

Gender Asymmetries: Visibility, with what Power?

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Abstract

Thirty years after the Beijing Declaration, power asymmetries persist that limit women's access to the public sphere and full citizenship. Starting from feminist criticism of the Habermasian model and the notion of counterpublics, this contribution distinguishes between integrative visibility—presence that legitimizes the order without changing it—and transformative visibility, which affects access, representation, and redistribution.

The reflection that precedes this contribution asks: when does visibility produce effective transformation? The rhetoric of emancipation, individualized and managerialized, can play the role of co-optation devices. On the media side, platforms, understood as organizational infrastructures, not only disseminate but also configure audiences and priorities, favoring regimes of controlled inclusion measured in metrics of attention rather than transformative outcomes. Given that increased visibility does not coincide with a redistribution of power, it follows that what is at stake is not 'being there', but rather rearticulating the rules of representability (who speaks, where, with what resources) in order to convert visibility into institutional capacity.

Key words

Social representation; Equality; Gender; diversity management

1. Visible but powerless

Thirty years after the Beijing Declaration (1995), expectations of a profound transformation of the public sphere have not translated into a rebalancing of power relations. The greater visibility of women in institutions, the media, and organizations has often been reabsorbed into mechanisms that legitimize the neoliberal order—from meritocratic rhetoric to diversity management (Syed & Murray, 2008) —which

individualize participation and depoliticize conflict. Starting from this tension, the proposed reflection questions the link between feminism (Hooks, 2000) and the public sphere. In fact, the relationship between feminism and the public sphere still appears to represent a field of power dominated by men, of tensions between demands, calls for emancipation that constantly fight against a rhetoric that aims to normalize power.

What appears to be an increase in presence—in institutions, the media, and the workplace—tends to translate into superficial inclusion. Inserted into productive circuits, this presence is traced back to a neoliberal logic that measures inclusion in terms of economic utility. The narrative of equality and participation, intertwined with patriarchal structures and structural inequalities, has slipped towards individualizing and self-actualizing registers, governed by the market and redefining which subjectivities are representable and legitimate. Within this framework, the public sphere seems to be increasingly regulated by economic logics that redefine which subjectivities are representable and legitimate. Starting from a theoretical-critical framework, we explore in particular the ways in which feminist demands are incorporated into the dominant narrative through corporate diversity management practices (Syed & Murray, 2008), i.e., technocratic-managerial strategies that allow companies to declare their attention to women's interests without actually listening to them (Casalini, 2018) and through rhetoric that, while appealing to justice, equality, and participation, ends up reinforcing market logic, depoliticizing gender conflict.

In this neoliberal sense, feminism—often in opposition to the welfare state but in the name of individual freedom—is configured as a functional representation of contemporary forms of governance; participation is valued to the extent that it fuels competitiveness, and even extra-economic indicators are translated into market metrics. The result is that what was once an anti-globalization and anti-capitalist movement has been, at least in part, seduced and co-opted by neoliberalism. However, this remains an elusive notion, as both “feminism” and “neoliberalism” take on different meanings and connotations in various disciplinary fields (Newman, 2013). Probably because of their flexibility, it is difficult to regulate the fission of these two terms, merging them instead within a paradigm that manages to restore their meaning in terms dictated by economic logic. The basic assumption that neutralizes the energy present in these terms, more in the former than in

the latter (neoliberalism acts and reacts on its own, feeding on its own failures), is that the collective-community power contained in feminism is appropriated by productive logic and rejected in the form of individual responsibility.

