


FROM ATTEMPTS TO BREAK TO RESISTANCE IN CIRCULATION: the symbolic image embodied in the Marielle Franco street sign

DAS TENTATIVAS DE QUEBRA À RESISTÊNCIA NA CIRCULAÇÃO: a imagem simbólica corporificada na placa Marielle Franco
DE LOS INTENTOS DE ROMPER A LA RESISTENCIA EN CIRCULACIÓN: la imagen simbólica plasmada en la placa de Marielle Franco


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ABSTRACT:

We discuss the media circulation of the "Marielle street sign," understood not only as an object but as a symbolic image that circulates mobilizing meanings about human rights. We consider the context of intense mediatization in which we are immersed, and, according to the media circulation of the sign, we analyze a case in which we perceive the configuration of meanings in dispute. We start from the understanding of circulation brought by Rosa (2019), Fausto Neto (2018), and Carlón (2021), in dialogue with the approach of the imaginary in Kamper (2016), Rosa (2014), and iconoclasm in Klein (2009) to analyze how an object that initially served as a tribute to Marielle Franco was (re)configured into a symbol of political identification and resistance even in the face of attempts to empty and transform the political act into a consumption act.

KEYWORDS: Mediatization; Circulation; Image; Marielle.

Introduction

In this work, we analyze the mediatized case we constituted from the circulation of the "Marielle street sign," an object created in honor of the councilor murdered in 2018 in Rio de Janeiro, but which is re-signified by the actors and collectives in the course of circulation. Not given in principle, the case presented here is configured from the researchers' effort to analyze the events that unfolded since the episode of the exhibition of the street sign broken by her political opponents during the electoral campaign of that year.

We are supported by discussions on mediatization and circulation from a Latin American perspective, seeking to understand how the image of Marielle's street sign condenses meanings and mobilizes a debate on human rights in this process. As a characteristic of circulation in an intensely mediatized context, the communication interactions observed are marked by strains, disputes, and negotiations that materialize

in the instance of circulation, considered central to understanding the phenomenon analyzed here (Rosa, 2019).

Allied with this, we add the discussion about the imaginary mobilized by this case, that is, the ways in which the image of Marielle Franco triggers social imaginaries at the same time that it is configured as a symbol that lasts. Such duration resists iconoclastic acts, such as the attempt to destroy the sign with her name or its trivialization. It happens through the actions of social and collective actors who organize circulation to prevent any form of erasure. In this sense, the sign that embodies Marielle resists as an image and an ideal.

In the following sections, we present a contextualization of the events that allow us to build our observation case. The case analyzed here begins in 2018 with the episode of the plaque breaking and unfolds in the following years until arriving in 2022. We prioritize an analysis of the meaning circulation from the images of Marielle's plaque, not restricting ourselves to observing the images per se but the meanings we can deduce from them.

From homage to the clash of meanings in circulation: Marielle Franco's street sign

A black woman born in Maré, a neighborhood in the northern part of Rio de Janeiro, Marielle Franco became one of the best-known figures in the Brazilian political and media scene after the attack that resulted in her death occurred in March 2018. Sociologist and political activist for human rights, Marielle was elected city councilor by the Partido Socialismo e Liberdade (PSOL)¹ in the 2016 municipal elections as the fifth most voted in that election; before her candidacy, she had built political experience working in social projects at Maré and later as an advisor to the state deputy Marcelo Freixo (PSOL).

Marielle coordinated the Commission for the Defense of Human Rights and Citizenship of Assembleia Legislativa² of Rio de Janeiro in 2009 in the commission presided over by Freixo. She was dedicated to caring for populations in vulnerable situations. During that period, she assisted the deputy in the CPI³ of the Milícias, mapping the favelas under paramilitary groups's control (Otavio & Araújo, 2020).

¹ Socialism and Freedom Party (free translation).

² The legislative assembly of a state/country.

³ Comissão Parlamentar de Inquérito – Parliamentary Investigation Commission. In the case presented here, the investigation was on militias fighting for control over communities in Rio de Janeiro.

During her term as councilwoman, Marielle stood out in promoting agendas related to defending the rights of the black population, poor people, women, and the LGBTQIA+ community.

It was a noisy but harmonious office, and she knew that from that space – made up of women, members or supporters of the LGBTQIA+ community, black people, and community leaders – multipliers of her project in favor of the defense of human rights and social equality of minorities could come out (Otavio & Araújo, 2020, p. 11).

