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1

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The role of digital activism within social movements to foster democratization in the global south: the case of *Ni Una Menos*

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Abstract

The present paper aimed to describe how social movements in the Global South can use digital technologies to seek the promotion of democratization. A mixed approach was applied to a case study, combining the use of simple statistical frequency with the content analysis technique to categorize texts, images and sounds on the Ni Una Menos' Instagram page. Based on Sen's (2000) instrumental freedoms, the modalities of Rohm, Xavier and Valuano's analytical model (forthcoming) and on the criteria of quality of communication, media type and engagement outlined on the present paper, the impacts and contributions of the use of digital technologies by social movements for democratization in the Global South were discussed. Finally, the results demonstrate that most of the publications analyzed had the purpose of sensitizing or organizing NUM's public, consisting of 99.6% of the posts. The most important media were arts (33.42%) and photographs (41.88%), followed by videos (18.72%). The quality of communication did not stand out as a determining factor of the generated engagement, which suggests a limitation of the social media used for the movement's intended purposes.

Keywords: Global South; social movement; digital technologies; democracy; democratization; Instagram.

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El rol del activismo digital en los movimientos sociales para impulsar la democratización en el sur global: el caso *Ni Una Menos*

Resumen

Este artículo tuvo por objetivo describir como los movimientos sociales en el Sur Global pueden usar las tecnologías digitales para buscar la promoción de la democratización. Un abordaje misto fue usado en un estudio de caso, compuesta por el uso de frecuencias estadísticas simples y un análisis de contenido para categorizar textos, imágenes y sonidos en la cuenta de Instagram de Ni Una Menos. Basado en las libertades instrumentales de Sen (2000), las modalidades del modelo analítico de Rohm, Valuano y Xavier (publicación próxima) y en los criterios de calidad de comunicación, tipo de medio e involucramiento descritos en el presente artículo, los impactos y contribuciones del uso de tecnologías digitales por movimientos sociales en el Sur Global fueron discutidos. Por fin, los resultados demuestran que la mayoría de las publicaciones analizadas tuvieron el objetivo de sensibilizar u organizar el público de NUM, consistiendo de un 99.6% de las publicaciones. Los medios más importantes fueron las artes (33.42%) y las fotografías (41.88%), seguido de los videos (18,72%). La calidad de la comunicación no se sobresalió como un factor determinante para el involucramiento, lo que puede revelar una limitación de la red social utilizada para los objetivos propuestos por el movimiento

Palabras clave: Sur global; movimiento social; tecnologías digitales; democracia; democratización; Instagram.

Introduction

The broad technological and organizational transformation of communications enabled the emergence of new actors, raising challenges and allowing social movements to take new paths from the emergence of the Internet (Castells, 2007). The Internet enabled more individuals to actively stand up for a cause, mainly due to the ease of narrating and disseminating information, complaints and injustices and the speed to spread these. It is important to emphasize the potential of these technologies, which can be used in different ways: to bring together a large number of people around a cause, disseminate awareness-raising information, organize the logistics of donations or medical equipment within a protest, etc. (Rodriguez, 2015; Tufekci, 2017; Valenzuela, 2013).

In this context, traditional modalities of participation re-emerge in the online environment and give rise to new forms of political participation. Social networks are seen as spaces for socialization and political communication, also generating new forms of

political activism (Ribeiro, Borba and Hansen, 2019). Valenzuela (2013) and Valenzuela et al. (2016) show a positive correlation between the use of social networks and the propensity of users to participate in street demonstrations, what is reinforced by Burgos Pino (2014) when she states that social networks amplify existing forms of offline activism.

The authors point out that online and offline activism can exist in a relationship of support, rather than exclusion, which is reinforced by Ribeiro, Borba and Hansen (2019), who address the continuity of activism from the offline to the online environment. However, it is important to notice the fact that the mere exposure to these platforms is not broad enough or sufficient to achieve the goals of activists, since schooling – and, therefore, the critical analysis of the content found online – is still pointed out as a necessary factor for the emancipatory use of these technologies (Ribeiro, Borba and Hansen, 2019; Valenzuela et al., 2016).

According to Comscore's 2021 report, about 82% of the population in Latin America had access to social networks in 2020. The three countries with the highest number of users are Brazil, Mexico and Argentina, with respectively 97.9%, 92.3%, and 91.1% of their populations accessing social networks. The most used networks among Latin Americans are Facebook in first place, followed by Instagram and Twitter, with Instagram being the network with the highest volume of shared publications among Internet users (LABS, 2021).