2. The public sphere and counter-publics

Reflection on the relationship between public space and feminism stems from Jürgen Habermas' concept of the public sphere, understood as a tense field of democratic consensus formation (1962). Although this issue is of social and political importance, it has connotations that conflict with the representation of women in the public sphere, since the original model implicitly refers to the figure of the bourgeois, white, educated man. Nancy Fraser (1990) and Seyla Benhabib (1992), among others, have critically emphasized this point, showing how the presumed universalism of the public sphere is based on androcentric assumptions and thus ends up excluding or marginalizing many forms of female participation. Nancy Fraser's interpretation of counterpublics (1990) – as we will explore in more detail in the next section – represents a consistent critical reformulation of Habermas's category with regard to the public sphere. While for the German scholar it is the arena for exchange between equal citizens, Fraser exposes its limitations, highlighting how that equality is largely apparent and ends up concealing structural inequalities of access that cut across and go beyond the public sphere. In this sense, the image of an active and universal 'public' reveals itself to be the transfer of a particular horizon – that of male, white, middle-class subjects – taken as a general measure (Fraser, 1990). This framework has historically excluded marginalized categories and subaltern classes such as sexual minorities, women, and racialized individuals for ethnic reasons. As Fraser observes, the idea of an impartial and unified debate ends up neutralizing female participation, bringing it into line with the bourgeois model that has historically dictated the rules of presence in the public sphere. Thus, despite presenting itself as inclusive, the Habermasian model – also due to its historical context – operates in practice as a device that marginalizes experiences and forms of participation that do not adhere to the dominant model. In this scenario, contemporary liberal democracies are also experiencing new divisions, fueled by demands for

recognition of minorities and the resulting “culture wars.” While progressive movements operate as counter-publics oriented toward expanding democratic inclusion (Fraser, 1985), contemporary right-wing movements construct transgressive publics that contest these claims and aim to reestablish the privilege of “true citizens” (Parker, 2021; Wells & Friedland, 2023). Added to this is the increasingly clear departure from Habermasian ideals of an open and rational public sphere (Habermas, 1974; 1991), as shown by feminist critiques and those directed at the cultural and structural assumptions of his model (Fraser, 1985; Calhoun, 1993). The combination of growing inequalities, institutional mistrust, and digital transformations has also fostered the emergence of illiberal communication spaces (Bennet & Kneuer, 2024), shaping what Habermas (2022) defines as a third structural transformation of the public sphere. Digital platforms, often lacking effective regulation, weaken traditional journalistic gatekeeping and facilitate the spread of polarizing and radical discourse, connecting political elites and extremist peripheries (Bimber & Gil de Zúñiga, 2020; Klinger et al., 2022). The result is a fragmented, polarized public sphere that is vulnerable to economic power, propaganda, and the predominance of emotional discourse (Bennet & Livingston, 2025).

2.1. The public sphere, conflict, and the politics of recognition

It is precisely this apparent inclusion that feminist critics emphasize, highlighting the non-universalist nature of the public sphere and calling for a reformulation of the concept in an intersectional and pluralistic key. These reflections gave rise to the proposal by US theorist Nancy Fraser, who introduced the idea of counterpublics, Fraser’s contribution to the concept of subaltern counterpublics – alternative discursive spaces in which marginalized groups can develop languages and forms of representation that contrast with the dominant codes (Fraser, 1990) – arises within a broader critique of democracy and responds to the limitations of the Habermasian model of the public sphere. The existence of these spaces is not simply a supplement to the dominant public sphere, but rather a critical perspective on its exclusive functioning. It is precisely through their conflictual action that the trajectories of exclusion emerge and the power relations that organize public discourse become visible (Fraser, 1997).

Fraser also recognizes the normative dimension of the concept,

highlighting the (im)partiality of the supposedly neutral public sphere, which in reality is constructed around the figure of a privileged subject, representative of a heteronormative society, which produces relational, and therefore social, as well as symbolic, hierarchies. Her elaboration calls into question the concepts of democracy and participation and, with plural and sometimes discordant tones, places itself in a scenario of transformation of the coordinates of public life. The latter is not a place of neutral consensus, but a terrain of discursive tensions where hegemonic and counter-hegemonic ideas, values, and projects clash. In the wake of the Gramscian tradition, consensus should be understood not only as a political manifestation, but as a cultural and symbolic process (Fraser, 2008). For this reason, counterpublics thus become strategies of resistance and tools for rearticulating the categories of democracy and participation.

