

Between carnival and confrontation. Discursive strategies in the media coverage of feminist protests

*Entre el carnaval y la confrontación:
estrategias discursivas de los medios
digitales en la cobertura de
las protestas feministas*

*Entre o carnaval e o confronto:
estratégias discursivas das mídias
digitais na cobertura de
protestos feministas*

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This paper aims to analyze the discursive strategies of Mexican digital media used to portray the actions and protagonists of the feminist protests in the context of the current administration of the Mexican federal government, known as “The 4T” (“The Fourth Transformation”). It reviews the coverage of feminist protests on emblematic dates (International Women’s Day, Global Day of Action for the Legalization of Abortion, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) of five digital media during the first three years of the 4T (2019-2021) from a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach. The results reveal how these strategies reconfigure the object of the protest and create two opposite hubs of significance: either to validate or to sanction women’s actions in the public space.

KEYWORDS: Feminism, digital media, feminist protest, discourse, gender.

El objetivo de este artículo es analizar las estrategias discursivas que utilizan los medios digitales mexicanos para significar acciones y protagonistas de las protestas feministas en el contexto del actual gobierno federal en México, conocido como la 4T (la cuarta transformación). Desde la perspectiva del Análisis Crítico de Discurso (ACD), se analiza la cobertura de las movilizaciones feministas en fechas emblemáticas (Día internacional de la mujer, Día de acción global por la despenalización del aborto, Día internacional para la erradicación de la violencia contra la mujer), realizada por cinco medios durante los tres primeros años de la 4T (2019-2021). Los resultados muestran que estas estrategias reconfiguran el sentido de la protesta, generando dos polos de significación que determinan lo válido y lo sancionable en la actuación de las mujeres en el espacio público.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Feminismo, medios digitales, protesta feminista, discurso, género.

O objetivo deste artigo é analisar as estratégias discursivas utilizadas pelas mídias digitais mexicanas para significar ações e protagonistas de protestos feministas no contexto do atual governo federal no México, conhecido como 4T, (a quarta transformação). Na perspectiva da Análise Crítica do Discurso (ACD), a cobertura das mobilizações feministas em datas emblemáticas (Dia Internacional da mulher, Dia mundial de ação pela descriminalização do aborto, Dia internacional pela erradicação da violência contra a mulher), realizada por cinco veículos outlets durante os três primeiros anos do quarto trimestre (2019-2021). Os resultados mostram que essas estratégias reconfiguram o sentido do protesto, gerando dois polos de significação que determinam o que é válido e o que é passível de punição na atuação das mulheres no espaço público.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Feminismo, mídia digital, protesto feminista, discurso, gênero.

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INTRODUCTION: THE CONTEXT OF THE FEMINIST PROTESTS IN MEXICO

“Alerta, alerta, alerta que camina...” (Warning, warning, warning, the feminist fight is walking...) is the slogan resonating strongly in Latin America in recent years. From the continental #Mareaverde (#Greentide) in the streets that march for the decriminalization of abortion, to the more than 208 replicas of the performance of *Un violador en tu camino*² (“A rapist in your way”) in Latin American cities (García González & Guedes, 2020), feminist protests have transcended their local character to articulate women’s demands for justice in the face of shared regional problems. In fact, it is considered that the articulation in transnational networks, through technologies, and the expansion of protest repertoires (with hashtags, audiovisual content, performances and artistic creations online) represent the characteristic feature of the “fourth feminist wave” (García González, 2022; Garrido Ortolá, 2022; Laudano, 2019; Pedraza & Rodríguez, 2019).

It is even proposed, due to the potential of this appropriation of the digital space, a feminist future of protest that questions and transforms the usual forms of masculine organization, expression and leadership of social movements (Rovira Sancho, 2018). However, it is necessary to recognize that the collective actions promoted on platforms by conversations and hashtags are correlative with the graffiti on monuments, the fountains dyed blood-red, the crosses and silhouettes displayed in the squares. Indeed, the feminist warning also walks the streets leaving an unpleasant reminder that women have had enough of multiple daily violence, institutional complicity and the State’s omissions.

² Performance created by the Chilean feminist collective “Las Tesis” in 2019 with the aim of demonstrating against violence against women, which was replicated worldwide in 366 cities in 53 countries.