The high use of social media in Latin America makes it worth mentioning that the widespread use of these technologies has ensured that the companies which control them have access to a massive amount of data generated from online activities (Fuchs and Trottier, 2017; Zuboff, 2018). Fejerskov (2017) states that by means of this data collection mechanism, the North's dominant relations over the marginalized populations of the Global South are reinforced, and the latter still have their resources exploited in contemporary times.

In order to continue the discussion concerning the impacts and uses of digital technologies by activists, this article questions: in what ways do social movements in the Global South can use digital technologies to seek the promotion of democratization? The present study sought to discuss the impacts and contributions of the use of digital technologies by social movements for the democratization in the Global South.

The democratization process and the role of social movements in this process were described in a review of scientific literature, seeking dialogue with important authors in the field of Social Sciences. Furthermore, the present article was a theoretical-empirical research, with a mixed approach (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018), and a descriptive character (Gil, 2008), in which the model of Rohm, Valuano and Xavier (forthcoming) was used to describe the digital tactics used by the Argentinian feminist movement Ni Una Menos on its Instagram account. Finally, the democratizing impacts of the use of these digital technologies were described from the prism of Sen's (2000) instrumental freedoms, combined with the criteria of quality of communication and engagement generated by the analyzed publications.

It is worth mentioning that the instrumental freedoms described by Sen (2000) have a heuristic potential to show, within the scope of individuals, how democratic and social progress are manifested concretely, beyond a strictly liberal reading. The contributions of Sen (2000) are also used in the present work in order to prevent the theoretical development of collective gains from being tied to the institutional dimension, such as

the approval of laws, and to point out how the broadening of democratization expands individual freedoms.

To develop the empirical part of the work, an analysis of the movement's publications on its Instagram was carried out using the case study strategy (Alves-Mazzoti, 2006). In the present article, from the collection of the 1170 publications of NUM's Instagram, which were grouped in 464 occurrences, it was possible to analyze that most of the publications made by the movement had the purpose of sensitizing or organizing its public, consisting of 99.6% of the analyzed set. The most important media were arts (33.42%), photographs (41.88%) and videos (18.72%). The most frequently used modalities were Narrative Building, present in 30.5% of the publications, Alliance Building, in 24.9% of the posts, Directing Events, in 20% of the posts and Education, in 12.5 % of publications.

In the following section, the theoretical foundation of the present work was developed to discuss datafication and the Global South, contemporary democracy, the process of social democratization and the role of social movements in the democratization process. In section 3, the methods used to reach the results were presented in more depth. In section 4, the results were described and analyzed, and final considerations were presented in the last section.

Theoretical background

1. Datification and the Global South

For the present authors, it is important to make the identification of the contemporary power concentrations more tangible by geographically localizing them. According to Raffestin (2012), the territory is a product of human work, which modifies the space. Halvorsen (2018: 5) agrees with this perception when considering the territory as a product of a historical moment, and advances Raffestin's (2012) theory by emphasizing "the plurality of power relations and political projects (both emancipatory and dominant) through which the territory is produced". According to Halvorsen (2018), only this plural conception would allow the perception of contradictory understandings about the political appropriations of space without denying the hierarchical and violent relationships which are generated by different uses of the same space.

It is important to consider that Raffestin's theory, according to Halvorsen (2018), also perceives the construction of a territory as a process that takes place on the existence of a previous territoriality. When considering that Big Tech companies, or surveillance capitalists (Zuboff, 2018), have been located, since their birth, mostly in the USA and in Western European countries, and have expanded their operating space to most countries in the world, it is important to study how these countries exert their influence on peripheral cultures, creating new territories on top of existing ones.

An example of this influence on the construction of a territory can be seen in Ameli and Kharazmi's (2013) note about the Internet as a means of realizing soft power in the phenomenon of digital colonialism. They claim that, in the digital environment, the influence of dominant countries extends even more intensely than in the analog world, establishing values and standards which become globally accepted. In this way, the thoughts and desires of a society are shaped, to a considerable extent, according to the

interests of those who control cyberspace.

An approach centered in technological innovations may overlook the current division of power, which is still concentrated in the hands of a small elite which holds property over social media and largely-deployed computer programs. This broad use of digital technologies has guaranteed the companies which control access to social media a great amount of data generated from online activities (Fuchs and Trottier, 2017; Zuboff, 2018).

