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Faculté des sciences sociales et politiques

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Video transcript of the conference “Another Marxist Feminism”

Video 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EeK-GyqQ_68 (online since April 19th, 2021)

This conference took place on April 15th, 2021, on zoom.

Organizers: Annelise Erismann and Stéphanie Nereu

Simultaneous translation: Stéphanie Nereu

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Introduction

First of all, we would like to thank the presence of all of you at this conference and the support of the Center for Gender Studies of the University of Lausanne. We have reached a point in globalization - some would say "progressive," others "imperialist" - that allows us to be online from Colombia, Brazil, Portugal, and Switzerland (to speak only of the panelists).

In this conference, we will undoubtedly deal with an "old world" in the "new continent" (with many quotation marks): namely, with a genre of Marxist feminism that differs from its Euro-American counterpart in its material and institutional conditions as well as in a second aspect. It is not an insignificant fact that both authors - here we will focus on the works of only two Latin American and Brazilian women, Vania Bambirra and Heleieth Saffioti - have been uncomfortable with the word "feminism"/"feminist" for an extended period of their trajectories.

One of Latin America's dilemmas seems to be the incompatibility of the "feminist question (patriarchy or/and gender?)" and the "national question" – which, in a peripheral country, would fundamentally mean being anti-imperialist and leftist. These "ties" (to use one of Saffioti's terms that in reality has more to do with Daniele Kergoat's 'consustancialité') indicate the existence of a history - Latin American and 3-World-related - that is usually not told in other languages.

Both women mentioned above were central figures of Latin American and Brazilian Marxist feminisms – and perhaps many of you have never even heard of them. I know, the "problem" is the "language" in which they write or speak, and it so happens that most lectures at the University of Lausanne are in French. How many universes flourish unscathed in Lausanne? Or, paraphrasing Fanon (in a book also written in French, reflecting why that was): "to speak a language is to bear the weight of a civilization."

One last reminder before I introduce the panelists and explain a bit of the structure of the following four hours: And by the way, we have here our dear Stephanie Nereu, who has taken upon herself the difficult task of translating such different cosmologies and vernaculars, from Portuguese to English, thank you and welcome you too.

There are many ironies about the role of language and nation/nationality in neo-/de-/post-/anti-colonial encounters. Still, I'd like to highlight just one. We are organizing a conference in the Portuguese language, which is much spoken in construction sites and by maids of middle and upper-middle classes households. It takes place at the same university that used to have a quota for foreign students - not in the sense of right to access as we use the term in Brazil, but in the restrictive sense. I quote: "In 1966, the academic council of the University of Lausanne decided to restrict the presence of this type of student to one third." (Gillabert et Riano 2017 *ibid.*: 10)

- Angelica Lovatto is a professor of political science at the University of the State of Sao Paulo, a trade unionist and member of the party Partido Socialismo e Liberdade PSOL-SP. For our meeting today, I would like to introduce Angelica through a quote from her article "Desvendando O poder do macho: um encontro com Heleieth Saffioti":

"Longing for Heleieth

"The moment I received the sad news that I would never be able to see her again, a movie went through my head, as it must have happened to everyone who knew her.

What I miss most are the afternoons I spent with Heleieth in her apartment in Praça da República, frequented by all of us students in her courses. Her generosity in opening her house to us, in letting us use her library - which occupied practically every room in the apartment - was immense.

The library was there "for us." After all, she used to say, what was the point of

accumulating so many books, if not for the pleasure of sharing them with us? Maybe that's why I got this tremendous feeling that I owe her so much.”

Angelica Lovatto, welcome. Angelica will present a text called "Vania Bampirra and dependent capitalism in Latin America."

- **Joana Coutinho** is a professor at the Federal University of Maranhao and coordinates the Observatory of Public Policies and Social Struggles and the Study group of Hegemony and Struggles in Latin America. She is a researcher of the *Nucleo de Estudos de Ideologias e Lutas Sociais*.

Joana Coutinho, welcome. Joana will present us with an article entitled: "The anti-fascist and anti-racist struggles require theoretical clarity and social practice." I will add here that Joana is a member of the advisory board of the site marxismo21.org (which is the site with the complete dossier of the lifework of Heleieth Saffiotti <https://marxismo21.org/heleieth-saffiotti-marxismo-genero-e-feminismo/> and Vania Bampirra <https://marxismo21.org/vania-bampirra-80-anos-1940-2015/>).

We had an inversion in the program between Elaine Santos' and Monise Martinez's presentations.

- **Monise Martinez** is a doctoral candidate at the Center for Feminist Studies at the University of Coimbra in Portugal. She is mainly interested in themes related to Gender, Media, and Religion Studies, with particular attention to Post-Feminism and Anti-feminist currents in Latin American Neo-Pentecostal contexts. In her doctoral thesis, she focuses on the possible ambiguities of the mediatization process of religion for female empowerment in the context of the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG). Monise, welcome.

Monise will present a text called "Neoliberal, anti-feminist and Christian: the Godllywood model of feminism and neo-conservatism in Brazil."

We will have a 40 minutes break between Monise's presentation and Izabel's presentation.

- **Izabel Solyszko Gomes** is a professor and researcher at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Universidad Externado de Colombia in Bogota. She is also Director of the specialization Conflict, sociopolitical dynamics, and violence of the research group Área de Estudios de Familia. Izabel also has a post-doctorate at the Universidad de Los Andes in Bogota. She will present a paper called "Women and war: analysis of the armed conflict and violence against women."
- Finally, **Elaine Santos** has a Ph.D. in Sociology from the Program "Law, Justice, and Citizenship in the XXI Century" of the Social Studies Center of the University of Coimbra. Currently participating as a collaborator of the Universidad de La Tierra in Ecuador, she is part of both the research group RETS - Work Relations and Society of the ESC - and the Study Group on Geopolitics and Natural Goods of the IEALC (Institute of Latin American and Caribbean Studies of the University of Buenos Aires)/CLACSO. Elaine dealt extensively with the Marxist Theory of Dependence in her doctoral thesis on extractivism in Ecuador and presented a paper called: "Insidious colonialism and oil extractivism in Ecuador."

This conference tries, therefore, as many others in our generation, to resume the debate about communists and feminist socialists: incongruities of their epistemological sources, of their political horizons, contradictions, possible political alliances, and the limits of the political analysis and practice of these two groups. The conference also tries to touch upon the big questions driving Latin America "since immemorial times," thinking about its "root evils" and telos. We propose here an overview of the situation in Brazil and Latin America at this moment, including but not restricted to the following themes: extractivism, developmentalism, religion, neo-conservatism, war, geopolitics, migration. And what do gender and patriarchy have to do with the revolution (or the counter-revolution)?

Presenting: Angélica Lovatto

Angélica: I want to greet everyone here, and the organizer of this event, Annelise Erismann, from CEG - Center for Gender Studies, University of Lausanne - thanking her for the kind invitation, but also congratulating her for the initiative of organizing an event meant to

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stimulate contemporary dialogues, willing to discuss the so-called feminist strand that has Marxism as its theoretical-methodological reference, and, in line with this, the role of women in the class struggle and the political struggle against the capitalist order.

My talk addresses the relevant work of Brazilian Marxist Vânia Bambirra and her political militancy to thematize and contextualize the struggles for a socialist transition. According to her, this is the only possibility to overcome capitalism and move us beyond capital itself.

Bambirra, who died in 2015 and was a sociologist and political scientist, is one of the greatest intellectuals and Marxists in Latin America. Her work has particular theoretical and political relevance because it is part of the set of formulations that unified and enshrined what became known as the Marxist Theory of Dependence (which I will call by the acronym MDT from this point onwards). This tradition of thought analyzes the “Latin American process of capitalist development of underdevelopment,” to use the expression of an important German author, André Gunder Frank. Frank was in Latin America, researching with Bambirra and other authors, and even lived for a short period in Brazil, helping to build and install a university in the capital of our country, Brazil, UnB - Universidade de Brasília.

This theory started to be better structured and developed in the early 1960s, initially in Chile, by exiled Brazilian authors (such as Ruy Mauro Marini and Theotônio dos Santos), due to the repression triggered by the 1964 military coup in Brazil, which would last long 21 years. (*pause, technical question*). This effort, therefore, by Brazilian exiles and Chilean authors, among others, resulted in the creation of a very important institute, CESO - Centro de Estudios Socio-Económicos de la Universidad de Chile. Critical studies were undertaken in this institution about the economic dependence and underdevelopment of the countries of Latin America. These studies were later referred to as the stepping stones of the Marxist theory of dependency, which intended to differentiate itself from another concept that other authors started to defend simultaneously, namely an associated dependency. The latter would be subordinated to imperialist capitals in that hot moment of the so-called Cold War. Therefore, it was a moment of intense economic-political and ideological dispute in the world. MDT theorists, on the contrary, denounced the Associated dependency proponents and showed that “the history of Latin American underdevelopment is the history of the

development of the world capitalist system,” in this literal quote from another great Brazilian author, Ruy Mauro Marini.