In this context, counterpublics become strategies of resistance and tools for rearticulating the categories of democracy and participation. They operate on two levels: on the one hand, they resist the dominant dynamics of the public sphere; on the other, they produce new readings and new grammars, redefining the terms of political participation. This duality is also reflected in their function: they generate places of reflection where subordinate subjects can redefine themselves as *loci di potere* (Sharp, 1985) and, at the same time, act as springboards for mobilization and pressure towards dominant groups, promoting an alternative imaginary. Fraser's reflection is particularly useful for accurately understanding the role of minority subjectivities and movements, especially feminist ones, in transforming the public sphere. Grassroots demonstrations, crystallizing as subaltern counterpublics, make their political presence visible and transform the space through their posture, from overwhelmed actors to bearers of new collective action. From this perspective, inclusion does not simply mean entering the confines of the dominant public sphere; it implies rewriting its rules and logic of recognition. The task is not only to denounce the exclusionary nature of the liberal public sphere, but to imagine alternative forms, inspired by plurality and rooted in cultural conflict as a practice of resistance and change. From this premise, paths open up that aim to transform the dominant order. The demands put forward by counterpublics are not limited to a one-way inclusion that only concerns women's experiences, but move along the lines of

intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), which offers a further key to reading the public sphere as a field of power intertwined with multiple axes—class, ethnicity, sexuality, gender—which, in turn, interact to generate different needs and demands for recognition. In this context, counter-publics can be configured as counter-hegemonic constructions with respect to those fields that continue to produce inequalities and normalize relations of domination (Bernacchi, 2020).

2.2. Integrative visibility and transformative visibility

The transformative power of movements is increasingly threatened today by the processes of absorption implemented by the neoliberal order. Remaining within the framework proposed by Fraser, what she defines as progressive neoliberalism (2019) describes the intersection between market logic and rhetoric of emancipation that is only apparent. In this combination, the system incorporates feminist practices and reorients them, valuing individual autonomy at the expense of universalist redistribution. Participation is translated in terms of the empowerment of the individual (entrepreneurial, competitive), while structural conflict is reduced to a question of soft skills, communication, and diversity metrics. The result is a mechanism that benefits production, and subordinate subjectivities and female visibility in the public sphere become functional to the reproduction of the paradigm rather than to the questioning of relations of domination.

This dynamic of co-optation operates through recognisable mechanisms. First, the individualisation of collective demands. Rights and claims are refracted in the figure of the “author of oneself” (Casalini, 2018), responsible for one’s own success/failure in reputation markets. Second, the managerialisation of dissent (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005): feminist practices and languages are absorbed into the repertoires of diversity management and audit culture, where equality is measured in indicators that privilege procedural conformity over changes in material relations. Third, the depoliticisation of conflict: the demand for transformation is channelled into best practices and toolkits that neutralise the antagonistic element, leaving the market order intact. In support of this interpretation, Michael Warner (2021) broadens the picture by focusing on reflective circulation and the form of discourse in the public sphere, as well as on the performative nature of publics and counterpublics as practices of communicative contestation. Their

effectiveness depends not only on content, but also on forms of circulation (who speaks, from where, through which channels, according to which rules of visibility). In a media ecosystem governed by platforms and algorithmic logics, visibility can translate into exposure without impact, or into recognition disconnected from redistribution. Here, Fraser's lens remains decisive: linking economic power, social justice and the public sphere means bringing criticism back to the concrete terrain of inequalities, preventing symbolic recognition from replacing material transformation. Re-examining the public sphere through counterpublics, feminist and otherwise, allows us to distinguish between integrative visibility and transformative visibility. The former legitimises the existing order by welcoming subjects and signs as long as they do not alter its architecture; the latter, on the other hand, shifts the coordinates of participation and recognition, rearticulating alliances, scales and lexicons of claim. In the terms defined by Fraser herself, this implies recomposing the recognition/redistribution/representation axis, preventing the focus on recognition from translating into socio-economic deflation of political demands (cf. p. 4).