In the case of Mexico, from the Violet Spring of April 2016³ (#24A) to the historic march of March 8th, 2020,⁴ feminist mobilizations have been at the center of the public agenda. The capital of the country has been the epicenter of these, where, according to the Comunicación e Información de la Mujer agency [CIMAC] (Women's Communication and Information) (2020), feminist protests quintupled in a decade (from 5 in 2007 to 26 in 2017). At the same time, questions about the forms in which weariness is expressed in the public space have increased.

These criticisms have become more acute during the federal government of the so called "4T"⁵ due to the unexpected confrontation with President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO), which began after the #NoMeCuidanMeViolan⁶ protest in August 2019, when different monuments and heritage buildings⁷ were objects of intervention with feminist graffiti.

These acts were described by the president as "plots" and "attacks" against his government, which led to a series of statements characterized by attempts to delegitimize, minimize, and dehistoricize the feminist protest (Abarca Reyes, 2022; Cerva Cerna, 2020). In response, different feminist groups have criticized the president for ignoring the specificity of violence against women, denying and minimizing the problems that affect them, constantly reproducing stereotypes strongly macho-sided,

³ Protest, in more than 40 cities, called spontaneously by different groups through the hashtag #VivasNosQueremos (#WeWantOurselvesAlive). It was the first massive mobilization outside of the institutionalized days of the struggle for women's rights, such as March 8th or November 25th.

⁴ This has been the march with the broadest participation in the history of the country, carried out in 20 states and with more than 80 000 participants in Mexico City.

⁵ Government of the Fourth Transformation (*Cuarta Transformación*, 4T), considered the first left-wing federal government in the country.

⁶ As a result of the allegation that police officers in Mexico City (capital of the country) had raped a minor.

⁷ Among them, the monument of La Victoria Alada, better known as El Ángel de la Independencia, emblem of Mexico City.

and protecting political actors previously reported for practices of sexual violence⁸ (De la Rosa & Ordaz, 2020; Juárez, 2020).

This has coupled with institutional strategies of provocation⁹ and criminalization of the feminist movement by the authorities¹⁰ (Amnistía Internacional, 2021); while political, academic and activist agents, some opposed to the current government, fuel the confrontation by criticizing government actions. Thus, feminist protests become the object of discursive fight between different political actors.

In this context, this paper intends to analyze the discursive strategies to name, assess and frame the feminist protests that use Mexican digital media. The first section summarizes the theoretical reflection on media coverage of the social movements' protests, particularly the feminist protests; then, the text introduces the methodology for the analysis of discursive strategies, from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), in the coverage carried out by five digital media (*Milenio*, *El Universal*, *Aristegui Noticias*, *Animal Político* and *La Silla Rota*) during the period from 2019 to 2021. On this basis, this article discusses the ways in which media discourse guides the understanding of protest, generating two opposed hubs of significance that sanction women's actions in the public space.

⁸ Criticism alongside online protests with the hashtags #PresidenteRompaElPacto (#PresidentBreakThePact), #NosotrasTenemosOtrosDatos (#WeHaveDifferentData), #UnVioladorNoSeraGobernador (#ARapist-WontBeGovernor).

⁹ Like the metal wall placed around Palacio Nacional (the National Palace, headquarters of the presidency), prior to the march on March 8th, 2021, modified hours later by groups of women who turned it into a "wall of memory" with the names of the victims of femicide.

¹⁰ Such as police retaining practices not recommended by international organizations, dissemination of personal information, opening of investigation files and arbitrary arrests.

THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE MEDIA ON FEMINIST MOBILIZATIONS:
FROM THE PROTEST PARADIGM TO THE POTENTIAL OF
THE *HASHTAG FEMINISM*

Transformations in the frame of protest

The academic literature addresses the media coverage of protests mainly from the news framing approach, that through the concept of “protest paradigm” (Boyle et al., 2012; Harlow & Johnson, 2011) describe a predominant interpretation scheme characterized by: a) highlighting the act rather than the causes and background of the protest; b) focusing on confrontation with others (authorities and police, mainly); c) highlighting the negative actions and aspects of the act; d) focusing on the authorities speech rather than the voices of protesters, to mitigate their negative actions. Studies account for the variables that affect adherence to this paradigm: the media norms and practices, the system and the political culture of the context, the sympathy that the movement arouses, and the size of the audience, among others.