Bambirra's texts have achieved considerable repercussions not only in Chile, thus in exile, but in many countries on the continent. With the military coup against Salvador Allende in 1973, and the rise of Pinochet's lead years, the author had to flee again (passing through Panama where she narrowly escaped arrest). She ended up exiled in Mexico, where she was welcomed and worked at UNAM - Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México - until returning to Brazil only in the late 1980s. So, we often hear that "Vânia is known in academia and in the political movements of the Spanish-speaking world." Still, she also had many of her texts published in Italy, Spain, and Portugal.

In this presentation, therefore, I will address some central aspects of three texts by this author. They are: Latin American dependent capitalism, a book with more than 15 editions around the world; and two articles: “La mujer chilena en la transición al socialismo” and “Liberación de la mujer y lucha de clases”, the latter two still published in Chile, in Revista Punto Final, in 1971 and 1972, respectively. By citing them, you will notice how incredibly contemporary Bambirra's formulations sound. These are what I call classic texts in the sense of maintaining theoretical references that do not seem dated and of delivering the ideological support for struggles that have yet to achieve their effective liberation. If women's liberation had already been the case, we would not be in the situation of profound economic and ideological misery in the contemporary world, which weighs with an iron fist in the exploitation and oppression against women.

I draw attention, initially, to the particularity of these two articles that deal with the issue of women in times when there was still no type of intellectual "trend" around feminist studies. Dealing with the question of women in a dependent capitalist society marked by class struggles was an actual pioneering act for Brazilian authors in 1960-1970. I also take the opportunity to mention the Brazilian Marxist sociologist Heleieth Saffioti, who died in 2010, and who started her career back in Brazil in 1976. This book, which she had already written in 1966-67, is a pioneering and extremely important thesis at that historical moment. It is called: *The woman in the class society: myth and reality*.

Both Brazilian authors, one in Brazil and the other in exile in Chile and Mexico (and, later, returned to Brazil), need and should be read by all those who research the theme. They

were protagonists of meaningful studies on the particularity of the oppression against women in capitalist exploitation and never lost sight of the totality of a system centrally based on capital against labor.

This refusal to fragment the issue of women is more than a current example of recovering the political efficiency of the struggles referred to as feminist struggles, without which any gender discourse can fall (tends to end) into an idealistic vacuum that never achieves women's effective emancipation. With regards to the struggle of working women, and not in terms of an ideal radical discourse, but in those of an effective transformation of their material conditions of existence, little is understood when women are framed in forced isolation, or when women's inferiorization is taken only as a cause, both of which do not imply a break with exploitation as a whole, pushed forward by the class antagonism in capitalism.

This argument can be found in Bambirra's "The Chilean woman in the transition to socialism," where she discusses the role of a socialist step towards communism (and not socialism as an end in itself). Hence, the universal character of her analysis, but without failing to mention the particularity of working women in Latin America, and, of course, reflecting on the Chilean context, a country where she lived and participated intensely in political and intellectual life.

Bambirra devotes herself, in this article, to understand the movement of the "Mujeres Comunistas de Chile," who, in their efforts for social transformation, had just held a great national assembly with agendas advancing on the combat of positions held by the extreme right. The latter, in turn, did not tire of putting obstacles to the popular government of Allende. Analyzing this movement triggered by the assembly of communist women, the author emphasizes the objective class exploitation affecting Chileans and any women living under the difficulties of an overexploited workforce on a dependent and underdeveloped continent.

Therefore, I highlighted these two texts by Bambirra, where she deals with the question of women, to show that in the first text of 1971, she is discussing tactical issues in a country, Chile, which had not carried out a revolutionary rupture. Instead, Chile had elected a socialist president by direct vote, who constituted a people's-led administration that could accumulate forces to pave the way to a socialist revolution. On the other hand, in the second

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text, “Liberation of women: a task for today,” from 1972, Bambirra starts to directly discuss the situation of women in revolutionary processes from this perspective. She affirms that, although at that time - the 1970s, in Chile, under the government, I repeat, of the people’s led-socialist Allende - although there was a consensus in the treatment of the women’s question from a leftist perspective, there were still few who were engaged, in that Chilean context, in giving more importance to and stimulating the discussion about the women's problem as part of the radical overcoming of class exploitation.

In the first text, she outlines this to then delve into the second problem. In her words: in Chile, “a real social revolution is not taking place, but a process of change based on bourgeois legality. Therefore, the likelihood of enduring reactionary institutions and values is very high and can only be countered to the extent that these really become the object of concern and the center of action of most revolutionary sectors.” Because “we know that while this [a deep revolution in the superstructure] does not occur, there is a great paradox in the process of change, as the transformation, at the level of productive relations, is conditioned and is not accompanied by the same pace of equally transforming social relations. And it is always inevitable that, in any revolutionary process, profound transformations in the economic level coexist with extremely traditional and even reactionary characteristics in the most preliminary forms of social coexistence, such as the maintenance for a certain period of the condition of women as an object.”

This dialectic between exploitation and oppression, which until today is still poorly resolved theoretically and politically in the scope of discussions addressed as feminist (most often misclassified as identity politics), is solved by Bambirra. From this point, she starts differentiating aspects of a strategic and tactical character without ever losing sight of the particularity of women's oppression.

However, without losing a dialectical relationship between the two, exploitation and oppression, she establishes a kind of hierarchy, in the sense of a qualitative degree of importance and determination of exploitation over oppression, as the first (capitalist exploitation) contains, includes, embraces and subordinates the process of reproduction of oppression. "If there is a great mobilization around the discussion of the problems of women and their organization that begins to solve them, inevitably only the bourgeoisie will have to lose from this." And further on: “Revolutionaries cannot forget this reality: working women

and workers have a double reason for being revolutionary because, in addition to the exploitation of classes, they are also subject to exploitation as women.”

Let us note that she reiterates that it is an exploitation of classes and an exploitation as women. And at this point in the text, she quotes Marx: “The theory when it enters the masses becomes a material force,” reinforcing that “the Marxist conception of women must be disseminated. (...) To reject the confrontation of women's problems is, objectively, an attitude of defense of bourgeois and counterrevolutionary values.” Bamberra, therefore, resolves this in this dialectic through the presented hierarchy and the overarching role of exploitation.

I reach here an essential point of her text; it is her defense of a struggle within the totality of (and against) capitalist exploitation: “The struggle for the liberation of women has nothing to do with feminism. It is by no means a struggle between women and men. Such a conception is absurd and grotesquely caricatural,” because “in this sense, it is not just a struggle of women for their liberation, but a struggle of all those exploited to liberate women as well. This is the correct form that this struggle must take and, therefore, it must be fought by all revolutionaries, men, and women, even if initially it is up to them to stimulate the discussion with greater dynamism.”

For this reason, I defend, recommend, and advocate that Vânia Bamberra has to be rescued urgently at the beginning of the 21st century. I reiterate: urgently. Why? To get out of the commonplace of so-called feminist struggles that rarely speak of political revolution, that find a revolutionary rupture challenging, even in a merely prospective view. Because change is not enough, there has to be social transformation.

Relating, therefore, the so-called feminism to the discussion of the Marxist theory of dependency means necessarily to link this “feminist” struggle directly and inseparably to the struggles of the working woman. Therefore, a woman belongs to a given overexploited social class under the capitalist system of production and under a very “organized” dependency on unequal associated development. This is what defines the terms in which the struggle of labor against capital takes place.

For no other reason, she wrote her greatest classic: Latin American dependent capitalism, with which I forward the final remarks of my presentation. In this book, she was concerned with understanding the particularity of every country on the continent, seeking to

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characterize the late (and, therefore, dependent) way in which capitalism was installing itself in its uneven and associated development, as I mentioned earlier. To this end, her book articulates our colonial origins in its relation to the primitive accumulation of capital in Europe without falling into the common misconception that some kind of feudalism was raging across the Latin American continent.

In that moment of the 1960s, this breathtaking book seeks the genesis of the social formation of this group of countries, “taking dependent accumulation and reproduction as the core of the analysis,” according to her own words in the book’s preface. The critical aspects she articulates, raising empirical data that were difficult to capture at the time, led to the formulation of what she called a dependency typology, relating industrialization and socioeconomic structure. There is no shortage of dubious people in the social sciences in Brazil who, simply because they have not read Bamberger (when they have heard a lot, or even due to sheer incomprehension), attribute to this Marxist author a supposed Weberian deviation for referring to and building a typology. Nothing more opposed to the author's thinking. Her typology is not based on an ideal construct that reduces the apprehension of reality to a false equivalency to different realities. It is precisely the opposite, based on the classification of differentiated levels of historical-social and political-economic development.

In short, in order not to frustrate the expectations of those who hear us today: for Bamberger, the Latin American countries would be divided into three major groups of this proposed typology: Type A - countries with an early start of industrialization (pre-World War II): Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, and Colombia; Type B - countries whose industrialization was the product of post-war monopoly integration: Peru, Venezuela, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Bolivia, El Salvador, Panama, Nicaragua, Honduras, Dominican Republic, and Cuba; and also a Type C - countries with an agrarian-export structure without industrial diversification: Paraguay and Haiti (where the author would include with some underlying doubt, also Panama).

With no conditions to deepen this categorization scheme, due to the scope of this event, it is only important to briefly emphasize that the adoption of this criterion by the author was the attempt to answer the crucial question about the formation of different types of dependent structure in the continent. For what? One of the practical consequences of national revolutions projects, articulated in continental scope, involved the emancipation of the

working class, thus, way beyond mere processes of national liberation. In fact, many of the books and articles written by Bambirra deal with the strategic dimensions of the classes involved in past and future revolutionary processes on the continent.