On the night of March 14, 2018, Marielle participated in a meeting at Casa das Pretas⁴, a collective space for black women located in downtown Rio de Janeiro; she mediated the debate on “Young Black Women Moving Structures.” After the event, Marielle left Casa das Pretas, accompanied by her friend and advisor, Fernanda Chaves, and her driver, Anderson Gomes. Without any of them noticing, they were followed since they left the event; about three kilometers farther, at Largo do Estácio, the car Marielle was in was attacked by shots, four of which hit the councilor, who died instantly, along with the driver, Anderson; Fernanda was the only survivor of the attack.

The face, the look, the hair, the accessories, and the entire construction of the black woman who carries with her a history of ancestry and resistance are embodied in Marielle Franco. Among the many demonstrations held after her murder, one calls our attention and will be the subject of our discussion in this article: Marielle’s street sign.

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PSOL activists and supporters of the causes defended by Marielle fixed a street sign in honor of the councilwoman at Praça Floriano Peixoto, in Cinelândia, where the Municipal Chamber of Rio de Janeiro (RJ) is located. The sign covered the official name of the “Marechal Floriano Peixoto” Square and had the following words: “Marielle Franco Street (1979-2018). Councilwoman, defender of human and minority rights, cowardly murdered on March 14, 2018.”

⁴ House of the Black Women.

Figure 1 Marielle Franco's street sign



Retrieved from: Carta Capital, 2018. (Elaborated by the authors).

On the night of September 30, 2018, the street sign was removed by Rodrigo Amorim, then candidate for state deputy for Partido Social Liberal⁵ (PSL), a right-wing party and a political opponent of Marielle and PSOL. The following day, Amorim, alongside Daniel Silveira, candidate for federal deputy for the same party, took the broken plaque and presented it during a campaign act by Wilson Witzel, candidate for governor of Rio de Janeiro state. This act triggered a series of mobilizations in Marielle's memory and legacy defense, which escalated in the media circulation.

Until the display made by the candidates, the street sign was restricted to a symbol of tribute to Marielle. However, after this episode and the intense circulation of the image of the broken sign (Fig. 2), the object also becomes an element of political identification, and - as it is characteristic of circulation in a mediatized context - it accumulates multiple and unpredictable meanings in this process.

⁵ Social Liberal Party. A right-wing party that elected Jair Bolsonaro as president of Brazil in 2018.

Figure 2 Daniel Silveira and Rodrigo Amorim show the broken street sign during a campaign act in 2018



Retrieved from: UOL, 2018.

The image of the candidates showing the broken sign circulated quickly and generated mobilizations in response to the act. On October 14, the date that marked seven months after the murder, demonstrators distributed a thousand plaques in downtown Rio de Janeiro. With the plates distributed, a mosaic forming Marielle's name (Fig. 1) was assembled. The initiative for the production and distribution of the signs came from the humor website *Sensacionalista*.

According to the newspaper *O Globo*, each person had the right to pick up a copy, and those who received it were instructed to leave the place with the plaque hidden inside an envelope, also distributed by the organizers of the act, to avoid reprisals.

After receiving the signs, the protesters set up a human mosaic in the streets of Cinelândia that formed the name of the murdered councilor and could only be viewed from the sky.

The act was an initiative of the humor website *Sensacionalista*, which created a crowdfunding campaign to raise R\$ 2,000,00 to make 100 plaques in honor of Marielle. "They tear one, we make 100," read the page on a virtual crowdfunding site (Carta Capital, 2018).

Discussions around the street sign remained in circulation. On March 2019, the UOL portal published an article entitled "Marielle Franco – One year after her death councilwoman became a symbol of human rights," discussing the articulations of social movements inspired by the councilwoman's struggles for justice. At the beginning of the article, we see a photo of nine black women, all wearing black clothes, and dark glasses, some with berets, turbans, or just sporting afro hairstyles and braids. With their fists

raised in the air and wearing black gloves, the women have posters around their necks and a replica of Marielle's street sign.

Figure 3 Black activists gathered in a demonstration that recalled one year since the murder of Marielle Franco



Retrieved from: UOL, 2019.