From this point of view, counterpublics operate simultaneously as strategies of resistance and devices for the production of new political grammars. Their performativity is not only aesthetic or communicative: it is institutional in the broad sense of the term, because it aims to transform the rules of the public game – who is legitimate to speak, which issues matter, which evidence counts, which forums deliberate. This gives rise to an idea of political participation not as simple inclusion within a given order, but as a transformative practice capable of redefining the very conditions of visibility, recognition and access to resources. Re-reading the public sphere through counterpublics allows us to distinguish between integrative visibility (which legitimises the order without changing it) and transformative visibility (which shifts the coordinates of participation). In the terms described by Fraser, this implies recomposing the recognition/redistribution axis and, in the global framework, the dimension of representation (misframing) as a condition of justice (Fraser, 2005; 2008). In conclusion, if progressive neoliberalism tends to incorporate and neutralise feminist demands through devices of individualisation, managerialisation and depoliticisation, the horizon of counter-publics offers criteria for discerning and supporting

forms of visibility that are not decorative but effective, those that connect recognition and redistribution, symbolic and material, presence and power.

3. Nation and gender in capitalism: a political genealogy

In today's fully globalised world, we are witnessing the emergence of new nationalist dynamics in response to economic developments. These are ideological criteria that were already present in various historical exaltations of the nation, now adapted to the neoliberal order. Although these movements present themselves as forms of opposition to globalist universalism, they stem from a strategic alliance between individualism and political and economic sovereignty, ultimately supporting and reinforcing the Western capitalist order, which is dominant both locally and transnationally. A telling example is femonationism (Calderaro & Farris, 2025): we will describe its functions within this order later on; here we are interested in defining its characteristics, which are manifested in a link between feminist and nationalist discourses oriented towards the market and individual promotion, producing a symbolic and political use of gender that serves to legitimise the Western economic order. From this perspective, accessibility to the public sphere does not coincide with a consolidation of representation or power, but rather fuels an ideological function of controlled inclusion. Female figures, rather than taking on a transformative role – as happens in counterpublics – are often compatible with market demands.

The intertwining of the logics described above and a deliberately economically oriented discourse emerged from the crises of 2008 and 2015, which led to structural transformations in European political and economic contexts. As described by Cox and Skidmore-Hess (2022), the precariousness of work has fostered the emergence and growth of new far-right movements. Through a discourse centred on fear and the protection of national borders, these movements – which later became genuine political forces – capitalised on the uncertainties produced by neoliberalism, channelling economic anxieties towards forms of national belonging. As Fraser (2023) suggests, this process is part of a broader framework, which she describes as cannibalistic capitalism, in which capitalism erodes the foundations of social democracy and produces new fractures in the social order. Across the board, the transition

from the Fordist to the post-Fordist regime (Farinella, 2004) has recontextualised the (socio)sexual division of labour, the proletarianisation of women and their inclusion in production circuits through the control of bodies and the naturalisation of gender roles (Alarcón; Kaplan; Moallem, 1999). According to Federici (2018) and Farris (2022), it is clear that women's reproductive work has been appropriated by the capitalist system, which has acted — not only in this case — as an invisible framework for accumulation. At the same time, the domestic sphere and processes of domestication (Fraser, 2023) emerge as mechanisms for disciplining bodies and producing labour. Thus, while in the workplace women are included in production circuits for mainly productive purposes, with apparent representation and persistent difficulties — compared to men — in accessing top positions, similarly, in the public sphere, the female presence is often “decorative”, in the sense that they serve to confirm the operational legitimacy of democratic institutions without affecting the pre-existing balance of power.