In other words, Vania Bambirra embodies, as a public intellectual, the dialectical dimension between the formulation of social theory and the proposition of practical-political action. In her terms, as soon as Allende comes to power in Chile, she clarifies: “The work we were trying to do at CESO was thankfully interrupted by the victory of Unidad Popular (UP), which requested the collaboration of part of the members of our study group on dependency, who were now faced with the task of breaking dependency.”

Once again, I ask: why is the thought of Marxist Vânia Bambirra up to date? If not, let's see: Let's consider that we are a little over 50 years from the events of May 1968, especially the French (which came to reject capitalism but also socialism), together with the fact that we have been a little over three decades living the consequences of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union and Eastern European regimes. It turns out that we live in a moment of near-absolute hegemony of the capitalist system in the world, without forgetting those few countries that are still trying hard to sustain processes revolutionaries started in the 20th century.

Therefore, since the last third of the last century and in the first two decades of this 21st century, we are plunged into a progressive counterfeiting that presents difficult pitfalls to combat, difficult to - literally - disarm, especially in their ideological aspect and which dominate the so-called new paradigms of the sciences social. A type of contemporary irrationalism that has been called postmodern theories. The latter present themselves as progressive, call themselves a non-Marxist left, articulate fragmented speeches and narratives, which in a Platonic way, present themselves as radicals. Yet, at the end of the day, we are faced with a counterrevolutionary construction of complicated disassembly. The fact that they present themselves as a left that rejects Marxism, intends, makes a direct connection with the (real) loss of prestige of Marxism in the sixties, at that moment in May, in which this one inferred the supposed loss of validity from the loss of prestige of Marxism. If precisely in this ideological nest are born the fragmented narratives of identity politics, “causes” (real, concrete and very important in the struggles against oppression), one of which the so-called feminism, deeply impoverish our fight against the oppression of women. It is very important

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to critically consider the involvement of feminist agenda-setters when coupled umbilically with the theories of postmodernity, which value the individual attitude of a multiple and plural subject against the class position to which that subject belongs. This is why retrieving and, of course, updating the core references of Vânia Bambirra's thought in this 21st century, comes in: which class can lead the anti-capitalist struggle, at first, and its revolutionary phase, afterwards: “The struggle for the liberation of women is a political and revolutionary struggle, which because it is a struggle against the capitalist system, which maintains and needs the oppression of women, is inserted in the context of the class struggle and has to be directed by the working class, through its vanguard parties and organizations ”. Therefore, in conclusion, it is not a struggle directed only by women that emancipates women, but the working woman in this context, with the working class as a whole.

I am much inspired by Vânia Bambirra for being a person who has always faced controversy in a dialectical critique, with parsimony and at the same time peremptory in her formulations. They are based on a well-founded criticism of what exists and project for the future the committed possibility of the transition to socialism. I remember the story she told in her Memorial, leaving Brazil as quickly (and afraid of being arrested), with her young daughter on her lap at the airport. She did not even know that her name had already been added to the Most Wanted list by the dictatorship, as she had actively participated in the Peasant Leagues in Minas Gerais. It could all have ended there. The escape of his companion at the time, Theotônio dos Santos, was planned while they were living as outlaws; the information he had obtained was that he was at greater risk of being on the Most Wanted list. I also remember how she describes the danger and the sadness of having to run out of Chile and, just like leaving Brazil, leaving everything behind, home, books, family, friends. I understand that we, from the Latin American continent who are here at this event, have an obligation to live up to this legacy of the texts that Bambirra left behind and to disseminate them throughout the rest of the countries and universities that offer an open space for this fundamental theoretical discussion. I believe this was made possible today here at the University of Lausanne, through the efforts of the organizer Annelise Erismann. I am available for the subsequent debate and I wish a great presentation to all of the comrades who will succeed me. This topic is very enriching and I hope this will be the first meeting of many others. Thank you.

Annelise: Thank you very much, Angélica. Now we will go straight to Joana Coutinho's presentation. Joana, good morning.

Presenting: Joana Coutinho

Joana Coutinho: Good morning, Annelise, good morning to all of you. First, thank you for the invitation and the organization of an event like this, and for the opportunity to be here presenting some studies and concepts that I have been exploring. And then I would like to clarify that my presentation is not going to deal exactly with the question of feminism, although it dialogues with it. What I have been thinking and trying to reflect upon is what I am calling the need for an anti-fascist fight and also an anti-racist fight, knowing that both require so much theoretical clarity in order for us to have a social practice that is self-aware in two senses. Aware, in the sense of the extent of the combat we have in front of us, and aware also of those who do not want the combat. I will try to better explain this formulation - it is that not every anti-racist fight is an anti-capitalist fight, and that is where I think it is important to emphasize. So, I will start here by briefly discussing what I am calling fascism because I think that it is extremely important – the concept of fascism. Of course, today's fascism doesn't present all the similarities with what we know to have been fascism in the past - Italian fascism, fascism in Germany, Nazi-fascism, or fascism in Portugal or Spain.

We cannot find so many similarities, but some are indeed present. The main difference that it presents today, let's say, is that if the fascism of the past had a veneer of nationalism - and we can notice its presence today, so much so that some authors in Brazil call it neo-fascism, proto-fascism, we can discuss this a little better later on – I argue that it is the opposite, what we have is much closer to imperialism and it is what we could call - it is not only me who calls it, many authors have used this term: neo-liberal fascism. Other authors have discussed and studied fascism, even qualifying it as a near-democratic fascism, as does Alain Badiou. That is: all institutions are preserved, including suffrage. People go and vote, but a type of power is installed that is much closer to what fascism was. Florestan Fernandes has a very interesting text "A Note on Fascism in Latin America" in which he points out that our dictatorships in Latin America have carried on the gene of fascism. And that's a little bit what I would like to argue here.

The rise of Bolsonaro in Brazil, his election, represented, actually represents a very advanced flirtation with fascist ideology. I think it is important to stress this: we are not in a

fascist regime, but we have a government with a fascist ideology that is moving towards a restructuration in that direction.

I am not going to discuss fascism much here - it is just to reinforce the central thesis that, of course, fascism is not easily created. For instance, racism is not a construction of fascism, but fascism potentializes and gives space for all the racism previously present in a society to stand out. The anti-racist fight is urgent, necessary, and must come together with the anti-capitalist fight. It is urgent to reflect on which forms of anti-racist struggles we want so that we don't get lost in minor issues and we focus on the issues that can really break with all forms of prejudice. Race distanced from class, indicates a real social knot that deserves to be the subject of a struggle, one that is fair, but not complete. Class, unaware of race, prevents us from seeing central issues that co-constitute the great challenge of our times. We advocate that the anti-racist struggle is also an anti-capitalist struggle and only so, it is truly capable of fighting for emancipation.

I am going to nuance what exactly I am calling “the ideology of fascism.” It persists in Latin America and it is present - if you are paying attention to the latest moves, the impeachment in 2016, the coup in Bolivia, just to stick with a few examples. It permits us to think of fascism as a modern phenomenon, one that is emerging from old structures or one that can be seen as a mere production or sub-production of pre-existing archaic structures.

Yet, I advise us not to exchange fascism for authoritarianism, as we are used to do in Latin America, once faced with an authoritarian administration. We are witnessing today in Brazil a process of fascistization of the society. Fascist ideology, both yesterday and today, emphasizes the most reactionary values in society: 1) marriage as a bond, the family as a duty; 2) the homeland as a greater value in itself, morality as an authority; 3) religion as an obligation emanating from eternity.

Bolsonaro's logo is “Brazil above everything else, God above all.” And he also works with the idea of morality as an authority. I think today we're particularly faced with one of these questions, namely: the idea of religion as an obligation. Religion is well used as a place for the dissemination of his fascist ideology and of course that is manifest in how women are presented in this context. A woman's major role is to raise a family and to take care of the spirituality of the family. Bolsonaro treats women in a sexist, misogynist way. The woman is a means to an end, the reproducer of the family. During his campaign, but also during his

administration, he declared the birth of a daughter to be a *faux-pas*, a mistake made in his until then preserved lineage of male sons.

I want to bring up some questions about racism and why it can be considered a cancer destroying our society. I would like to dialogue with an author - Aimé Césaire - who has a text about colonialism where he describes the cruelty of the colonizer taking away his own humanity. That is, the colonizer "dehumanizes" himself in the process of colonization. From colonization to civilization, he says, there is an infinite distance. Considering all the colonial expeditions, all the colonial statutes: "no single human value would be left." The idea is that no one colonizes in innocence, or even in total impunity. The civilization that does this, and does it by force, is a sick, morally stricken civilization. Here, an analogy is made to Nazism in Europe and its consequences. The fact is that this same or even greater barbarity was committed during the colonization of the "new world" and with the European enslavement of Africa. Colonization is synonymous with "objectification." Marx, in several passages, addresses the issue of slavery and relates it to the development of capitalism:

“Direct slavery is just as much the pivot of bourgeois industry as machinery, credits, etc. Without slavery, you have no cotton; without cotton you have no modern industry. It is slavery that gave the colonies their value; it is the colonies that creates world trade, and it is world trade that is the precondition of large-scale industry. Thus, slavery is an economic category of the greatest importance.” ([Marx 1847: 49-50](#))

In *Wage Labor and Capital*, he says:

“What is a Negro slave? A man of the black race. The one explanation is worthy of the other. A Negro is a Negro. Only under certain conditions does he become a slave.” ([Marx 1847, 13](#)) Marx, a staunch abolitionist, openly criticizes Lincoln: "Lincoln fearfully revoked the Emancipation Proclamation of the Negroes belonging to the rebels which was declared by Frémont's Missouri (General John), doing this after the protests of the slaveholders who threatened to secede....”