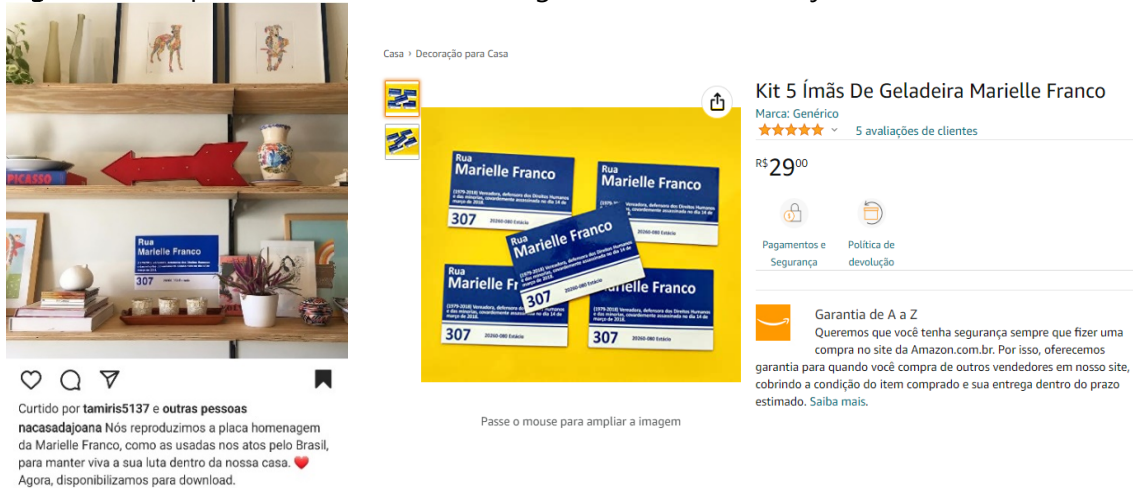
The text discusses how the murder of the councilor represented an "affront" to social movements and an attempt to obstruct the fight for human rights based on fear. The article recovers the episode of the street sign breaking that occurred during the 2018 election campaign:

The candidates were Daniel Silveira and Rodrigo Amorim, who complained that the left was silent in the face of the deaths of other people and the stab wound against Bolsonaro. Amorim shared the photo with the broken sign on social networks. The scene reverberated in the press, causing revolt, but it was celebrated by PSL supporters. The two gained prominence with the case and ended respectively elected to federal and state deputy positions. After the episode, *the image of the sign gained a new meaning, and began to be used more and more in demonstrations by human rights activists* (UOL, March 2019; highlighted by us).

As highlighted in the previous quotation, the plaque in honor of Marielle started to circulate and was used as a symbol of identification with Marielle, with the defense of human rights and the progressive field. But, more than that, in addition to the thousand plaques distributed in 2018, we noticed a multiplication of the uses of the object and, consequently, of the meanings generated from these uses. The sign was sold as a decoration object to be placed on walls, shelves, and beauty salons, presented at shows,

projected on buildings, reproduced in comics and fridge magnets, and used by candidates in the 2020 election, et cetera.

Figure 4 Examples of uses of the street sign as a decorative object



Retrieved from: Instagram, 2022; Amazon, 2022. (Elaborated by the authors).

We notice that all the mobilization around the sign, whether based on the motto “They tear one, we make 100” or the demonstrations held after the crash episode, allows us to think that the Marielle Franco’s sign assumes, here, a triple function: it signals the place, re-signifying it and attributing a symbolic presence to an absent body; on the other hand, it disconnects the idea of a geographically referenced place, since, in media circulation, the street sign serves as a sign of political identification, recognition of values and ideas shared between activists and, consequently, generates belonging to the progressive field. However, it also becomes a discursive element in dispute, stirring up clashes both in the media and between different social fields including politics, which is already an intrinsic part of the murder of the councilwoman and activist.

Resistance in circulation

We build our analysis on the case of Marielle’s street sign taking circulation as a central concept for understanding the process we observe. We start from a perspective that sees circulation as key-element for understanding communicational processes in a context of intense mediatization; that is: when actors, collectives, and media or mediatized institutions assume the work of production, no longer being restricted to the role of receivers of hegemonic media productions. In this context, circulation ceases to be a point of passage, becoming an instance of negotiation, clashes, and struggles for recognition, being a privileged space to observe disputes of meanings. In the case of Marielle’s street sign, we notice the perspective of circulation based on

interfaces/couplings provided by the intensification of media and technological-digital processes (Fausto Neto, 2018). In our analyses, we perceive the coupling of meanings that multiply in the media circulation of the image of the plaque.