However, the tendency to delegitimize the speech, to misinform about the causes and to make the demands invisible remains constant. This creates a relationship between the media and social movements that is asymmetric from the very beginning due to the paradoxical need of the latter to increase the visibility, scope and legitimacy of their protest acts through media coverage (Brown & Harlow, 2019; Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993; Rovira Sancho, 2013).

Nevertheless, the impact of sociodigital platforms in global protests has reformulated not only this asymmetric relationship, but also the very conception of the media and movements. In the first place, there is talk of an emerging information environment in which the workforce, practices, genres and formats, technologies and temporalities of the platforms with traditional media hybridize (Chadwick, 2011). The latter not only transfer their publication channels to the web, but also change their information production dynamics (routines, publication formats and languages) due to the mediation of digital technologies. In this transformed information sphere, news production is decentralized, therefore the (now digital) media become nodes in a dense network of information gatherers, producers, and disseminators (Heinrich, 2011; Hermida, 2010).

On the other hand, the emergence of this information environment affected the dynamics of social movements, as exemplified by the cases of the Arab Spring, the *Movimiento de los Indignados* (The Indignant movement), #Yosoy132 (#Iam132) or #MeToo. The studies on these cases highlight the use of digital technologies as tools that have facilitated the distribution of information, the organization and the visibility of the movements but, above all, the platforms are recognized as the space for the connective action that shapes events, subjects and protest expressions (Cottle, 2011; Micó & Casero Ripollés, 2014; Rovira Sancho, 2012; Tufekci & Wilson 2012).

This has undoubtedly had an impact on the media coverage of the protest, due to what Cottle (2011) calls “overlapping communication flows” (p. 652) in which there are no asymmetrical relationships, but constant interaction: movements provide on-site images and testimonies of the protest through their network profiles, they monitor local media coverage, and alert the international community; while the media collect what the community of users shares on the networks, they update the protest coverage with this information and provide direct links to the different platforms where the information is disseminated. The protest paradigm’s reviews in this digital context find adherence to it to a lesser extent, a tendency to a more legitimizing frame of the movements, and a preference of the user community for coverage by platforms instead of traditional media (Brown & Harlow, 2019; Harlow et al., 2017; Shahin et al., 2016).

Feminist protests in the media

Analyzes of feminist protests in the traditional media concur in pointing out that there is minimal coverage, with frames and discourses focused on ridiculing, minimizing, and demonizing the actions of the protesters (Armstrong & Boyle, 2011; Lind & Salo, 2002; van Zoonen, 1992), and that they generate stereotyped and distorted images of feminists and the movement (Bradley, 2004; Bronstein, 2005). However, more recent reviews find a greater number of news items with more positive but fragmented, depoliticized and even contradictory framings that omit the disruptive nature of feminist action (Dean, 2010; Mendes, 2011).

In this change on the framing, some authors point to the strategic use of sociodigital technologies as a key factor: the information

disseminated by the collectives (through their own channels and accounts), the protesters (who transmit on-site) and the community that, without being in the streets, take part of the protests in the digital world and create other discourses about the protests that modify the media perspective (Casas et al., 2016; Nicolini & Hansen, 2018). In fact, there is a growing field of studies on feminist protest on platforms and in digital media. In particular, priority has been given to studying the potential and limitations of feminist hashtags or the *hashtag feminism* (Dixon, 2014; Williams, 2015) in generating public conversations, increasing visibility, and growing the feminist protest communities bigger (Acosta & Lassi, 2020; Esquivel Domínguez, 2019; García González & Guedes, 2020; Mendes et al., 2018; Portillo Sánchez et al., 2022).

When reviewing the media coverage of these online protests (mainly through monitoring the hashtags), we find that the news framing focuses on the creativity of the repertoires and the diversity of testimonies, but without going into depth or contextualizing the cases (Brantner et al., 2020; De Benedictis et al., 2019). Although the existence of less stigmatizing frames is recognized, other authors identify remaining elements of the protest paradigm (Shahin et al., 2016) or warn of a news framing of decontextualization that contributes to the media devaluation and depoliticization of feminism in general (Thomas & Stehling, 2016).

