

# Corporal Fascism over women's bodies: feminist movements seeking emancipatory alternatives through the mobilization of law

PD/BD/142805/2018, Funded by FCT | Ongoing

**Jessica Carvalho Morris**

Supervisors: Boaventura de Sousa Santos and Verónica Gago

## General Theme

Even though women's rights have become a hegemonic concept, the world has not become a more equal or just world for women. Never before have there been more laws, covenants and treaties nor have there been more organizations dedicated to the promotion and protection of women's rights.

Despite these efforts, women continue to be discriminated against, to experience physical and sexual violence, and to be denied sexual and reproductive autonomy. In addition, the current social, economic and political global scenario has deepened the already abyssal inequalities. Many countries claim to be democracies but are, in fact, low-intensity democracies, with politically democratic and socially fascist societies. This global rise of societal fascism constantly produces women as nonexistent and places them on the other side of the abyssal line.

This project expands on Santos' five forms of *societal fascism*, and advances the concept of *corporal fascism*, particularly *corporal fascism over women's bodies*. By focusing on the struggle to legalize abortion in Argentina and Brazil, this project analyzes the ways *corporal fascism* works, how feminist movements have used their *feminist potencia* to resist and have mobilized the law to dismantle it, and explores postabyssal possibilities for women's rights.

## General Objective

Contribute to the field of human rights by:

- developing the concept of *corporal fascism* focusing on *corporal fascism over women's bodies*
- analyzing the ways feminist movements have used their *feminist potencia* to resist *corporal fascism*.

## Specific Objectives

- Develop the concept of *corporal fascism* and in particular *corporal fascism over women's bodies* using as springboard women's resistance experiences in Argentina and Brazil to decriminalize abortion.
- Research how feminist movements (broadly defined as organizations, movements, academics that adopt a critical perspective on the social situation of women and act to change this situation) have used their *feminist pontencia* to resist and have mobilized law in these two contexts; and
- Explore postabyssal possibilities for women's rights.

## Research Methods and Techniques

This research uses different methodologies taking into account feminist epistemologies, epistemologies of the South and the extended case method.

This project is intended to highlight elements, experiences, practices and knowledges working towards abolishing corporal fascism over women's bodies and thinking alternative thoughts of alternatives.

## Fieldwork

- Brazil (2019-2020) – the research was conducted primarily in Recife (home to the first feminist NGO in the country) with trips to Brasília, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador and São Paulo to join feminist activities and interview feminists involved in the struggle to legalize abortion in the country.
- Argentina (2020) – the research was conducted in Buenos Aires. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the country imposed a severe lockdown (the longest lock down in the world). As a result, the methodology was adapted and interviews, events, mobilizations were almost all conducted virtually, using tools such as zoom, skype, etc.

## Communications

Morris, Jessica Carvalho (2021). "Resiliencia y reinencion de los movimientos feministas en Argentina en la lucha para legalizar el aborto en medio de la pandemia Covid-19", Conference Paper, *Feminismos sin Cuarentena. Panademia y Resistencias in América Latina at the Latin American Studies Association 2021*, May 26-29, 2021.

Morris, Jessica Carvalho (2019), "The right to abortion as a debt of democracy: lessons from feminist movements in Argentina and Brazil", Conference Paper, *Gender Violence and Feminist Resistance in Latin America organized by the International Feminist Journal of Politics*, Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, October 17-19, 2019, São Paulo, Brazil.

Morris, Jessica Carvalho (2019), "Feminist movements in Argentina and Brazil: mobilization of human rights law in the struggle against Corporal Fascism Over Women's Bodies", Conference Paper, *IV Seminário Internacional Pós-Colonialismo, Pensamento Descolonial e Direitos Humanos na América Latina*, Pontifical Catholic University of Pernambuco - UNICAP, August 21-23, 2019, Recife/PE, Brazil.

Frente Pernambucana  
pela Legalização do  
Aborto at the Marcha  
das Margaridas,  
August 2019, Brasília,  
Brazil.



Ni Una Menos at  
the International  
Feminist Strike,  
March 9, 2020, Buenos  
Aires, Argentina.

Banderolazo organized  
by the Campaña  
Nacional por el  
Aborto Legal, Seguro y  
Gratuito on September  
28, 2020 (Day for  
Decriminalization  
of Abortion in Latin  
America and  
the Caribbean)