We are facing new circulation conditions in which meanings are mobilized and strained by different actors and media. When analyzing the communicational environment in which we are currently immersed, we realize the importance of not restricting ourselves to an analysis that prioritizes the hegemonic media but focuses on the multiple actions of the actors, their experimentation, and appropriation of the media. We share Carlón's (2019) understanding of the theme when he emphasizes the importance of carefully analyzing what society does with the media and how it transforms itself in the process since circulation in mediatization becomes more complex, causing transformations not only in institutions but in the modes of interaction of actors and collectives. For the author, "circulation follows in multiple directions in a continuous and incessant way⁶" (Carlón, 2019, p. 35).

Considering the case we bring to discussion, we can realize how the murder of Marielle Franco produced a mobilization force that was built, to a large extent, through the circulation of information (and disinformation) that was established on digital media, including both journalistic media and social media. Marielle's image starts to circulate, mobilizing discourses around the guidelines she defended, being appropriated by different groups that use this image and the imaginary constructed from it.

In media circulation, Marielle's image as a symbol of the fight for human rights is built and consolidated. The sign made in her honor – and later removed and broken by opponents – becomes a political object when it starts to circulate through media spaces as a symbol of identification with an ideological field; at the same time, it also becomes a decorative object, stamping walls and shelves. We have not just the circulation of the plaque as an object but the symbolism it adds and strains in circulation.

The image of political opponents showing the street sign broken in half refers not only to another attempt to breaking, erasing, and eliminating Marielle's body, but everything she represented at that moment. What circulates is not just the image but the exacerbation of political and social strains, clashes between antagonistic groups, those who fight for dignity and equality and those who feed inequality and exclusion. Marielle is embodied in the plaque during its circulation: when it is posted in front of the City Council of Rio de Janeiro, replacing the name of a military man and occupying a space in an institution traditionally white, masculine and wealthy. By being broken and forcibly

⁶ Our free translation for: "circulation follows in multiple directions in a continuous and incessant way⁶" (id.)

removed from there, the episode of the street sign recalls the murder of the councilor now violently prevented from occupying that space, and it is an attempt to destroy her image incessantly publicized by opponents who seek to reaffirm her elimination – now symbolic. However, it is in circulation that we perceive the resistance of this image of Marielle, not broken or destroyed, but welcomed by the groups she represented, which by multiplying the street sign also put into circulation the multiplication of her legacy and her struggles; it is not just a street sign to be reproduced and distributed (as depicted in figure 1), we have Marielle's circulation here as a symbol of resistance that endures despite the many attempts to eliminate it. However, as is characteristic of the complexity of mediatization, this circulation is not restricted to legacy, struggles and resistance; in it, the sign that initially appears as a political act, turns into an act-consumption when it becomes a decorative object (Figs. 4, 5 and 6), bringing with it identification, adherence to a progressive social and political field.

The movements we observe here corroborate Rosa's idea (2020), which defends circulation as a relationship of value attribution that intensifies in contexts of power struggle.

When considering that the image that circulates results from an intense dispute for meanings, what gains visibility becomes the result of power, exclusions, and erasure operations, and, on the other hand, valorization. These valorizations occur not by a single agent or another but in interactions and multiple ways (Rosa, 2020, p. 306-307).

The mediatization operations that emerge from the case of Marielle's street sign are performed by multiple agents who occupy different spaces in the communicational topography, from the hegemonic media, going through individual actors, and those organized in collectives. The meanings that circulate from the street sign and – consequently, from Marielle herself – translate the (diverse, contradictory) values attributed by these agents, giving visibility to social and political strains. This process instigates us to think about Marielle's image embodied in the plaque and the symbolism that circulates in the attempts to break it and the resistance struggles.

Between destruction attempts and the body-image⁷

The episode observed in this article makes us think about Marielle's place as an image and how such an image is "embodied," that is, the sign that initially carried

⁷ When we use the term body-image here we speak of images that acquire, in circulation, the role of embody the people they refer to and therefore gain other meanings, beyond the events they portrait.

Marielle indicating her presence and her social guidelines in the city, in the streets of Rio de Janeiro, starts to be questioned and undergoes attempts of breaking and rupture. However, such a process not only affects a collective symbolic element, a street sign, but affects the body-image and, therefore, refers to a double aggression: violence to Marielle's body and memory, violence to the image that brings together other bodies and subjects. It is because the purpose of the plaque was to restore order, mainly by covering the name of a marshal honored as a street name for his "deeds," removing his place of power to carry out a historical reparation that also tells about how history has been told in Brazil.