Zuboff (2018) highlights the roles of Google and the National Security Agency of the United States as two of the main actors who benefit from the analysis and use of these data, whether for sale and profit or for behavior modeling. Other actors such as the Government Communications Headquarters and the company Cambridge Analytica have also demonstrated their power to use data collected from social networks to manipulate democratic processes (Azevedo, 2018; BBC News, 2018; Cadwalladr and Graham-Harrison, 2018; Feldman, 2018; Rosenberg, Confessore and Cadwalladr, 2018).

To Zuboff (2018), Google pioneered and created this new market, but this accumulation model is adopted by other online companies such as Facebook. Once the development and property of these networks are mostly located in the Global North, the data and the benefits generated by their use are also concentrated in the Global North, which brings advantages for the surveillance capitalists pointed out by Zuboff (2018).

In the following subsection, the problems introduced by the broad use of digital technologies in the process of democratization will be discussed. The present authors consider that, in order to build a new territoriality which is truly democratic, it is necessary to understand what democracy is and what it can be in its practical dimension of influence over individual liberties.

2. Contemporary democracy and the social democratization process

When analyzing economic development, Amartya Sen (2000) proposes an approach to development which encompasses other aspects, overcoming the notion that development can be solely related to factors such as Gross National Product (GNP) or per capita income. The author suggests that the approach which prioritizes economic development as an end in itself is limited. He argues that, if wealth is but a means to achieve what people want and not an end in itself, then the study of development cannot be based solely on the economic dimension, which would also be just one of the means to achieve development in a society.

Sen's (2000) analysis places the degree of individual freedom as an indicator of development. The author points out five fundamental freedoms: (1) political freedoms, (2) economic facilities, (3) social opportunities, (4) guarantees of transparency and (5) protective security. Achieving these instrumental freedoms would lead to the achievement of substantive freedoms which would be promoted for their intrinsic value, instead of being valued according to the degree of economic growth generated by them.

Political freedom can be seen as the ability to define the orienting principles of a government, electing representatives, participating in public debate, exercising control over government activities and having the freedom to express political views. Economic facilities describe adequate conditions to consumption, production or trade of goods among individuals or private entities. Social opportunities are the supply of basic health

services and education, among other means which ensure that the population has access to their rights in these areas. Transparency guarantees involve individuals' expectations regarding transparency from others and access to information which are of public interest, certifying that representatives fulfill their role and inhibiting activities which are contrary to collective interests. Protective security refers to the continued or emergency intervention from government to ensure that a minimum dignity and the primary needs of individuals are maintained in situations of extreme unemployment or hunger (Sen, 2000).

In sum, individuals need opportunities to reach a degree of freedom which allows them to participate in public life and in the democratic process (Sen, 2000). When placing the pursuit of economic growth as an end in itself, capitalist societies limit the degree of democratization which they are able to achieve. Because of that, Santos (2016) deduces that the effective democratization of social rights is incompatible with capitalism. When social rights are no longer seen as something which might generate profit, they are no longer perceived as relevant, whereas in the capitalist logic, they are not an end in themselves. Santos (2016) consequently points out that the broadening of democratization depends on overcoming the search for compatibility between capitalism and democracy.

After observing the online environment, Malin and Soares de Freitas (2018) point to the potential of digital technologies for reducing the degree of participatory democracy. By highlighting the vulnerability of the digital public sphere in the face of powerful private interests, the suitability of this sphere for the democratic process is questioned (Pfister and Yang, 2018). The use of bots and the manufacture of news with false content to manipulate political debates and public opinion are examples of problems that can emerge from the intense use of digital technologies in the democratic process (Malin and Soares de Freitas, 2018; Tenove et al., 2018).

Such inadequate use of the digital territory directly impacts individual freedoms. The use of bots and fake news to manipulate elections is probably the clearest example of how these tools can be used to reduce political freedom. The quality of debate is jeopardized, creating polarization and hindering dialogue between divergent ideas. Social opportunities are also affected by the propagation of false content, which becomes even more complicated due to digital illiteracy and the difficulty to recognize false information.

In the following subsection, the work sought to understand how social movements can use digital technologies from Milan's (2013) perspective.