In a different research line, there are few works that, from the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), address more subtle ways in which the coverage of the protests (again, in networks) reproduces the gender order (Eilermann, 2018; Murphy, 2017). These studies don't seek the characteristics of the general framings, but the contradictions of the coverages that are considered to be more legitimizing. The CDA perspective analyzes the way in which social relations are established and strengthened through the use of language, texts and speech in the social and political context (Wodak & Meyer, 2003). From CDA, discourse is considered as a social practice (Fairclough, 2001), which implies a relationship between a particular discursive event and the situations, institutions and social structures that frame it. In this consideration, discursive practices can produce and reproduce power relations through the ways of representing situations and subjects with different linguistic resources. From a feminist perspective, resorting to

ACD contributes to understanding the power of discourses (in this case, of the media) to reproduce social gender norms.

Thus, the contribution that is intended starts from analyzing the feminist protest as a transgression to the gender norm that determines the ways of acting in the public space and that is reproduced in the media coverage. Various authors point out that the exclusion of women from public space has functioned as a structuring element of the gender order that produces imaginaries and meanings differentiated for women and men, which regulate access, practical activities and behaviors carried out daily (Falú, 2011; Soto Villagrán, 2016, 2019). However, women have historically developed –individually and/or collectively– resistance and political transgressions expressed in the use and appropriation of public space. In this case, it is considered that the organized and massive action of the feminist protests transgresses and updates this gender norm in, at least, three ways:

- a. By collectively affecting the public space, based on other interests different from the usual ones, to communicate demands, claims and women's needs made invisible.
- b. By using symbols, languages, behaviors and body aesthetics that clash with the feminine stereotypes imposed by sexist socialization.
- c. By making interventions on what, in the public space, has been sacralized as valuable, acting on monuments to heroes, representative buildings of patriarchal institutions (church, companies, government), as well as other spaces that serve as symbols of masculinity, power and domination.

These three transgressions are key in the media representation of the feminist protest, since it guides a sanction on women's actions in the streets. Following this argument, here we seek to expose these sanctions in the coverage carried out by digital media

METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGY: PRECISE DETAILS ON THE ANALYSIS OF DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES IN DIGITAL MEDIA

Although current studies on media discourses from CDA highlight the need to incorporate multimodal analysis due to the characteristics

of digital media, they do not rule out textual analysis as long as they consider the flow, interaction and participation conditions in which they attend news publication (KhosraviNik & Unger, 2016). One proposal to analyze these uses of language is that of discursive strategies (Meyer, 2003; Wodak & Reisigl, 2001), defined as the discursive procedures adopted to achieve a certain objective; that is to say, they reflect the linguistic choices made to name, assess, argue, frame or qualify certain aspects of reality, hierarchizing and excluding meanings according to a particular social order.

The relevance of resorting to discursive strategies as linguistic choices of the media is considered to highlight that: a) they are carried out by various subjects who participate in the production of news; b) they are guided by the structural objectives of the media institution (in this case, the consumption of news through the web); and c) that they reproduce various social orders (among them, the gender order).

For this article, a corpus of 429 news items (Table 1) on the protests of three emblematic days was reviewed: 8M (March 8th, International Women's Day), 28S (September 28th, Global Day of Action for the Legalization of Abortion) and 25N (November 25th, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women). News stories from five Mexican digital media with different scopes and trajectories were included, in order to cover the spectrum of views on the protests: *El Universal*, *Milenio*, *Aristegui Noticias*, *Animal Político* and *La Silla Rota*.

TABLE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS ITEMS BY NEWSPAPER AND BY DAY						
Day of protest	<i>El Universal</i>	<i>Milenio</i>	<i>La Silla Rota</i>	<i>Aristegui Noticias</i>	<i>Animal Político</i>	Overall total
8M	96	52	50	54	23	275
25N	35	20	11	10	13	89
28S	7	34	10	6	8	65
Overall total	138	106	71	70	44	429

Source: The author.