In this sense, when we talk about bodies, in this work, we deal with the perspective of Kamper (2016, p. 73), for whom violence manifests in the gaze. For the author, the edges of the image and the body increasingly become tenuous or blurred to the point where the distinction is no longer possible. "He who despises the body transformed into an image also mistreats real bodies. He is not (very) far from murder, although he does not know what he is doing." Even if Kamper were thinking of other objects, this quotation would be important for our argument in this particular case. We note that the contempt for the body transformed into an image – therefore, Marielle's image present on the street sign and in a set of materialities that aim to attribute a body and a character of homage or deference to it – is a way of duplicating the murder. That is, to despise Marielle's body and her trajectory implies despising a set of living bodies involved in what the councilwoman defended or questioned. In this way, the destruction of the street sign is not just the material destruction of a symbol but the attempt to mistreat bodies denied of existing. The plaque with the mention of human rights condenses, in itself, the countless daily situations of violence, disrespect, aggression, invisibility, and when attacked, the bodies it makes visible are attacked in the same way.

However, the debate is broader. More than a double murder, the breaking or depredation of Marielle's plaque, as a political act, is a violent act. Now, if we look through the prism of the effect of this act, we realize the impossibility of breaking this *body-image*. It is iconoclasm and the opposite effect it causes since the image transcends its support. In this sense, we understand iconoclasm here as an attempt to destroy the image to banish it from the circulation process and, consequently, from the social imaginary.

The word iconoclasm and its strength go back to the religious discussions and are at the base of Christianity and Protestantism and strain iconolaters and iconoclasts. For the former, worship images mean their own connection with the sacred, the cult image being the link. Iconolaters feel they belong to and recognize themselves in the images

they adore. For the latter, the iconoclasts, image is a form of lie and deception and does not correspond to the biblical commandments; therefore, its worship, due to the mediation it performs, is contrary to the sacred. Every image must be banned because when destroying the materiality of the image, the supposed bond is destroyed too. Although our text does not focus on the religious discussion, this mention here is relevant for us to understand that the iconoclasm we refer to in this work is in an attempt to destroy the plaque in its materiality as a way of destroying Marielle's image as a person and what she represents.

However, in terms of media, forms of iconoclasm have become common and repeatedly inscribed in the media circulation since they are mediatized actions. As Klein (2009) rightly states, the image has always been some place between fascination and hatred. We can remember here iconoclastic acts such as the destruction of the statue of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, the destruction of the Christopher Columbus and Thomas Jefferson statues during protests after the death of George Floyd in the United States, the breaking of the image of a saint in a television program in Brazil, among others. These acts involve both the effective destruction of objects and the impediment to the circulation of digital images, for example. The impediment to the circulation of images is common due to protection/conduct rules of digital platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, as well as for legal reasons. We can take as an example the case of the image of the body of the boy Marcos Vinicius murdered by the police in Rio de Janeiro, whose records were withdrawn from circulation, leaving as an embodiment the image of a blood-stained T-shirt. Here, when we approach the idea of iconoclasm, we are discussing the act of destruction but, more than that, what this act does in terms of images. If the image makes the absent present, as Debray (1993, p. 38) reminds us, it ends up replacing the absent referent, here Marielle herself.

Nonetheless, the circulating image does not restrict itself to the object (the street sign, the statue); as it circulates, it gains other contours, meanings, appropriations, and survivals. And even if the plaque gets destroyed, Marielle's image only strengthens and intensifies. It is because violence against the material (exogenous) image does not eliminate the immaterial (endogenous) image already present in flows and circuits. Thus, as indicated in this article, "they tear one, we make 100;" we question: how to break the unbreakable? In this case, when political actors decide to carry out the iconoclastic act, even trying to reframe the image by attributing another body based on the use of the framed street sign in 2022, they do nothing more than attribute value in circulation to the image they tried, in vain, to dissipate. In this sense, Klein (2009, p. 12) emphasizes that "the iconoclast himself often cannot extricate himself from the hypnosis of the

image. The measure of violence inflicted against the image is ironically proportional to the recognition of the measure of power it wields.”

The question that arises is: to what extent does the image resistance imply the maintenance of its strength? This discussion will be addressed in our next item regarding the appropriations of the plaque in the ever-forward flow (Braga, 2006) of circulation.