After this small preamble, let's think about the issue of race in Brazil.

Between 1561 and 1860, Brazil was the destination of more than 5 million African slaves. It has today perhaps the largest contingent of black people outside the African continent. Together, black and brown people make up 56% of the Brazilian population.

19.2 million Brazilians declare themselves black and 89.7 million declare themselves brown. That's 108 million. Having said that, let's get to our central issue, because we are dealing with this cancer called racism nowadays, despite being in the 21st century. And here, it is necessary to think more deeply about our history and about the place relegated to black people (referring here to black and brown people).

Gilberto Freyre, in his classic *Casa Grande e Senzala*, refers to a certain "racial democracy" that translated into an almost harmonious coexistence of races and that legalized miscegenation. This creates the Brazilian people, the one that carries in its genes the three races, or the one composed of what Darcy Ribeiro would later call "brasíndios." It is the racialization between whites, blacks and also Indians that would allow the construction of this democratically racialized nation.

This myth of "racial democracy" appears more as an ideal than as something concrete. Even Gilberto Freyre himself says in his *Casa Grande e Senzala* that this refers to the imaginary of the Portuguese man in a manner that was reproductive of the relations that this concept corroborated, which I will call here "structural racism." I know the term is controversial and questioned, but we are using it to highlight how racism is embedded in institutions. According to Gilberto Freyre, the prevailing categorization scheme could be summarized as: "Blacks to work; mulattos to fuck (it is precisely this vulgar vocabulary that comes to his mind); and the whites to marry." In other words, the constitution of the family was not thought of including a mulatto woman, or even less, a black and a mulatto woman. Here, we are talking about the *Casa Grande*. Only white women could imagine building a family. We could think about this reasoning and how this reasoning is much more common amidst poorer classes, since there are not many blacks among the bourgeois in Brazil. There is some contradiction about this statement, we can return to this point in the debate. Florestan Fernandes, an author that I mentioned before, wrote a book called "O negro no mundo dos brancos," warning that the idea of miscegenation, as an index of social integration, had no effect in a society whose social stratification is as strict as it is in Brazil. Here, he discusses the myth of racial democracy and how it accompanies extreme indifference and lack of

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solidarity with a sector of the collectivity that was pushed to face alone the changes brought about by the universalization of free labor and competition, that is, of capitalism. So, there was no democratization of income, social prestige and power. Abolition turned blacks into the "pariahs of society." Added to this, we will see - still in the 19th century – the emergence of something called the "ideology of whitening." What did this “whitening ideology” mean?

Based on the ideas of eugenics that emerged in 19th-century Europe, especially those of Gobineau, the government of Dom Pedro I encouraged the migration of Europeans to Brazil as free waged labor. The general idea, supported by the elite and intellectuals of the time, was the superiority of whites over other races. The whitening of the nation was intended to achieve a moral and cultural cleansing of Brazilian society. To whiten the population in order to progress the country became a national project defended in the 19th century, but which advanced into the 20th century. Eugenics in Brazil had a different meaning than the one adopted in Europe: while Europeans believed that miscegenation was a degeneration of the races and that it would bring bad consequences for the evolution of the human species, in Brazil the intention was to whiten the population through this mixture. This would mean, that next generations were expected to be all white in a period of at least 50 years and at most 200 years. The population of mestizos was 'positively' classified by its degree of whiteness: quasi-white, semi-white. Or, as Caetano Veloso later describes it, “they are almost all blacks because they are so poor.” It is interesting to see how poverty and race are connected and that most poor people are black or near-black.

All of this doesn't mean to ignore that racism is impregnated in society and that it is passed on, of course, through a dominant ideology and what I will call here a "racist culture" - there are hundreds of jargons, popular sayings, etc. that place black people in a particular situation permeating class relations. We cannot dissociate racism, first from capitalism and second, from the class of origin. In a warm and vibrant account of the Black Revolt in Haiti, C.L.R. James describes how the black slaves and former slaves had a somewhat ambiguous relationship with the mulattos. That the issue is not with color, but with social class. Which is not at all to deny racism, but to bring the debate about racism back to the social structure. I would like here to give you some examples:

1) Blacks are the greatest share of the labor force - 54.9% - and overrepresented among the unemployed and underemployed.

2) Only 4.9% of blacks occupy the seats on the boards of directors of the 500 most profitable companies in Brazil and they earn less than whites.

3) The rates of poverty and extreme poverty are higher among the black population.

4) They are a minority in the Legislative and Judiciary branches of government, but the majority in the incarcerated population;

5) Another important fact is that black women are the biggest victims of violence.

I would like to summarize my speech here:

1) The fight against racism must be an anti-capitalist fight. Here it is important to emphasize that the fight for inclusion is necessary, urgent, and legitimate, but racism cannot be ended without ending capitalism, one feeds off each other;

2) The struggle of part of the black movement, which also includes black feminists that I will call here liberals who deny the class issue as the main factor enabling racism, consists of claiming a place and dangerously framing rights as "privileges." If they are privileges, the struggle changes its character – we will no longer be talking about equal treatment, since privileges must be extirpated.

As Angela Davis says it, it's not enough to not be racist, we need to be anti-racist. And the struggle against racism includes whites. This liberal black movement, by denying class and the class struggle as central for the eradication of poverty, racism and all other prejudices, propagates the false illusion that the creation of a black middle class would solve the issue of racism in this country.

To conclude, I would like to recall how Brazilian black people have been, ever since fighting against slavery in a slave society, mobilized after the abolition in a fight for racial equality. This awareness is a fundamental instrument for the overcoming of the modern picture painted by contemporary social inequality affecting millions of Brazilians. Therefore, to understand the conjuncture of the dominated classes in Brazil, it is necessary to analyze the two central dimensions of domination: the class-based one and the racial domination. Any questions you may have, we can return to them in the debate.

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Annelise: Thank you very, very much, Joana. I would like to ask, we would have gone straight to Monise's presentation but I would like to ask for a five-minute-break so that Stephanie can get some water. Then we will continue with Monise directly, and then we will move on to a general discussion about the three interventions that we heard, if that is okay? 5 minutes. Then, I'll see you in a little bit.

Then, if we need to, we'll take another five-minute-break, but if not, we'll move on to a general discussion that we can also relegate to the beginning of the second block, if it's better for everyone to take a longer break. Thank you very much Stephanie for all the, the incredible work of simultaneous translation which is very difficult. Monise, thank you for being here.

Presenting: Monise Martinez

Monise: Good afternoon, everyone. I am glad for the opportunity to participate in this event with this very important topic and alongside professors and researchers whose work I admire a lot. I would like to start, then, thanking Annelise for organizing the event, for the invitation, its promotion, and thanks to the present audience - I know it has been increasingly difficult to be online for several hours, as we have all been in recent times, so, thank you.

When I received the invitation to participate in this occasion, I thought a lot about what exactly I could bring to contribute to the dialogue on this topic since, and I say beforehand, the Marxist theory of dependency has not been the main topic of my research work. By that, I mean that, as a doctoral student, I am not actually working on a thesis on this topic or within this theoretical framework. But I am working on some intersections between neoliberalism, the media, feminism(s) and religion in the Brazilian context - more specifically on (neo) Pentecostalism – all topics which can be relevant when discussing the Marxist theory of dependency today.

My speech then appears as an invitation to try to build this bridge. And for this to be possible, I will talk a little more about the research I have been doing, starting with a very simple question: “What is happening to feminism (s) in the world, or more specifically, in Latin America and Brazil?”

In 2015, when I signed up for the PhD in Feminist Studies at the University of Coimbra, the so-called 'Women's Spring' was flourishing in Brazil in the form of several feminist street demonstrations and online campaigns. For me, as someone who had known a student movement that was still nearly untouched by the feminist debate during my undergraduate studies, that particular moment seemed to represent a new horizon for feminist forces in Brazil. And it did indeed represent that.

Understanding feminisms as fields of action - that is, as communities involved in the enunciation of new cultural [and political] codes that dispute the dominant representations -, Sonia Alvarez defined this moment as that of a sidestreaming characterized by a multiplication of plural feminist fields. These would rely on the active participation of diverse actors (social movements, party nuclei, NGOs, institutes and educational institutions and the State itself), to an extent in which we were able to perceive a move toward a 'popularization of feminisms.' But what exactly is this idea associated with?

In a study on the topic of this so-called "popularization of feminisms," conducted by Sarah Banet-Weiser in the North American context, where her main focus of the analysis was placed on the "media landscape", the author started from three basic meanings to understand this "popularity" which I believe to be useful when thinking about the Brazilian case.