Both *El Universal* (founded in 1916) and *Milenio* (founded in 2000), considered as center-right political tendency, are newspapers

that transitioned to digital due to media convergence processes, but also keep on printing. In contrast, *Aristegui Noticias*, *Animal Político* and *La Silla Rota* (founded between 2010 and 2012) are native digital media, created for the web environment and that do not derive from print or audiovisual media. News items with the protest as the central topic were gathered, regardless of whether they were published before or after the day of the protest. The analysis period goes from March 2019 to March 2021,¹¹ the first three years of the 4T government.

The categories of analysis are summarized in Table 2. Although Wodak's original proposal considers five discursive strategies,¹² for reasons of length, this text presents the results of the three considered central to the configuration of the discourse on feminist protests:

TABLE 2
SUMMARY OF CATEGORIES OF ANALYSIS

Description	Categories found in the analysis' corpus
<p>Nomination or reference strategies: construction of internal and external groups from the ways in which social actors are named and categorized.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal nouns: The march, the various marches, the protest • Generalization: Women, protesters • Collectives: Feminists groups, feminists collectives • Specific groups • Individual figures
<p>Predication strategies: they attribute negative or positive valuations to the actions of the social actors that are expressed implicitly or explicitly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implicit positive • Implicit negative • Mixed or contrast
<p>Framing strategies: they position a predominant point of view in the description and narration of events from a thematic axis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vandalization • Confrontation • Foresight • Carnivalization

Source: Adapted from Wodak and Reisigl (2001).

¹¹ This explains the largest number of news items about the 8M, covering the protest of the three years, unlike the 28S and 25N, covering only two.

¹² Nomination, predication, argumentation, framing and intensification.

nomination, predication and framing, which allow us to analyze the linguistic choices to represent the protest answering to: what, who and how.

The two remaining strategies, argumentation and intensification, are considered to complement and deepen what these first three strategies reveal, so the decision was made to remove them. The analysis unit was the written news story, with emphasis on the opening paragraphs. In the following section, the results are structured in three blocks, in each one of which the logic of presentation of the quantitative data is explained, data that made it possible to identify the dominant strategies in the analysis corpus, to later delve into the underlying meanings in media linguistic choices through the qualitative analysis of representative news items.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Predominant discursive strategies: the main trends in the coverage of feminist protest

In this section, the predominant nomination, predication and framing strategies are presented through a table that illustrates the proportional trends in each medium's total news items and in the overall total (Table 3). The cells with the predominant strategy categories (with the highest percentage) are highlighted to illustrate the differences between media.

In the nomination strategies (Table 3) it was found that the generalization *Women* (with variants: *Protesters* or *Participants*) is the most frequent, sometimes alongside an indicator of quantity: the media talk of thousands, hundreds of or dozens of women as a discursive resource to qualify or intensify the relevance of the protest. Later, it appears the verbal noun *The March* (with the variants: *The marches* and *The mobilization*), as an entity to which protest actions are attributed: causing damage, leaving injuries, causing losses. The third strategy names collectives or groups (alongside the adjective "feminist" or with complementary descriptions such as "hooded women"). The specificity is much less: there are few news items in which a specific group or individual figure is named.

TABLE 3
 PREDOMINANT DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES IN EACH MEDIUM AND IN THE OVERALL TOTAL

Media		<i>El Universal</i>	<i>Milenio</i>	<i>La Silla Rota</i>	<i>Aristegui Noticias</i>	<i>Animal Político</i>	<i>Corpus total</i>
Nomination strategies	Generalization	24%	11%	38%	43%	59%	30%
	Verbal nouns	37%	14%	35%	29%	14%	27%
	Collectives	17%	63%	10%	4%	16%	25%
	Specific group	16%	7%	7%	16%	11%	12%
	Individual figure	6%	5%	10%	8%	0%	6%
Total by media		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Predication strategies	Mixed or contrast	58%	64%	61%	49%	66%	59%
	Implicit negative	34%	28%	10%	23%	7%	24%
	Implicit positive	8%	8%	30%	29%	27%	17%
	Total by media		92%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Framing strategies	Carnivalization	40%	43%	52%	46%	59%	46%
	Confrontation	36%	18%	23%	41%	25%	29%
	Foresight	9%	25%	18%	6%	11%	14%
	Vandalization	15%	13%	7%	7%	5%	11%
	Total by media		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: The author.