From appropriations to emptying: the place of the symbolic

The image of Marielle Franco condensed on her street sign gained a much greater dimension than the collective manifest that gave rise to it. When questioned and broken, the image began to endure in the media circulation. However, as seen, circulation is the locus of clashes where the weaving of meanings occurs and is transformed. In this respect, the image of Marielle’s street sign began to be appropriated by different social actors, whether involving political issues, human rights, or just as an element of pop culture, a mark that, incidentally, Marielle Franco herself seemed to adopt in her electoral campaign still in 2016. That is: the aesthetics of popular culture, the play of colors and art traits that so marked the councilor, began to be composed with her inscription.

T-shirts with phrases and watchwords are nothing new in the relationship between fashion and communication, for example. However, the expression *Marielle Presente*⁸ and particularly the image of Marielle’s street sign started to stamp T-shirts, bags, and invitations for parties and events. The act-manifesto street sign was appropriated as an act-consumption, often a consumption less referred to the product itself and more to an idea of an effective appropriation of Marielle’s values, as if, by wearing or displaying the street sign, the councilwoman’s symbolic power could be transferred. Marielle’s body is back in dispute. This time not in the sense of erasing or destroying the image, but a dispute about the value of giving body, that is, whom do we embody when we wear Marielle’s street sign? To what extent is the subject’s body fueled by a kind of aura that Marielle acquired? Thus, it is not uncommon to see a conflict between the body that uses Marielle’s street sign as an object of culture and a discourse that empties the meaning of the manifesto and the act that resulted in the creation of the plaque.

It is about thinking that the uses and appropriations of the street sign, as an object of culture, lead to a double incidence: on the one hand, value and strength to the unbreakable image and, on the other, an emptying of the value of the image. This emptying is noticeable in what Norval Baitelo Jr (2014) calls iconophagy. The icon, the

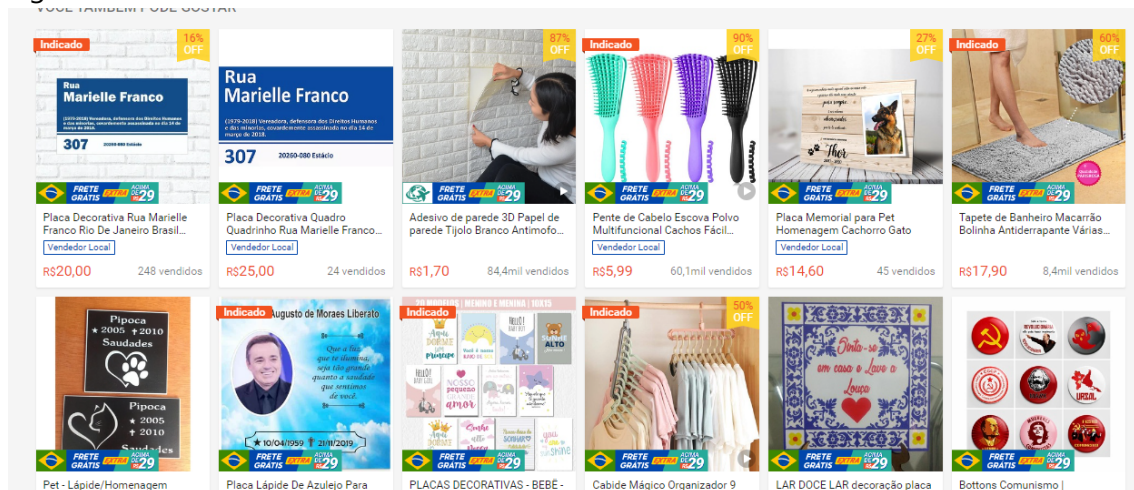
⁸ Marielle Present.

image is consumed - such phagia leads to new productions, reinsertions, reappropriations; however, in all these movements, the image gradually becomes an object - objectified.

The excessive proliferation of images, specially exogenous images, as a result of the enormous facilities of technical reproducibility, brought much more than the democratization of information promised by the Benjaminian's prognosis; it brought about the emergence of a growing instance of images that insinuate themselves to be seen, while the human capacity to see them decreases in an equal proportion. This phenomenon, configured as a crisis of visibility, promotes an increasingly intense acceleration in the population growth of images, generating an inflation that adds to them a growing lack of value. It also generates, in turn, the desperate search for visibility at any cost (Baitello Jr., 2014, p. 91).

The street sign images started to appear in unthinkable spaces, for example, on shopping sites like Shopee and Amazon. Along with other acquisitions that the subject may like (as indicated by the algorithms based on our searches), there is Marielle's plaque as a decorative object, as well as rugs, hairbrushes, communism buttons, and the tombstone plaque of Gugu Liberato⁹ (figure 05).