In this context, a fundamental role is played by the notion of nation, understood as a symbolic space within which, through rhetoric and discursive devices adopted by the political groups mentioned above, an architecture of production and regulation of bodies is imposed that distinguishes between those included and excluded from the public sphere. In this construction, women historically excluded from the public sphere — as Yuval-Davis (1997) states — perform the work expected of them, that of biological and cultural reproducers of the nation and instruments for the transmission of national values (McClintock, 1993). Today, this dynamic extends to the political sphere, where, despite greater public relevance and a gradual detachment from domesticity, women often remain isolated and operate within the limits of acceptability. This framework, which is only apparently transformative, is projected in the shadow of power and makes women's participation in the public sphere a compromise between those who dominate and those who suffer.

3.1 Femonationalism and neoliberalism: border devices and the production of otherness

The break with socialist feminist movements coincides with the emergence of neoliberal feminism (Gill, 2007), which marks a paradigm shift in the construction and representation of female individuality: the

self is fully inscribed in the dialectic of the market and self-promotion. The feminist appeal thus shifts from the emancipatory and collective horizon to the promotional and individual one, reconfiguring the principles of self-determination and freedom as moral responsibility and as the ability to compete and adapt to a capitalist order (McRobbie, 2009). In this perspective, the slogan “do it yourself feminism” (Chidgey, 2014) translates the language of liberation into a grammar of personal efficiency, nullifying critical potential and depoliticising gender. The result is the transformation of empowerment into a symbolic tool which, when inserted into the neoliberal machinery, produces inequalities rather than bringing them to light and combating them (the basic premise of socialist feminism) (Haraway, 2018). This configuration paves the way for the subsequent fusion of nationalism and gender issues, a conjunction in which female representation and visibility in the public sphere operate, as already mentioned, as instruments for legitimising the hierarchies generated by the neoliberal order.

The normalisation of this model has paved the way for new forms of political co-optation of feminism, in which demands for freedom and equality are reorganised within nationalist margins. In these scenarios, ideological configurations emerge that legitimise the subordination of women under the guise of defending gender rights, including femonationalism (Farris, 2017). This formation brings together formally divergent discourses – national security, meritocracy, female emancipation – and operates not through direct coercion, but through disciplinary powers that inscribe in bodies a normativity conforming to the dominant economic order and, in its name, to productivity (Foucault, 1975). As Silvia Federici observes (cf. p. 9), the transition to neoliberalism has restructured the sexual division of labour: on the one hand, women have been integrated into the labour market while continuing to support care and reproductive work in the private sphere; on the other, women from the global South have emerged, whose subordination guarantees the continuity of this double expropriation, often in favour of white, Western women, who are apparently privileged because they are part of the productive machinery. It is also thanks to the assignment of these tasks to non-Western women that the machinery continues to function, reproducing forms of domination that are anything but new. In this context, what Harvey defines as market nationalism (2007) makes explicit the purpose of the neoliberal state,

namely to guarantee the free movement of capital, protect national borders and neutralise social conflict through programmes and precarious forms of citizenship. The public sphere celebrates female representation as a sign of progress and modernity, but in reality, this representation serves as a vehicle for legitimising the neoliberal order observed thus far. The visibility of certain female experiences – white, Western – is contrasted with “other” women – migrants or members of ethnic or social minorities – whose experiences are not given the same prominence, are silenced, marginalised and relegated to care work in the domestic spaces of women in the global North. This automatism reproduces hierarchies within the female order itself, limiting the paths to emancipation for those who remain excluded from public participation. The model, which apparently limits itself to re-schematising social roles, covers up, constructs and legitimises a femininity that adheres to the values of profitability, individuality and competition.