3. The role of social movements in the democratization process

For the present work, datification is the use of digital technologies as a form of control in contemporaneity. In face of this problem, the present authors chose to study in what ways social movements may use digital technologies considering the dominant relationships between the Global North and South.

When analyzing activism which aims for emancipatory communication, Milan (2013) reconstructs the history of social movements initiated in the twentieth century who advocated the critical and autonomous use of information and communication technologies. She points out that the re-appropriation of this means for the creation of parallel communication's infrastructure enabled activism to take on new paths, hedging the filters of media monopolies and reinforcing non-hegemonic perspectives.

Milan (2013:173) identifies three ideal types of tactics which can be deployed by activists who defend communicative emancipation. The insider repertoires of action legitimize norms and institutions, and therefore seek to cooperate with them to advance their goals according to windows of opportunity, using “tactics like advocacy, lobbying, and campaigning”. On the other hand, outsider repertoires act outside from existing institutions, both for not having access to them and for not legitimizing their existence, and adopt “confrontational strategies and disruptive tactics like rallies, and norm-change tactics, typically campaigning”.

Finally, beyonder repertoires cannot recognize institutional legitimacy and the verticalization of power. By using new practices, they propose novel dynamics which are compatible with the values they believe in, expanding them and projecting other realities from specific technical solutions¹.

According to Bacallao-Pino (2016), some social movements are able to initiate reterritorialization within themselves, as also pointed out by Milan (2013). When building new power relations and territories which are created according to the group’s values, social movements initiate the construction of the society they envision. This is the case of some social movements in Latin America which are studied by Bacallao-Pino (2016), such as the movement of landless rural workers (MST) in Brazil.

In the following section, the methodological path used to answer the research’s question is presented so as to investigate the potential democratizing impact of digital technologies when they are deployed by social movements in the Global South.

Methodological path

In order to describe the tactics used by Ni Una Menos in the movement’s Instagram account, this study used a combination of simple statistical measures, such as average, standard deviation and frequency, and a qualitative analysis of texts, images and sounds collected from the social network of the movement, which characterizes it as a mixed approach research (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). This paper had an inductive approach to interpret data, and aimed to reach a better comprehension of the relation deployed by a social movement and the democratization generated by it, which characterizes the study as descriptive (Gil, 2008).

To understand how a social movement from the Global South can influence the democratization process in their country, the present paper used a case study. Alves-Mazzoti (2006) points out that this is an adequate research strategy for studies which aim to explain a complex phenomenon from the example of a specific and relevant case in view of the study’s goal, which justifies opting for this strategy to the detriment of others.

The selected case was the feminist Argentinian movement organized around the name Ni Una Menos (not one [woman] less – NUM). The case was chosen based on five criteria: (1) being a broad social movement – and not a political party or an NGO – which was active in 2021; (2) being a movement with consistent work and concrete actions; (3) having

¹ Milan (2013) describes how radical techies appropriate digital tools and apply their values and beliefs to the building of infrastructure. Participation and horizontality, for example, are present among groups which create these technologies and reflect on them as well, contesting the status quo with their daily practices as a means to achieve their ideals.

contributed with practical results which could be analyzed in regard to the movement's context; (4) being an active movement since, at least, 2016; and (5) being a movement which was representative of the Global South.

These five criteria were adopted so as to enable the discussion of the impacts and contributions of the use of digital technologies by social movements for democratization in the Global South. Criteria 1 and 4 aimed to measure the social movement's achievements and practical impacts in the reality of the country where they work.

Among the social networks used by the movement, Instagram was the chosen platform to analyze the use of digital technologies by NUM for two main reasons: in comparison with Twitter and Facebook, Instagram is the network where NUM publishes with the highest frequency, and also the one with the largest amount of followers. Instagram is the network with the greater number of publications in important deliberation periods for the movement, which was verified after a test applied between October and December 2020, the months preceding the approval of the law 27.610, which legalized abortion in the country.

In spite of the great international engagement with the name Ni Una Menos, deployed by social movements in Uruguay and Chile, for example, the present authors opted to limit investigations to the profile @_niunamenos_, controlled by the Argentinian movement. Regarding the time frame, a longitudinal cut was made, considering a three-years period between July 1st 2018 to July 1st 2021. This frame was considered as representative of NUM's main claims and achievements since its birth in 2015.