Regarding the predication strategies, from the description of the actions, an implicit valuation is granted that guides the positive or negative attributions to the acts, actors and situations. The predication with the least presence is the implicit positive (17%), with an argumentative line that highlights causes and reasons for the mobilization, including statistical data and testimonies that account for situations of violence and inequality. On the other hand, the implicit negative predication describes the impact of the protests, highlighting the consequences: damage to buildings and monuments, confrontations, injured people, mobilized police forces, closure of subway stations, deployment of cleaning personnel, etc. The contrast or mixed predication strategy, which is the predominant one, describes the spectrum of actions and participants between the two poles of valuation.

On the other hand, four framing strategies are identified that determine the central point of view to frame the protests. The predominant frame is carnivalization (almost half of the corpus), which focuses on the detailed, emotional and anecdotal narration of the protest, with the description of women's actions in the streets in a recounting and episodic manner. The second frame is confrontation, present in less than a third of the corpus, focused on conflicts with the authorities, security and police forces and, mainly, the president. Conflicts do not always happen in the space-time of the protest, but rather through statements (made in press conferences, press releases, and conferences such as *La Mañanera*).¹³ The foresight frame prioritizes the information referring to the actions prior to the protests, where the news stories focused on the measures of the authorities stand out (streets closures, extension of transport timetables, police mobilization) as well as the ones focused on the recommendations and calls from organizing groups (routes, schedules, protest slogans and songs and even "Tips for your first march"). In both cases, the notion of security frames the meaning of the texts.

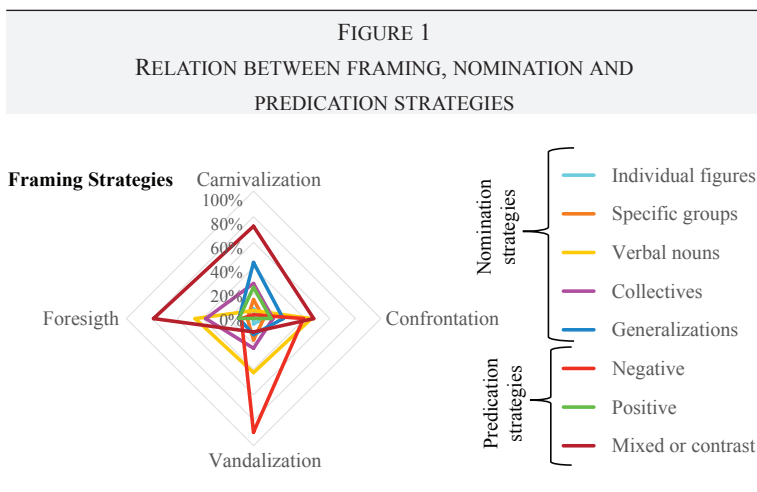
Vandalization is the frame with the least presence (11%), although acts of vandalism are mentioned in more than 20% of the news items (but from another discursive strategy approach). The vandalization is

¹³ Daily Morning Conference of President AMLO.

presented by two perspectives: the narrative one, with the recount of the affectations caused by The March in public space; and the informative one, which presents the figures from the authorities on the damage caused by The March (number of buildings affected, mobilized elements, repair costs, etc.).

Associations of discursive strategies in the texts: the hubs of significance around women's actions

After identifying the predominant strategies, this section shows the association of the strategies present in the texts of the news stories. Figure 1 illustrates, proportionally, what type of nomination and predication strategies (highlighted by the colored lines) are more linked to the framing strategies (located in each quadrant).



Source: The author.

By associating the strategies, it becomes evident that there's a configuration of two hubs of significance of the protest, which define what is acceptable (validating recognition) and what is reprehensible (sanctioning transgression) of women's actions. In one of the hubs, the carnivalization frame is associated with mixed and positive predication strategies, mainly linked to generalizing nomination strategies:

“We want ourselves alive, free and without fear. Not one less” is one of the phrases on one of the protest signs with which tens of thousands of women demonstrated this Sunday, March 8th, in Mexico City, tired of machismo, to demand equality and to stop the femicide violence, which takes the lives of at least 10 women a day in the country... From there the group left for the Antimonumenta (Anti-monument), in front of the Palacio de Bellas Artes (Palace of Fine Arts), and then arrived at the capital’s Zócalo, where the names of murdered women were painted earlier that day (La Equipa Editorial, 2020, par. 1).