A crucial step in this genealogy was the Beijing Conference (1995), whose redefinition of the terms of empowerment – power in the public sphere, economic autonomy, the ability to exercise one’s rights – promoted integration and a common perspective among women already involved in productive activities. Furthermore, by associating emancipatory potential with economic freedom and the security of national borders, an alliance was consolidated between right-wing movements, conservative forces and Catholic movements, giving rise to the so-called symbolic glue (Kováts & Poim 2015), capable of coagulating opposition to gender as a threat to traditional values. In this theoretical perspective, the Western woman’s body is elevated to a symbol of national civilisation and instrumentalised as a moral boundary against postcolonial otherness. Thus, femonationalist rhetoric and homonationalist practices (Puar, 2018) participate in the construction of the neoliberal project based on rights and freedoms, while reinforcing processes of exclusion and social control. In this context, women and LGBTQIA+ individuals become symbols of an (apparently) inclusive modernity that proclaims pluralistic integration while reproducing familiar patterns of subordination applied to other subjects. The result is a non-counter-hegemonic female presence that exists to the extent that it guarantees the dominant narrative. Under these conditions, the neoliberal order has given rise to new forms of enclosures: a symbolic perimeter that reconfigures public space (Brunori & Musso, 2023),

within which practices such as femonationalism and homonationalism find nourishment and operate as devices of legitimisation, defining who can be included – in the rhetoric of equality – and who must remain on the margins in order to preserve the ideological coherence of this architecture.

As a result, contemporary forms of gender politicisation appear to be a continuation of the logic of capitalist accumulation. Issues relating to sexual freedom and female empowerment are absorbed by neoliberal rhetoric through processes of depoliticisation and re-evangelisation, becoming tools for building consensus. The visibility discussed so far, far from indicating substantial participation, takes the form of supervised participation.

In the neoliberal, Western and white order, difference is a criterion for selection, exclusion and control of bodies (Meo, 2012), in both public and private spaces. In this scenario, non-Western women and other subjects who do not conform to the dominant model become a reserve wage army (Marx, 2013). Therefore, the conflict that today affects gender, sexuality and representation in the public sphere should not be read solely as an identity or cultural tension. It must be placed within a broader perspective, which recognises it as a strategic juncture for the rearticulation of power in the public sphere. Grasping the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon means recognising that the struggle for justice is inseparable from criticism of the capitalist system and the multiple mechanisms that sustain its reproduction and perpetuation.

4. Platformized public sphere

Following Fraser, we have distinguished between integrative visibility – akin to affirmative strategies that correct outcomes without touching structures – and transformative visibility, close to transformative strategies that affect recognition, redistribution and representation (Fraser, 1995; 2005). In the framework outlined in the previous paragraphs – where the public sphere is addressed as a field of tensions and visibility as possible controlled inclusion – digital platforms should be understood not only as means of disseminating content, but as organisational infrastructures of the public. They configure networks, priorities and circulation routines, transforming communication into organisation and redefining, in fact, who can be visible, in what forms and with what effects. In this perspective, William L. Bennett and Steven

Livingston (2025) propose a systemic reading of platforms as drivers of political organisation. In this ecology, the authors explain (2025), connective action can consolidate into digital surrogates (influencers, think tanks, operatives, elected officials) capable of imposing issues and candidates, eroding the gatekeeping of traditional organisations and pushing parties towards illiberal structures. These chains not only generate exposure, but also coordination and institutional leverage (pressure on political parties, restrictive reforms), demonstrating how visibility becomes organisational power when anchored to hybrid networks. This dynamic ties in with criticism of progressive neoliberalism, where rhetoric of emancipation is incorporated and reoriented in an individualistic and performative key. In a platform environment, the “success” of feminist demands risks being measured in terms of attention metrics (reach, engagement), producing integrative (decorative, legitimising) visibility rather than transformative visibility (capable of shifting access, recognition, representation/redistribution). The issue at stake is not “being there”, but rearticulating the conditions of representability: who speaks, where, with what resources and alliances – that is, translating visibility into organisational capacity (Bennett & Livingston, 2025).

The risk is that platforms will operate as new symbolic “enclosures”, i.e. they will define who is included and on what terms, rewarding what is brand-safe and compatible with the market order.