Banet-Waiser uses 'popularity' to highlight the visibility and media accessibility of feminisms, which have come to manifest themselves in speeches and practices that circulate in pop culture and the media, such as digital spaces, social networks and electronics. She also highlights the state of 'admiration' or 'identification' which some people and groups have come to attribute to feminisms (as in the case of celebrities). Banet-Waiser equally refers to the term 'popularity' to reflect on the idea of 'popular' in the Gramscian interpretation of common sense, hence, placing this movement on a battlefield. In the analyzed case, it served to show that different feminisms were competing for space within a given economy of visibility.

This dynamic of popularity involving feminist fields of action makes evident the importance of thinking about the dynamics taking place between plural actors / of feminism (s) and the dynamics that nowadays go against them. And this is where it becomes very useful for us to think about the process of 'neo-liberalization of feminisms' and its relationship to a so-called *gender mainstreaming*.

The term 'gender mainstreaming' serves to designate a strategy that underpinned the recommendations and strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action. It was a strategy based on gender equality and promoting women's participation in all spheres of society, as described in this Platform. The Platform itself consists of an extensive document issued at the 4th World Conference on Women in 1995. This conference was the last within a series of other three carried out by the United Nations since 1975. From there, as we know, a series of actions aimed at the areas of focus listed as priorities in the Platform has been promoted, as in the case of reproductive health, combating poverty, the media, etc.

Among the various controversial effects associated with the gradual implementation of these policies at the global level, including in Latin American countries and more specifically in Brazil, we highlight the transnationalization of the so-called 'feminist advocacy' in the 1990s. This process was accompanied by a verticalization of the Brazilian feminist field through its association with NGOs, which kept a relative distance from the streets. What I want to highlight in this context today, however, is the cooptation of gender agendas by neo-liberal policies and initiatives, including corporate ones.

This cooptation process has taken place globally. As political scientist Elisabeth Prügl pointed out in a study on the design of corporate projects aimed at "female empowerment" in the Global North, it is associated with the distortion of feminist agendas carried out by companies, aiming at a competitive advantage when using a so-called feminist language. This would contribute to a political emptying of feminisms through an entrepreneurial and individualistic feminist subjectivity. As Catherine Rothenberg detailed later, this subjectivity contradictorily claims to fight against gender inequalities by proposing individual responsibilities for success and thus, aligning itself with the social, economic and cultural forces that precisely promote such inequalities. Amidst this process of cooptation, the expansion of the visibility given to gender issues has been ever more expanded, making this category a central meta-political catalyst in the spectrum of the conservative right.

For example, in the Latin American context, political scientist Flávia Birolli pointed out that the progressive path of gender issues to the center of political disputes in the region was becoming more substantial as neoliberal politics, economics and ideology progressed along with advancing anti-gender initiatives. However, these anti-gender initiatives have not been fortuitous nor have they been specific to this region. They too gained strength in the

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wake of the 4th World Conference on Women (UN), as a political project headed by the Holy See (Vatican) was articulated, namely through the conception and initial dissemination of the well-known «gender ideology». This ideology was intended to highlight the “dangers” of adopting the constructionist perspective of gender (that is, the understanding of gender as a social construction). It aimed at defending the heteropatriarchal family model and, thus, containing advances in feminist and LGBTQ + agendas at a global level.

Flávia Biroli explains the relationship between these processes as following: Neoliberalism would be a moral project with neoconservative roots, which strives for "privatization" also through the expansion of the "protected private sphere," pleading for the expansion of the role of the family and of the “moralization of the State's power in the domestic and institutional sphere.” As the “traditional Christian,” the neoconservative family model preserves gender inequities through the strict notion of complementarity between masculine and feminine, one that serves an economic order in which the exploitation of the feminine and labor force reproduction are fundamental pillars. Hence, the defense of this family model becomes an effective tool for the preservation of neoliberal rationality and Christian morality. In this context, then, that actors in the religious field come to play a fundamental role in manifesting these dynamics. In my current research, for various reasons, I have focused, above all, on those led by women from the Universal Church (IURD).

IURD was founded in 1977 by Edir Macedo in Rio de Janeiro. It is a neo-Pentecostal Church, adherent to the Prosperity Theology initially spread by the APG in the USA. Therefore, it is based on the belief that, by following a strict path of faith, the faithful manage to achieve wealth, health, and victory. Since its foundation, characterized by the massive use of the media, from radio to new media, the Church has been considered a key piece for significant changes in the Brazilian religious field due to its relationship with the political field. As for other Christian Churches, the family is an important guide in the worldview shared by this Church with some particularities. The first of them is that the family project is based on the idea of a "prosperous family." Apart from the Christian worldview on the complementarity between male and female, there is a worldview saying that the family has to prosper. The 'recipe' for that to happen is incorporating male and female-centered subjectivities, among others things, in decisions over birth control.

In 1997, at a time of fierce competition in the Brazilian religious field marked by disputes between the Catholic Church and evangelical sectors, the publicization of health and

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reproductive rights, associated with the idea of "family," became an important strategic element for this Church. At this point, the Church was concerned with legitimizing its religious authenticity in the public sphere. It is important to note that the CI had constantly questioned its religious authenticity with the support from Rede Globo, which entered the dispute over the fact that MS, the founder of the Church, became a competitor once he bought another TV channel (Rede Record). The idea of transmitting to the population that the evangelical sectors were also in defense of the "family" countered the Catholic Church's ambitions of monopolizing this defense. The latter had also been a central theme in John Paul II's speeches during a providential visit by the Pope to Brazil in the wake of the increasing advocacy for reproductive rights after 4th CMM. Several aspects were mutually reinforcing each other here, but I want to highlight the gradual incorporation of women into the IURD Church's media empire. Why?

Today, the greater role of women (in the case of wives of bishops and pastors) in IURD's religious media coincides with the gradual advances of anti-gender reactions in institutional politics, civil society and the Brazilian media landscape. As from the 2000s onwards, as I said at the beginning of my presentation, we see an advance in feminist and LGBTQ + agendas in Congress, as well as a significant increase in their visibility with the appearance of blogs, pages, and profiles for dissemination of feminist content. We also see the conservative narrative of the "gender ideology" taking shape in the country and, in the case of Universal, a more important leadership role given to women of the Church in creating disciplinary programs aimed at the general female audience.

In 2010, for example, Catholics and Evangelicals came together in the National Congress in favor of removing the terms "gender" and "sexual orientation" from the National Education Plan (PNE). In this moment, a disciplinary project by Universal entirely dedicated to women is created in Brazil: *Godllywood*.

The Godllywood project was conceived by Cristiane Cardoso, the eldest daughter of MS, with the main objective of making faithful young people of the Church "better-suited for God" by following a disciplinary program. It declared itself as a manner of combating "wrong values" promoted by Hollywood, aimed at rescuing an alleged "feminine essence" prescribed by God. This program was initially set up in a selected number of Brazilian capital temples, restricted to restrictive groups of churchgoers and, little by little, streamlined online through

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challenges posted on Facebook. In December 2015, a version available to every woman interested in participating in the dynamic called Godllywood Self-Help was launched, and these daily exercises and challenges were posted in a blog. In 2019, shortly after Bolsonaro was elected, Godllywood declared itself a 'movement without an ideology' aimed at women, extending its dynamics and activities to Instagram and YouTube, where daily lives are published with content that promotes the ideal woman.

This profile of an ideal woman is called «virtuous woman» and was presented in detail by Cristiane Cardoso in her best seller *Woman V: Old fashioned modern* in 2011. It consists of a rehashed version of the Christian femininity model, introduced through the use of a more secularized language, close to the self-help discourse, proposing a woman-centered model of achieving success in marriage, family, work and spiritual life. It is from this “trans-religious” model (which is not a novelty in a widespread view of Pentecostalism) that we begin to notice, then, the existence of a relationship between this Church's femininity project and a type of a so-called “neo-liberalized feminist.”

In the analyzes that I have carried out for my research, I have used critical and feminist analysis of discourse (CFDA) as a qualitative method to unravel the points of convergence and distance between these so-called subjectivities. Among the convergences, it is possible to note the presentation of individualized solutions to structural gender problems, and the establishment of a paradigm of individual transformation. The latter is built on an idea of management and mental discipline to achieve efficiency, competitiveness, personal responsibility for success and well-being, and appreciation for the notion of personal choice. Unlike "neoliberalized feminist subjectivities," there is no intention whatsoever to declare this woman a feminist. The relations drawn up with feminisms are of opposition. Eventually, feminisms and their actors are invoked more directly or indirectly as antagonists to the woman profile that the Church idealizes.

This relationship with feminisms becomes especially important when we situate this dynamic in the context of an advancing neoconservatism in Brazil that relates to neoliberalism in dubious manners. There is a commitment to propagate a gender ideology that proves to be an 'alternative' to the project of a feminist society. This same paradigm of action is rooted in the cooptation, subversion and delegitimization of feminisms in institutional politics and civil society through disputes over what can be referred to as common sense. Ultimately, this is a verifiable strategy in the far-right populist government headed by Jair Bolsonaro, especially

when we focus on the ministerial performance of Damares Alves, Minister of Women, Family and Human Rights.