Due to this association of strategies, the protest is presented as the appropriation of public space with feminist acts, symbols and protest slogans; women are valued positively: “dressed in black with purple and green scarves, they protested with songs and protest signs”, or “they walked and shouted protest slogans such as: We are not hysterical, we are historical”. In this hub of significance, the media validate two senses of the transgression that the protest represents: the alteration and occupation of the public space to claim and demand rights (which stands out by virtue of the magnitude of the attendance); and the use of symbols, languages, behaviors and body aesthetics that challenge stereotypes of female behavior (and that are validated as they constitute an act that can be watched and even spectacularized).

In contrast, the framing strategy of vandalization and the negative predication strategy are presented as complementary to each other, associated with nominations such as The March (which, by not referring to specific subjects, facilitates negative valuations):

The Hemiciclo a Juárez was damaged today after the “Not One Less” March that takes place in commemoration of the Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, in which several of the sculptures and monuments located in Paseo de la Reforma were also vandalized (Piñón, 2019, par. 1).

The March to commemorate International Women’s Day, yesterday March 8th, in Hidalgo, generated losses valued at one million pesos due to the destruction of 52 windows in three stations of the Tuzobús transportation system that will remain closed for several weeks... the closure of the stations

will affect at least two thousand users, mostly women, since 54 percent of users are women (Redacción, 2021b, par. 1).

In this type of news stories, an opposition between categories of women converging in the public space is implied (which, however, are hidden in the use of nominations such as The March). This opposition is clearer in the news stories with mixed or contrast predication where, regardless of the framing, the nominations delineate the canon of what to validate and to sanction:

Several Mexican women and feminist groups have begun to gather at the Monument to the Revolution in the Historic Center of Mexico City, the place from which the march for International Women's Day will begin. Girls, adolescents and adults have gathered in the area, who will once again demonstrate against gender violence in the country. In the Monument to the Revolution there are women who arrived hooded, as well as mothers who arrived with their daughters (Redacción, 2021a, par. 1).

Among the more than 3 000 people attending the protest, a group of no more than 50 hooded women was the one that cause the damage along the route, which was watched, at all times, by policewomen who repelled the attacks with slogans of: We are policewomen and we are eradicating violence! (Padilla, 2019, par. 2).

This opposition is accentuated by the comparison of actions and the emphasis on the numerical difference. Thus, at one hub are “the mothers who arrived with their daughters”, “the thousands who protest in peace” or the “policewomen”, and at another, the “women who arrived hooded”, the “feminist groups” and the few that “go beyond limits”. With these strategies, sanction for female action in the public space remains, through a categorization of women and their acts. In the linguistic choices that make up phrases such as “this is how the streets were after the 8M march”, “Buildings remain damaged four days after the feminist march” or because “Not even by being sealed off, buildings saved” an implicit sanction to women who transgress what is considered valuable in the public space becomes evident, even when the value of occupying this space to protest is recognized.

*Differences and commonalities in the media discourse:
from feminists vs. buildings to feminists vs. the president*

Even with the general commonalities described, the review presents discursive differences between the traditional media (*Milenio*, *El Universal*) and the native digital media (*La Silla Rota*, *Aristegui Noticias*, *Animal Político*). Traditional media, who make up, to a greater extent, the hub of significance that sanctions the women's actions, show a greater tendency to negative predication (around 30% of their coverage, unlike the digital native media that register less than 10%); and they publish more news stories with the vandalization frame (around 15%, almost double or triple that of other media), focusing on the public space affectation:

In the middle of the “Not one less” march that takes place this Monday in Mexico City in commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, several of the sculptures and monuments in Paseo de la Reforma have suffered damages with the graffiti of some protesters (Redacción, 2019b, par. 1).