Figure 5 Screenshot with the possibilities of products for sale, including Marielle's street sign



Retrieved from: Shopee, 2022. (Elaborated by the authors).

Although very different from each other, this set of products, put into circulation by the logic of the market and consumption, symbolically empties the power of the images but restores it when these images become self-referential. We no longer need to return to the attempted breaking or iconoclasm; the plaque remains intact in its

⁹ A Brazilian TV host died on November 21, 2019.

countless reproductions. However, the fact that it remains intact as a product does not preserve its untouchable place in terms of the meanings that emanate from it. Through the actions of social actors, the street sign becomes an object that brings together both a discourse of struggle and a discourse that takes advantage of the struggle itself.

This taking advantage lies in the fact of the banalization of the plaque, of its reification. The more meanings are generated about it, the more the plaque gains space. For some, an achievement; for others, a mere display icon. In this case, contrary to the iconoclasm that tries to banish the image, there is an effort to maintain it, to adhere not to what it figuratively is but to what it symbolically represents in terms of social discursivity and recognition. What would make us want a fridge magnet (Figure 06) of Marielle Franco? Even more so when we can receive the “product” at the comfort of our home, what seems to break with any idea of a manifesto or political act.

Figure 6 Set of fridge magnets that reproduce the image of the plaque



Passa o mouse para ampliar a imagem

Retrieved from: Amazon.

In view of these examples, we can consider that Marielle's plaque is strained and destroyed in circulation. This statement, however, seems untrue. At the same way that the plaque becomes commonplace through the making of subjects, it is through political and politicized social actors that the artifact reinvests with power as an image that lasts. The same street sign broken and transformed into a consumption artifact continues to circulate as a form of political act, mainly due to the actions of collectives that take the agenda of the murdered councilwoman to the fore. Marielle Franco's Institute per se maintains a very interesting action that plays with the edges of repetition and emptying. The action is a stimulus to the free reproduction of the file with Marielle's plaque. However, an engaged reproduction develops a reproduction operation considering its

power of being a totem image-therefore, a barrier image for other, competitive ones, to circulate.

The <https://www.ruamariellefranco.com.br/> page focuses on replicating Marielle's street sign as an invitation to engagement and action. With the motto "Let's take the plaques to every corner and show that Mari is the size of the world!," the organization assumes the role of agency circulation, not impeding the circulation of appropriations of the plaque but stimulating its use and displacement. In addition to being able to *download* the art of the plate, it is possible to include the existence of one's plaque in a map (Figure 7). That is, little by little the manifest-act, transformed into a consumption-act, composes another geography. The same Rio de Janeiro plaque covers several parts of the world. Although it may sound like just a tribute, in our view, this collective movement allows Marielle's symbolic image to remain in circulation. Even in the absence of a portrait of the face, of a defined physical contour, Marielle is present in the houses, on the street, on the map, in memory, in the struggle that goes beyond any materiality.

Figure 7 Map produced by the Marielle Franco Institute that points out the presence of the Marielle street sign in different geographic spaces inside and outside Brazil.



Retrieved from: Instituto Marielle Franco, 2022. (Screenshot produced by the authors).

Thus, the place of the symbolic is not in conflict with the appropriations typical of circulation. On the contrary, it is in the relationship of assigning value to the street sign, in interactions, that Marielle resists as a symbol and exists as a body. The logic of mediatization prevents attempts to restrict circulation since the meanings never stop their flow. Likewise, to prevent the image from circulating would be the same as preventing its existence, as the politicians who physically destroyed the plaque tried to

propose. In this sense, the Marielle Franco Institute and the associated collectives assume exactly the opposite movement, inviting the appropriation and reinscription of the image but at the same time developing a tactic of demarcation, considering that even the apparent impoverishment of the discourse is a way of fixing Marielle's image.

Considerations about Marielle's totemic image and Human Rights in circulation

Attempts to fix Marielle's image seem to be gaining echo. The street sign is one of the initiatives, but we can identify the presence of posters in demonstrations, the Marielle Franco Agenda that brings together actions linked to the causes that the councilor defended, the statue installed at Buraco do Lume, at Praça Mário Lago, in Rio de Janeiro. In addition, the numerous tattoos inscribed on bodies stand out. Such inscriptions in circulation and in bodies that effectively circulate in public spaces allow us to think of Marielle's symbolic image as a tribute but also as a kind of shield. Marielle's image cannot be erased, broken, destroyed. It restricts the entry of other images even when appropriated and supposedly trivialized; it resists as a totem. The totemic image, for Rosa (2014), is one fixed in a kind of adherence, even when it is not even materially present. It is an image that settles in the social imaginary, largely because it brings together deep relationships with archaic images. Thus, the more Marielle's image is adored and questioned, the more strongly it becomes established. The central difference here is that both iconoclastic agents, willing to break images, and iconolaters, willing to reproduce images, do nothing more than work in cooperation to agency circulation, amplifying Marielle's value as "the image" to be eliminated or "the image" to be preserved.