Annelise: Thank you very much Monise. Now we would go directly to a general discussion, but I don't know if that is too much to ask in terms of time. You could especially give me an answer from the panelists if you prefer to continue directly or take a break.

Monise: I would prefer to continue

Joana: Better to continue.

Angelica: I think so too, to continue.

Discussion

Annelise: So, I'll open it up for general questions and then I'll have mine, but first any questions, comments are also very welcome, any reactions? Danny Moraes, please open your microphone.

Danny: Hello, good afternoon. Can you hear me? First of all, congratulations for the event, I learned a lot of things, I am not a student of this field, I am just an enthusiast. My area is totally different and what I would like to know is that... it was said a few times and it is something that I usually question, I wonder.... How is it possible to spread information in such a way that it reaches society in a broad way, so that it arrives in a concrete way, leading to real actions in the most diverse interfaces? Because there is experience and what I see is that there are enough stimuli to change behavior, stimuli that emerge from culture, right? And that, with time, they become more rooted. But there is the media stimulus, beforehand dictated by big television media and now we have a little more capillarity through social media... This supposedly would bring us some kind of more democratic information... Yet, based on the way the algorithms appear, it is not exactly democratic, our access to this information. And my question would be: what would be a reasonable possibility to spread information so that our practice does indeed achieve some change or an effective contribution to building up something new?

Annelise: Thank you very much, Danny. I would propose that we take more questions and then we have a single moment for the answers. Then, we have João da Costa Chaves Júnior who wrote in the chat, if João could turn on the microphone to ask his question... If it is not possible for you to ask your question right now, you can always write it in the chat and I can read it out loud.

João: Can you hear me? Well, then, first of all I would like to thank you for the possibility of participating in this very important event and to greet the presence of everyone who spoke, from whom I learned a lot. I would like to make a comment. It seems to me that the dehumanization and discrimination of social groups is a phenomenon inherent to capitalism. The existence of niches of oppression is a necessary condition for the reproduction of capital. It is configured as an extremely useful construct that delivers the necessary ideological support to neoliberalism, which is a concrete expression of contemporary capitalism. To me, a non-scholar of the subject, it seems that there are some discourses here and there that suggest that a racial, gender democracy is possible, and that it could also contemplate the overcoming of violence against the LGBTQIA+ population. It seems to me that this is an idea underlying some of the concepts and frameworks defended by groups often referred to as the "non-Marxist left." I ask if what I am saying makes any sense. That is my comment. Thank you very much.

Annelise: Thank you very much, João. We'll move straight to Andressa who has a third question.

Andressa: Hi, good morning! So, I am, I'll introduce myself quickly, right? I am from Recife, Pernambuco. I am a state school teacher here and I am also a member of the Intermere Study Center and a popular educator at the May 13th Center *Nucleo*. And this is a debate that interests me a lot. I also think that, like Danny, I am not studying it, but it is a debate that permeates our performance in several spaces in which we meet, so I would like to thank for the organization of this space and also for the contributions of professors Angélica, Joana, Monise. They were very nice, they touched upon several issues that make us think, right? And one of them that I wanted to point out and that if they could develop them a little bit... I'll see if I can explain myself well, but nowadays it seems, roughly said, that there are two sides when we talk about feminism, right? Either this more post-modern side in which everything is oppression, there is only oppression, there is no exploitation, and that in a certain way

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capitalism even takes advantage of this, gives in on some agendas, some demands, and allows for incremental changes so that everything stays the same. So, it is possible, it is not bad to discuss oppression as long as we don't talk about exploitation. This ends up fragmenting us, right? We don't look at ourselves within this conception, we don't see ourselves as a class and we get fragmented. For capitalism, this is great. Then, on the other side, we will have a, I don't know if we can call it a tendency, I don't even know if this is the best way to characterize it, but a kind of a "mechanistic" Marxism that totally denies oppression and that postulates that in our debate, what we need to focus on is the class struggle, the economic struggle, right? And the question of oppression, then we hear this often, "because we are not going to debate oppression because it divides our class, so we are going to focus on the economic struggles and, who knows, in a possible transformation, revolution, we are going to address the agendas of racism, feminism and all the other divisions." And this is also a problem when we think that our class is totally permeated by the question of oppression. So, I think that if it were possible, I would like you to talk a little bit about this, because when we think about the topic of Marxist feminism, or as per the conference title, "another Marxist feminism:" How can we make this relation, even thinking that Marxist social theory is not simply... it exists to interpret reality and transform it. I think that it is, when we study Marxist social theory, it goes along these lines. So how can we transform the extremely unequal society we live in without understanding the oppressions and looking only at the economic struggle?

Annelise: Thank you so much Andressa. I was going to ask if you had any more questions, if not I will put mine in line. Any others? Well, I am going to ask a quick question, actually, reading Joana's and Angelica's texts, I thought about the question that probably everyone - scholars, non-studious, non-researchers - is asking about the conditions of possibility of a popular revolution. There is this very beautiful quote in Angélica's text, actually, where she says, I will just read quickly: "And it is always inevitable that, in any revolutionary process, profound transformations coexist at the economic level with extremely traditional and even reactionary characteristics in the most preliminary forms of social coexistence, such as the maintenance, for a certain period, of the condition of women as objects." This brought me fundamentally back to one of Fanon's texts called *The Wretched of the Earth*, in its first chapter "On Violence." There's a part where he talks, it's an expression that I like very much

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"...in this terrible machine of grinding and mixing that is a popular revolution." I was thinking, I don't want to generalize and it's logical that it's not all spaces, but feminism, along with other anti-oppression struggles, has earned the "bad name" of being politically correct, or as acting as a type of censorship. And I would like to understand a little bit what the political practice is, or what you think the political practice that precedes a popular revolution should look like? I imagine that you are already going to answer in a certain sense, but it would still be interesting to verbalize this whole question of, for example, in this period in which the condition of women as objects will still exist: what is too much conciliation? What is not enough conciliation? What would be unacceptable? What are the limits of acceptability if we are really, genuinely, interested in an anti-patriarchal, anti-racist fight, if we recognize the legitimacy of these anti-oppression fights, which is not the case of everybody? And I will read just one more question from Juscelino, who wrote here in French in the chat, Juscelino do you want to speak for yourself? Are you sure? By the way, Juscelino is our French translator so welcome. Juscelino will do the text translations for the website afterwards. These speeches, they will be in their full versions on the same page, together with the video of this conference. Juscelino asks: "What is it to be a feminist today?" And that's it. I will pass the microphone to you, Joana, Angélica, Monise, and that is it, then we will continue and we will have a pause before the second block.

Joana: In the same order, Annelise?

Annelise: It is up to you, if you want to go first.

Joana: No, not really. Angelica, do you want to go first?

Angelica: I can go, Joana. Well then, Danny Moraes, João Chaves, Andressa and Annelise, I don't know if I missed anyone, but I think that was the whole set. In fact, all of these questions go to the core of what we need to attack in the contemporary world. How to allow these conclusions to affect others in a concrete way, as Danny said, how to fight within our struggle and have a real effect, one that goes more in the sense of a social transformation rather than a simple change? João is taking the issue of the dehumanization of capital that also appears in Andressa's and also in Annelise's questions. So, I would go along these two axes, right? In

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this direction that, in the middle of the 60s and 70s, Vânia Bambirra becomes our reference and I am here fighting to keep her memory alive. She was an exiled author, hardly read in Brazil – she should be read here in Brazil in the first place - but she is a universal author in this sense. The first question is the one she would address by discussing the role of representative organs of the working class. In other words, no good comes from just talking to the middle class, it is not good for us to keep talking along the lines of May 68 that I quickly criticized here – demanding an extreme horizontalism, autonomism, voluntarism of all the struggles, of the collective subjects who are chaotically placed at the same level. A collective is a sum of individuals, not the intermingling with his/her own class. So, the bad news, Danny, is that it is harder to articulate these ideas through these channels. The good news is that we don't waste time and we don't stay “running a treadmill,” which is the main point I want to make in my intervention. We can't be doing the same that we've been doing until here. Then, I'll answer João's question, tackling Danny's as well. These nuclei of oppression, which really exist, this is clear in João Chaves' question, serve as an ideological support, to quote a very important Hungarian Marxist author, it is "capital's line of least resistance." So, the causes, even if they are real-life problems, if they are not articulated with labor unions, class representation organs, parties, institutional or non-institutional popular movements... because even this expression has been taken away from us in post-modern times, where we refer to social instead of popular. And I insist that we call them popular movements, not social movements. Together with a group of authors - evidently, everything I bring here is part of a long tradition of great thinkers who came before us, nobody here had a Eureka-moment and saw the solution, the social soul of a political revolution, as Marx characterized it in one of his seminal texts in the 1840's... The great question pertaining to human emancipation is: how can we extrapolate political emancipation? How do we get there? Through organized working-class led organs, where each one of these causes, be they racial, indigenous, LGBT, or women's causes, are articulated. I would also like to take this opportunity to mention a book that is about to be published right now in the next weeks here in Brazil: *"Identity and social class: a critical analysis for the articulation of class and anti-oppression struggles"* by Professor Carlos Montano from UFRJ, who is here with us at this event and who has done an extraordinary work of fine-grained research, which will propose exactly this path, and discusses this articulation in a polemical way.