Notably, *Milenio* focuses on the Collectives as protagonists in more than 60% of its news stories (associated with negative predications and the vandalization perspectivization). In contrast, *Aristegui Noticias*, *La Silla Rota* and *Animal Político* register a higher proportion of news stories with positive predication (close to 30%, three times what *Milenio* and *El Universal* register), focused on the actions of “women”:

Women in Mexico City demonstrated this Monday against gender violence and femicides in the country, to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. “I am not hysterical, nor I am menstruating, I am outraged by all my murdered sisters”, is one of the messages that a young woman showed, on a protest sign. “If we don't fight together, they kill us separately”, said another (Redacción Animal Político, 2019, par. 1).

However, during the period analyzed, the discourse of both types of media evolved coincidentally in the coverage of the protest, from the confrontation frame, as a result of the conflict with the president.

In the timeline, the vandalization frame in the total corpus decreased from 20% in 2019 to around 10% during 2021. In contrast, the confrontation frame tripled (from 14% in 2019, to 43% in 2021). The digital media that most resorted to this strategy represent the two types of media: *Aristegui Noticias* and *El Universal*. This indicates that the concern for the affectations on the public space was replaced by the direct conflict of the protesters with the president and the authorities:

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador insisted that the #8M protests were an act of open provocation against the authority because there were hammers, mallets and even gasoline. This after reports of aggression by authorities in the feminist protest. Regarding the Marabunta group, he maintained that its members take sides. To exemplify his statements, he showed a video with violent expressions during the march (Redacción AN / AA, 2021, par. 1).

Only 10 minutes and 700 meters had gone by on the path that one of the marches for safe and legal abortion intended to follow in Mexico City, when the police surrounded it, set up an encapsulation that lasted four hours, and deployed actions of repression that provoked the violent response of the protesters (Arteta, 2020, par. 1).

This change in strategy, observed in all the media, altered the valuation of the protesters by placing the hub of the negative sense in the actions of the authorities. Although it seems to give feminist protest more legitimacy (that is, it increases the positive predication of transgressive acts while confronting presidential machismo), it also pushes it into the background. Thus, the increase in media interest in the street's feminist protest is the pretext to talk about the conflict with the president, which becomes the central event.

FINAL REFLECTIONS

The resonance of the feminist protests of the last decade, although it has made it possible to gain visibility in media discourses, also generates tensions and contradictions in the ways in which feminism,

feminists and, in general, women who occupy the public space are represented. The review carried out for this article coincides with the trend indicated by other studies on the coverage of traditional and digital media, which detect a greater number of news items with a positive frame on the feminist protest.

In this text, the emphasis of the analysis was placed on the ways in which the discursive strategies of the media sanction women's actions in the public space. The findings can be summarized in three key ideas:

- a. The media discursive strategies validate certain forms of protest through nominations, predications, and framings that value transitory transgressions of public space as necessary (singing, dancing, carrying protest signs, using scarves, and other resources to claim rights and justice).
- b. These, however, coexist with other strategies that reproduce a gender sanction when the transgressions seek permanence in the materiality of the space (such as interventions on buildings, walls or monuments).
- c. This creates opposite categories of protests protagonists: the thousands of women who demand their rights vs. the hooded women and feminist groups that destroy; however, the sanction for transgressive acts decreases when the president is confronted with them, but in this displacement of meanings, although greater coverage is gained, the very nature of the protest is relegated.

The findings outlined here do not exhaust the lines of analysis of the texts based on other variables: the coverage per day of protest (which is not the same for a march that calls on all women than for another that seeks the decriminalization of abortion), the participation of male and female reporters in the coverage, the incorporation of the gender perspective, etc. Likewise, a more complete analysis must incorporate the review of the graphic and audiovisual discourses, the links and the comments posted in the news portals, which coexist with the texts on the protest. The results of this work, more than inferences about these other aspects, provide starting points to continue analyzing media discourses.

Other questions arise from this review, but they require a different framework of interpretation and analysis. For example: how is the spectacularization of feminist protest, from the conflict, used as news merchandise that generates clicks and reproductions in the digital environment? How do these news stories coexist with the conversations in the networks, the misogynistic hashtags and the communication tactics of the feminist collectives? What kind of coverage do alternative feminist media generate and how do they contribute to the flow of information that shapes the meaning of the protest? Undoubtedly, the field of studies on feminist protest continues to present edges to explore, which requires complementary theoretical and methodological perspectives to account for the advances and resistance caused by the feminist warning in the media, on the networks and in the streets.

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PROFILE

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