It is interesting to note that on March 14, 2021, the three-year anniversary of Marielle's murder, the Rio de Janeiro City Hall paid tribute to the councilwoman by posting a new street sign in front of the Chamber of Councillors, also bringing a new text (Fig. 8) where it reads: "Brutally murdered on March 14, 2018, for fighting for a fairer society." Added to this phrase are the elements of description: black woman, favela dweller, LGBT, and human rights defender. The installation of the homage plaque is, to a certain extent, the restitution of the daily assaulted body of countless Marielles in the country.



Retrieved from: Beth Santos / City Hall of Rio de Janeiro.

In this sense, Marielle's symbolic power gradually merges with the human rights agenda. The councilwoman becomes the face, body, and voice of those who were and are victims as much as she was. The difference is that denied in terms of existence, human rights come into existence, in fact, as a practice after her death. The social impact caused by the brutal murder of the councilwoman, who was beginning to emerge as an important voice in defense of human rights, became a trigger that activated the circulation of the debate on such rights.

Marielle has her image linked to the fight and defense of human rights, but unlike what we see in the hegemonic media, in which the theme of human rights is surrounded by legal discourse, diplomatic and distant, therefore, from the experience of the many groups to which they are denied on a daily basis, by adhering to Marielle's image, these discourses are embodied, gaining a palpable dimension of identification between those who see themselves in Marielle, who recognize her as an equal, who feel represented by her speeches, her struggles, as well as by her erasement (or by erasure attempts).

We observe not only the adherence of the human rights discourse to Marielle's image but her transformation from the opening of a space for the collective construction of human rights organized departing from her. In this sense, we highlight the creation of Instituto Marielle Franco (IMF), which acts as a political articulator in an attempt to occupy the space left by the councilwoman, disputing narratives both with the hegemonic media and other groups, developing projects in the area of human rights in partnership with collectives spread across Brazil. IMF initiatives, such as the Marielle Agenda (2020, 2022) – documents that organize and give practical direction to the demands defended by

Marielle – demonstrate that these discourses and disputes do not restrict to her image but have a relevant point of articulation in her.

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Discutimos a circulação midiática da "Placa Marielle", entendida não apenas como um objeto, mas como uma imagem símbolo que circula mobilizando sentidos sobre direitos humanos. Consideramos o contexto de intensa midiática em que estamos imersos e, a partir da circulação midiática da placa, analisamos um caso no qual percebemos a configuração de sentidos em disputa. Partimos da compreensão de circulação trazida por Rosa (2019), Fausto Neto (2018) e Carlón (2021), em diálogo com a abordagem do imaginário em Kamper (2016), Rosa (2014) e iconoclasmo em Klein (2009), para analisar como um objeto que serve inicialmente como homenagem a Marielle Franco, se reconfigura em símbolo de identificação política e resistência mesmo ante a tentativas de esvaziamento e de transformação do ato-político em ato-consumo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Midiatização; Circulação; Imagem; Marielle.

Discutimos la circulación mediática de la "Placa Marielle", entendida no sólo como un objeto, sino como una imagen simbólica que circula movilizando significados sobre los derechos humanos. Consideramos el contexto de intensa mediatización en el que estamos inmersos y, a partir de la circulación mediática del signo, analizamos un caso en el que percibimos la configuración de sentidos en disputa. Partimos de la comprensión de la circulación aportada por Rosa (2019), Fausto Neto (2018) y Carlón (2021), en diálogo con el abordaje del imaginario en Kamper (2016), Rosa (2014) y la iconoclasia en Klein (2009) para analizar cómo un objeto que inicialmente sirve como homenaje a Marielle Franco se reconfigura en un símbolo de identificación y resistencia política incluso frente a los intentos de vaciar y transformar el acto político en un acto de consumo.

PALABRAS-CLAVE: Mediatización; Circulación; Imagen; Marielle.