And, of course, his book, and those who are here, others who are fighting for this very important dimension: we will get into a polemic that is not always - to return to João's question - that is not always well seen by the so-called non-Marxist left. It is a left that rejects capitalism, socialism, at the same time, bringing us to a void of alternatives. There are different foundations and driving forces upon which Carlos Montano also touches - so I already recommend that you read it, it will be published not just in print, but it will be an e-book as well. Therefore, you can access it from anywhere around the world. João Chaves, who is also a great union companion, we are professors of our ADUNESP (Association of Professors of UNESP), has been as our president a great fighter for this specific dimension, beyond what the non-Marxist left suggests, a fighter for the question of women in class society. We had debates in our union about this. Now, I would like to answer him and Andressa. Andressa, the question you raise is very important: if on the one hand, there are only those who speak about oppression, usually in a field outside of Marxism, there is also a so-called "mechanist Marxism," which does not properly understand the relationship to oppression. Even Carlos Montano's book tries to get out of this dichotomy, to attack and overcome it. I have the following reading. It is our responsibility as Marxists, and I think our interventions highlighted this today. Our reading as Marxists, and as Marxist researchers, has to be the one that indicates socialism as a transition, towards communism and not as a mere platonic order, one that is impossible to achieve. The word communism is so ideologically rejected in the contemporary world that it is up to us as researchers to take it up again. To remove the bogeyman attached to it because, by doing so, we are going against the discourse of the right-wing. On the one hand, there is what you are saying, Andressa. But which strand of Marxism did this? Or is it that, instead of a given strand of Marxism, and this is a question that I ask, it is a part of my ongoing research project, shouldn't we rather criticize the postmodern counterrevolution led by the bourgeoisie that I understand as the fourth counterrevolution when it comes to ideological turns, which ever since 1848 have been very well implemented by the bourgeoisie. Shortly stated: It is the Stalinist vulgate. So, we have to be very careful, not to confuse the Stalinist vulgate, the problems that occurred in the Soviet Union, problems that really existed in a system that was, at most, perhaps, a post-capitalism that did not go forward, with today. We do not need to get scared, because 70 years for humanity, for history, are nothing. History did not begin when we entered it, this is very important. And the anti-humanism that, and this is João's question, the anti-historicism, the

contemporary irrationalism and the praise of madness we see today. When no one understands each other, social madness, one that exists objectively. Which class is at this moment enjoying that we're all incapable of understanding each other in a society run by capital? Evidently, it is the bourgeoisie. So, in order to refute this eventual mechanistic Marxism that, in Andressa's words, parades around at times, let's try to situate it historically. I think that Andressa's question goes in this direction, that objectification, and I reiterate that we cannot take the failure of the Soviet Union and interpret in it the failure of Marxism.

And for those of us who are progressives, leftists, revolutionaries or not - though I am indeed talking here exactly about the Revolution. One that is absolutely sterilized as an objective idea. The bourgeoisie had to erase its own history – I'm speaking of the French Revolution of 1789, the English Revolution and American independence. Why? To implement a bourgeois counter-revolution that makes us, in Danny Moraes' question, unable to reach the bases. I think that's what Danny is asking: "How do you reach the grassroots?" And for sure, for those of us who are Brazilians here, we know that the "*Ele nao*" movement against Bolsonaro in 2018, despite being very well-intentioned, was coming from a middle class, it didn't reach the outskirts. The priorities of the outskirts have to do rather with hunger, with the private property of the means of production, and this leads me to Annelise's question. The greatest anxiety of a revolutionary is that there is a moment of transition, before the frontal attack and the expropriating private property of the bourgeoisie, upon which I have also been reflecting, where you see a double transition after a political revolution, it is when the social soul of the revolution is brought out. And a woman is only considered an object when we see society from the point of view of the capitalist mode of production, which has private appropriation of the productive forces. Heleieth Saffioti has done tremendous work on this, yet, without taking away the brilliance of Heleieth, Bambirra goes a step further. She already indicates in that quote that you made in your question, it is literally hers, right? I added it to the text to call attention to the fact that it is not that psychologistic puzzle: "ah, but there will always be evil among men, there will always be some kind of competition and then the woman will continue being mistreated, the black in a socialist society, even in the eventual communist." Nothing could be more mistaken, not only from a historical point of view, but also from an objective one, and with this I will stop to let Joana answer. What we can concretely produce is that there is a social class that has nothing to lose but its fetters, that is, this social class has no property at all. It is the first time in history that nobody has any

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property in the dominated class. That this dominated class can fight, with transitions, since we will have a revolutionary government led by workers, this is the polemical dictatorship of the proletariat, but we live under a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, so it is expected that we will have to go through a transition of our own dictatorship to guarantee the removal of private property. Then the question of women, or of any race, or any other question that has to do with our class, can be solved once we find ourselves moving towards the famous society of associated producers. We are in a society of competition, capital and market. We only understand things as property. It is difficult to overcome this ideologically, but with the help of studies, books, right? All of the fighters we have here, all together, trying in this room to give this revolutionary dimension to their struggles. Because without it... and please forget the word utopia because it is linked to something normally achievable. The revolution is something perfectly plannable and it arrives at the base. That was it, sorry if I took too long.

Annelise: Joana, Monise, the other two panelists, before we go to break.

Joana: Well, I would like to at least try, I can't answer all the questions, they are quite complex, aren't they? And Angelica did that very well, but I would like to try to point out some issues, Annelise. One of them, I think the way Danny Moraes presented it, and she is absolutely right. What does it mean today in this world in which we live, that we have all this information, in all forms, but how does this information reach and is "digested" by the population? If we think about the elections in Brazil in 2018 for instance, his propaganda was based on fake news. Now, how does that reach the population? So, to disseminate information is also to disseminate education, and I think this is a very important task. We on the left have given up grassroots education, of going to the outskirts, of having education centers, and now there is a proposal for socialist centers that I think is very interesting, right? The proposal is interesting, but I have yet to see how it will be implemented. Because, you see, it is not enough to have information. It is how this information arrives and what we do with it. And then, I think a little with Paulo Freire, that is, training happens, conscientization happens in both directions. You also become self-aware in a pedagogical encounter. And this is extremely important. When we think about what the Centers for Popular Education were in the 60s and 70s, and what they have become since the 90s... Andressa must know this better than I do, because the May 13th *Nucleo* was one of these formation centers for workers, for

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laborers. And this is what we have been losing, I mean, of course, the May 13th nucleo still exists, but it does not have the same importance that it had in the 60s, 70s, until the 80s. Some authors would address the late processes affecting such centers as “the NGOization of these movements.” I also make this distinction made by Angelica, namely to think how these social movements went through a process of formalization, of institutionalization and became NGOs. There are several critical texts about this. And then, of course, it is important to think about how these issues that were part of, that were in the vocabulary of the Popular Education Training Centers, how conscientization, there was no “women empowerment” going around, but women had a prominent role. There was a great valorization, not of the role of women per se, but of leaving the domestic space. Many of these social movements or popular movements, as you wish, like the movement for health care rights, the education movement, the housing movement, many of those were mainly composed, or their leaders were women. And then, due to our time constraints, it is not possible to develop this much further. But that I think this is fundamental. And there it doesn't need the word empowerment in it. They are not empowered women in that sense. Because it's not about that either. And I think, it is even a personal problem of mine with the term. Here in Maranhão, for example, there is a movement of “Mulheres quebradeiras de coco,” women coconut breakers. The inclusion of these women into empowerment circles is praised in a way that does not question the exploitation they are subjected to, the empowerment is about the participation of these women in organizations. I am careful with the words, like João Cabral de Melo Neto, "we need to pick words like we pick our beans" because words have a lot of weight, I also don't want to be harsh with the comrades who do this kind of work. But there is no deep questioning of the social structure in which these women are inserted. It is almost as if it would suffice to praise their work, which is important, but not enough. And they continue to do extremely exploited work and with serious health problems later on, right? Because I don't know if you have seen how a coconut breaker works. She has to squat, with a kind of axe, I mean, at the age of 40, she will have problems that she would only face at the age of 70. Just for us to have a little bit of this dimension. And then it shows a kind of empowerment that is not real. This is what I wanted to discuss a bit further, and Angélica has already dealt with this. How this post-modernity, this post-modern discourse that focuses on the subject and puts the focus on the subject and not on the class, it disorganizes us in an extraordinary way. There is a neoliberalism and the accompanying neoliberal ideology which has also penetrated these

