unlike content in video, where it is possible to see the physical traits of those who stream, when I talk about digital content in audio format, the territory is more marked by the voice of those who express themselves. In case the podcaster does not name herself as a woman socially marked by socioeconomic or racial-ethnic criteria, it is not always possible to make this distinction just by the sonority of her voice. Audiophonic identities in podcasts are expressed loaded with territorial markers, translated by their vocabularies, accents, and cultural characteristics, called authenticity.

In this context, recording memories in podcasts aligns with historical practices of black and feminist press, serving as privileged spaces for preserving

experiences from their perspectives (Freitas, 2019, 117). The vocalization of feminist demands aims to decentralize the podcast media, offering new definitions that closely tie into democracy. If media representation falls short, speeches lose the potential to contribute symbolic capital to the desired demands, resulting in limited intimacy and public impact.

### **Final considerations**

The research initially aimed to investigate the direct correlation between feminism and women's profiles in podcasts, creating a micro field of analysis within a feminist framework. It is crucial to highlight that this study has focused on examining and interpreting these profiles in the Latin American (and Brazilian) context, within the context of feminist analytical paradigms of Global South, by analyzing the perspectives of female podcast producers from an empirical perspective, as a producer and researcher.

Understanding how many respondents identify as feminists directly suggests some ways in which we can interpret the production of content by women and how feminist practices impact content creation choices, digital participation, and community engagement – whether as activists or through subsidiary methods – even when the podcast's scope may not be explicitly feminist at their shows.

An assumption I made, it is not enough to guarantee a place for women to speak, it is necessary to ensure that they can be heard. As much as there is a plurality of feminisms in Brazil, it is evident that the media becomes a public arena in dispute, which in an important way “members of subordinate social groups invent and circulate contradictions to formulate antagonistic interpretations of their identities, interests and needs” as Nancy Fraser (1990) points out.

These ways of “seeing and classifying the world” (Miguel & Biroli, 2011, 25) confront the “universal” concepts and the diminishing perspectives of women outside the axis of media power, to present counterpoints in new aesthetic perspectives in collective constructions (Martín-Barbero, 2004). This puts these women from their knowledge situated in favour of constructions of collective memories (Halbwachs, 1990), not only geographically, but narratively.

The presence of different groups of women does not always mean that multiplicity constitutes effectiveness and should always be thought of in the context of limitations and restrictions. There are different audiences in the same environment, and there are rules that place preferences and data referrals within

a large system of streaming networks. As broad as these spaces may seem for political discussions, there is a whole system that discourages the engagement of women producers with few downloads or niche subjects, creating barriers to decision-making spaces within the media.

Therefore, a remark I would like to make about this fact is related to the uncertainty about the definition of what feminism is, or the non-acceptance of a single feminism, since this concept represents today multiple interpretations and political applications, or the adherence to decolonial feminist movements (Cusicanqui, 2010; Gohn, 2007; Lugones, 2014; Segato, 2022).

In this way, there is a challenge in investigating the limits and challenges of the general term "feminism" in Brazilian podcasting, because naming yourself as a feminist does not mean that you adhere to any epistemology or movement, something that will have to be explored in greater depth in future research. Although they are based on the fight against discrimination and the search for gender equality, they are not always convergent and do not concern only this, since they are interconnected with other emancipatory phenomena and expansion of identities.

The numerical inequality among podcast producers lacks a clear explanation, and gender-related access issues are not the sole cause (IBGE, 2019). The disparity is rooted in a complex system involving digital literacy, appropriations, and factors like the masculinization of sciences and technologies. This prompts a discussion on the localized knowledge of women, despite gender inequalities in technology use during leisure time (Natansohn, 2014). Podcast programmes, often pursued as hobbies rather than jobs, offer insights into these dynamics.

I can still conclude that two assumptions need to be considered concerning access to communication by Brazilian women podcast producers, which affects women in general. The first one relates digital productivity and works to their social *locus* as a woman, within all the intersectional characteristics presented; the second one relates media policy to its gender *locus*, strongly stressed by the patriarchy and post-colonial problems, whether in mixed production groups or in the *podcastsphere* itself. These assumptions present not only a theoretical problem but a question socially faced by women producers, which reverberates directly in the feminist political movement built in the media.

The podcast medium, at present, shares commonalities with other forms of media in confronting inequalities and navigating considerations of which voices

will be acknowledged as legitimate. This assertion suggests a comparative analysis with established media platforms, which possess distinct arenas for political representation, legitimacy, and gender hierarchies.

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