In this context, the visibility of women – especially white, Western, professional women – often becomes a sign of supervised modernity, while other experiences (non-aligned feminisms, queer and racialised subjectivities) are marginalised, silenced or confined to politically insignificant niches. It is precisely at this level that the function of counterpublics becomes decisive. They should not be understood as a simple online presence, but as collective practices that aim to rewrite the rules of the public sphere. Only in this direction can visibility become truly transformative – and not run the risk of being reabsorbed and neutralised within the confines of progressive neoliberalism – allowing recognition and redistribution to be held together even in the environment of digital platforms (Fraser, 1995; 2005; Bennett & Livingston, 2025).

5. Final reflection

In this reflection, we have shown how the increased visibility of women in the public sphere does not, in itself, coincide with a

transformation of power relations. Starting from feminist criticism of the Habermasian model, the public sphere has been interpreted as a non-neutral field, structured by asymmetries of access and hierarchies of recognition. In this context, the category of counterpublics allows us to understand discursive and organisational practices capable of challenging the apparent universalism of the “public” and producing alternative grammars of participation. On an analytical level, the contribution proposed an operational distinction between integrative visibility and transformative visibility. The former is limited to controlled inclusion mechanisms that legitimise the existing order (decorative presence, symbolic performances, attention metrics); the latter, on the other hand, is measured by structural outcomes in terms of access, representation and redistribution. This distinction, anchored to the recognition/redistribution axis and the question of representation, allows us to assess in sociological terms when visibility translates into power and not just exposure.

Criticism of certain notions has also shown how nation and market are fused in formations such as femonationalism and homonationalism, which mobilise rhetoric of emancipation for security and exclusionary purposes. Domesticity, care work and the (socio)-sexual division of labour remain cogs in the wheel of accumulation; female representation tends to be valued in a legitimising rather than transformative way, reproducing hierarchies within women and between Western and non-Western women. “Difference” thus operates as a criterion for selection, differential inclusion and exclusion. The shift to platform ecology accentuates these dynamics. Platforms not only disseminate content, but also organise audiences, priorities and circulation routines. In this sense, communication functions as an organisational infrastructure, capable of enabling hybrid networks that can both co-opt feminist demands within the logic of attention and empower counterpublics with institutional influence. The asymmetry between intermittent mobilisations and stable organisational structures explains why, in the absence of organisational infrastructure (offices, resources, mandates), much visibility remains integrative and rarely produces changes in rules, access and resources.

This has three sociological implications. First, the evaluation of inclusion policies requires indicators that go beyond symbolic recognition and measure effects on representation and redistribution (mandates, budgets, veto/voice powers, accountability). Second, the transformative

capacity of movements depends on their translation into stable organisational forms capable of converting communicative capital into institutional and material power. Third, in the platform environment, the construction of effective counterpublics involves the rearticulation of the rules of representability and resistance to recurring cycles of co-optation.

This contribution has some limitations, which we will outline below. The trajectory is mainly theoretical-critical and does not yet test the hypotheses put forward through case studies; the analytical focus remains largely confined to Western contexts; the distinction between integrative visibility and transformative visibility, although proposed in operational terms, requires broader comparative validation. These limitations give rise to a future research agenda that consists of operationalising the link between recognition, redistribution and representation with indicators of access, power and resources applied to different arenas – institutional, media and territorial; scrutinising platform policies (moderation, ranking, monetisation) as new symbolic enclosures, measuring their effects on access and legitimacy; integrating qualitative and computational methods to track the transition from mere circulation of discourse to actual influence on the agenda, regulatory outcomes and resource re-allocation.

Finally, visibility, from a sociological point of view, is particularly relevant only when it translates into structural transformations – new rules of access, new forms of representation, new allocations of resources. The challenge, both theoretical and political, is to design counterpublics capable of resisting neoliberal co-optation, of using platforms without being absorbed by them, and of converting visibility into effective and lasting democratic power.

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