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organizations, including the so-called leftist parties. In the leftist parties, what one sees today is what I will call here "identitarianism" - I think this must be fought at all costs. I did a recent text with a friend here, a colleague, a professor, in which we tried to analyze the presence of women and black people in last year's 2020 mayoral race. If we look carefully, most of the women elected, they are brown and black. The majority. When you look at the political party, they are in extreme right-wing or right-wing political parties. Of course, with all the issues that we have in Brazil, it's not so that a political party will have this centrality in every corner of the country, but it is important to notice this movement. Trying to answer a little bit the question that João had asked: that is what this is all about. You have a neoliberal ideology that is introjected even in those spaces that should be our spaces to combat it. That's why the task is huge to try to revert this situation. I am already curious about Montano's text. I remember a book, by an American of Pakistani origin, I'm not sure about that, in which he writes about "the identity question." Now, a left that ignores the identity question loses enormously and the left that focuses on the identity question loses equally. One cannot disregard the question, the gender oppression, one cannot disregard the ethnic question, which in Brazil includes blacks and also the indigenous, we cannot forget them, and other ethnicities as well, but mainly these ones, that have a rancor from the years, as Angelica said in her presentation. The slavery heritage in Brazil is something impressive. We haven't managed to uproot this heritage. It is still very present, even in the way the middle class treats its domestic workers, a way that is similar to slavery. Now, to focus on these issues without taking into consideration the role of class makes no sense. See, this is what I said in my presentation: I don't think it is illegitimate for some black groups, including women, black feminists, to fight for an insertion in the capitalist mode of production. It is fair, it is legitimate, that they have access to consumer goods, etc. What I think is illegitimate is to put this forward as a struggle disassociated from what capitalism represents: capitalism is an unequal mode of production par excellence. To think that the insertion of a part of black people in this society will end racism... it won't. And so, I think Annelise is a little anxious with our schedule, so I will give my final answer: the question that Annelise raises I think is the most central question for those of us who think and want a just society, namely the question of the possibility of a popular revolution. I think that it is not only the possibility, but the necessity of a popular revolution. It is becoming more and more necessary. Now, the question that arises and makes me think, what you have pointed out here: is this popular revolution possible today? Because you see, I am thinking of revolution

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as a process and a process to be built. It is not given and it does not depend on my will. It depends on the concrete conditions to which the working class is being submitted and on its conscientization. That is, class consciousness is created in the process of class struggle. And here I think how the role of political parties, of unions has changed. This is what I perceive today - I could be wrong, of course. It is that instead of unionism, a combative unionism concerned with training and formation, one has today a unionism of results. Identitarianism entered our associations as well. There we have to think about the concrete conditions for the revolution, which, ultimately, is becoming indispensable. And Juscelino very quickly, right? What is it to be a feminist today? Well, I consider myself a feminist. Now, feminism and the feminist struggle cannot give up on an emancipatory struggle. And you can't think about feminism without thinking about class. So, to be a feminist today, in my understanding, is to embrace all these questions. And here the presence of men is indispensable. We need more and more feminist men. And then I'll stop here so that Monise can also speak.

Monise: Look, these are very complex questions. I'll start with Danny's, who talked a little about the spreading of information, and I'll try to answer to these questions together. I'll also talk about something that might be interesting, which just occurred to me: When I thought of researching neopentecostalism in Brazil, more specifically about the Universal Church, it was precisely because I saw the extent of how widespread their materials were, reaching out to groups that are in places that the left is not. Where the left thinks it is or where the left even is, but where we can't win. It is not there, already installed and prepared as a base. There are many dimensions to this that we could think about. There is the question of handouts/charity, of how it is (pause), there are many layers to this. In my research, I have come to understand how bridges of dialogue are offered. I think that there is a dynamic, in the way it is used, in the way it is built, that offers material conditions to people whose realities are not always easy, and here I will talk specifically about the issue of women, right? There is a very big debate inside Pentecostalism, neo-Pentecostalism about hierarchies of power, and contradictorily, the entrance of these women into the church ends up bringing their families to recovery. For instance, the numbers of violence against women are reduced. I am not defending the church here, I am not saying that this is good, but I am saying that this is a reality.

And it is very problematic, very problematic. So, I think that first of all, we need to understand how information navigates, looking at places that sometimes we don't look and we also have to deconstruct our judgmental look in this sense, listening to these people, do you understand? And, based on that, we will start building dialogues. I may sound very condescending in this sense, I have been through several debates like this, and I find it interesting, but it is because I really think that this dialogue is very necessary, because these people, for example the church becomes a place of community building that is major. If we are in a moment of capitalism that we are in, in which all things are falling apart, if we are in a moment of uberization of work relations, more and more people are working inside their own homes, without any rights and everyone in this condition of extreme individuality, do you see what I mean? If things keep going this way, it is imperative that we develop a sense of collectivity. The church is a sense of collectivity. Churches do this, they manage to establish collectivities, which many times leftist movements do not manage to do, you know? In this way, with this level of widespread information. So, I think it is very complicated, it is a question that I do not pretend to have an answer for, but I wanted to bring this reflection because we often lose sight of it when we are in debates about feminism. And then also answering Juscelino's question: "what does it mean to be a feminist today?" This is a question that I think about every day, it is basically this, waking up and thinking: "My God, what do we have here today to solve?" Because we get beaten from all sides. Inside the movement, there are a lot of questions. Andressa summarizes well these two aspects, this important antagonism, it was very well pointed out, but it is complex because it will, at times, seem that we have to take one side over the other and vice-versa, or that some fights are more important than others. And then I would like to finish my speech here with a reflection that I think is important. When I started in this path and a colleague once asked me if it would be possible for us to think about difference, about the difference between people, beings, things, without thinking about the notion of hierarchy or, on the contrary, if we can think about hierarchy without thinking about difference. I think that thinking of the relationship between difference and hierarchy also says a lot about how we tend, following the construction of Occidental thought, to think that we have antagonist fights. I think that we have to have convergent fights. I totally believe in a project of feminist society that is, of course, anti-capitalist, I think that it is inseparable, I don't even like to say, as many people do, that there is a neo-liberal feminism. I think this is stupid, in fact, I argue that there is a neo-liberalization of feminisms

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which is a clear cooptation of agendas of plural movements by corporations. Even as Joana underlined now, there is the very issue of NGOization with its contradictions. But I think it is very important that we develop an eye for ambiguities, right? And if we want to sparkle a conversation, which is a truly revolutionary act in this sense, we need to start seeing ambiguities and our dead angles, because there are a lot of things we don't see. We need to listen so that we can have more arguments to build a path, a project of society, right? I don't know if I answered everything, I tried to bring some points that I find interesting from my reality, which at this moment is very intense because I'm basically attending church meetings almost every day because of my thesis. This influences a bit my perception, of how people, church women have been relating to this. Women who are there, who don't identify with feminism, with these feminisms, because as Angélica herself said, we have it here immediately associated with class, with a middle class, an inherent middle-class feminism. Yet, I also think it is very bad when we frame feminism only as a result of this or only as a middle-class thing. Because it's not that other struggles don't happen in these spaces, for example religious ones, and that they are not advocated, pushed forward by women, you know? So, I think this is a long debate, but I'm just trying to throw some things out here so that we can think further. I think that's it.

Annelise: Thank you very much, Monise. I will allow myself at this point to finish this block.

Angelica: Annelise, can I just answer Juscelino's question, is that okay?

Annelise: That's fine.

Angelica: Sorry to interrupt you. I wanted to apologize to Juscelino, I had not seen his question in the chat and I would answer hyper-quickly in the following: For me, to be a feminist today, and I am pursuing this important provocation, inspired by Vânia Bambilra, means precisely not to call our fight feminist. Without any demerit or fundamental disagreement with those who are using the term obviously, but I think that we are going to have to make a leap. And to make a leap is to stop using the concept of feminism and start categorizing our fight as the question of women in class society. This is not new, I am not being original in any way. It is Heleieth Saffioti who is saying this in 1976, it is Vânia

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Bambirra who is insisting on this. And Vânia goes even further because Vânia rejects Simone de Beauvoir and Heleieth still assimilates her. Because it brings us no further when we start talking about “a classist feminism.” The bourgeoisie, the bourgeois woman is also a classist feminist. That is why I like the efforts undertaken by Monise and Joana to characterize feminism as something. But wouldn't it be better to reject the term feminism entirely? I think we would make an extraordinary leap, there would be no more confusion. It is a polemic invitation, but an invitation that I leave here to everyone, inspired by Juscelino's question. I have been invited, even saying the most polemic things, rejecting the expression feminism, and above all thinking about class struggle, I keep on being invited by LGBT entities, feminists, of ethnic associations, and sometimes what I hear at the end of the speech is: “Oh, it hurts inside to hear what you are saying, the rejection of May 68, a lot of rejections. But you seem to have seen a light at the end of the tunnel.” If that light is the trickling down that Danny had asked about, I think it would be very important. And finally, I was going to answer Annelise, and Juscelino's question comes back. I forgot to say: In fact, there is a polemic here that we never touch upon in our movements for women's emancipation. That is the monogamous family. So, there is a classic that those who haven't read it yet, have to read it, and those who don't know it, need to know it, and those who have read it, need to read it again and again. It is from comrade Engels who was together with Marx in the 19th century, “The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.” There is no way we can continue talking about feminism, after reading this classic text, with the advances that we had after that. We know that the nucleus of the monogamous family is the one that gives a solution to this question that seems irremediable, framed as either anti-oppression or exploitation. So, in this sense, I would say that Marxism has already given an answer to this articulation, right? And of course, some of the Marxists, perhaps not so inspired by Marxian texts, have made this mistake. Juscelino, that would be my answer to you. Thank you, Annelise and everyone.

Annelise: Thank you all very much, Angelica, Joana, Monise. We are going to have a fifteen-minute-break until 6:00 pm local time. And we'll be back using the same link. Thank you.