Microsoft Excel was used to organize the data, which was manually collected, allowing for the record of 1170 posts from https://www.instagram.com/_niunamenos_/ in the selected time frame. Since the present authors aimed to analyze NUM's tactics, the posts were classified and grouped in small sets of data, which were called occurrences. Occurrences can be composed of a single post or multiple posts which complement each other. Therefore, a publication which has full meaning by itself will not necessarily be a unitary occurrence, since its meaning can be complemented by other publications which come after the first one.

For example, an occurrence composed of multiple publications may consist of a call for a meeting, the presentation of documents which will be analyzed and speeches by leaders who conducted the event. The full meaning of the call for a protest, as in this case, demands that the user understands the following questions: why to manifest, where, when and how the event will take place. At this point in the analysis, it is unnecessary to know the result stemming from an occurrence.

For the analysis and categorization of the movement's posts, each publication was initially observed as a unity, which allowed for a subsequent categorization in occurrences. Three criteria were used to classify each post: 1. the presence of modalities, 2. quality of communication, and 3. engagement.

The first one considered the presence of modalities according to the model of Rohm, Valuano and Xavier (forthcoming) as an eliminatory criterion, so that posts which didn't have any modalities would not be considered to the analysis. This is due to the decision of only studying tactical actions related to the movement's strategy, placing the others as social spam. The authors have been careful during this phase so as to notice modalities which might not have been identified in the initial development of the model.

Rohm, Valuano and Xavier's (forthcoming) model considers the following modalities:

Table 1: **Modalities**

Modality	Description
Educating	To raise awareness or educate by means of informative campaigns, disseminating information and stimulating debates.
Building the movement's narrative	To inform about the movement, what it is and what it denies.
Building alliances	To promote partnership with organizations which have similar objectives or publicize their activities online.
Solidarity building	To build and strengthen the bond among members by exchanging information, debating about the movement and celebrating their conquests.
Recruiting	To stimulate mobilization with the aim of increasing the base of the movement.
Tactical and Strategic Planning	To plan and organize the progression of internal events which allow the development of the movement's strategy, such as assemblies.
Resources Management	To manage or gather material, informational or financial resources.
Directing events	To convoke and direct events, provide orientations on how to participate, encourage participation and the transmit of information about an ongoing action.
Infrastructure Development	To protect the identity and the security of activists using autonomous digital infrastructure and reliable tools.
Symbolic Pressure	To jeopardize an organization's reputation by coordinating broad criticism towards a specific actor.
Material Pressure	To jeopardize an organization's activities by means of boycotting, taking down websites or leaking evidence of wrongdoing.

Source: Rohm, Valuano and Xavier's (forthcoming)

The second criterion, which observes the quality of communication, is of classificatory type and refers to informativeness as much as to the degree of emotional affectation of the communication carried out by the movement. This criterion classifies the publication as having low, satisfactory or high quality, in order to identify gradations. It was understood that using both informativeness and the degree of emotional affectation was important due to the relationship of complementarity between these two dimensions of the analysis. It was not considered that both criteria should necessarily be of equal quality.

Finally, the third criterion was also of classificatory type, and aimed to observe the attainment of the goal and the effectiveness of the occurrence's affectation. Firstly, the authors analyzed the interquartile distribution of likes so as to better understand the interaction of users with the account, and what represented a large number of likes within this pattern. Secondly, the average of likes of each occurrence was located within this interquartile distribution to determine the level of priority that should be given to the occurrences.

From that, it was possible to define that occurrences with an average of likes equal or inferior to 394 (1st quartile) should have a low priority in the analysis; occurrences with an average of likes between 395 and 1714 (2nd and 3rd quartiles) had medium priority; and occurrences with an average of likes equal or superior to 1715 were prioritized in the analysis.

In order to rank the occurrences, the authors used Table 2 to quantitatively categorize both quantitative and qualitative criteria, establishing “points” to each occurrence. The sum of the points was composed of the amount of apparent modalities, the quality of the communication and the engagement of their posts.

Table 2: Criteria to rank the occurrences

Criteria	High priority (3 points)	Medium priority (2 points)	Low priority (1 point)
1) Apparent modalities (eliminatory)	3 or more modalities	2 modalities	1 modalities
2) Quality of communication (classificatory)	High	Medium	Low
3) Engagement (classificatory)	4th quartile (average of likes equal or superior to 1715)	2nd and 3rd quartiles (average of likes between 395 and 1714)	1st quartile (average of likes equal or inferior to 394)

Source: Authors

Occurrences with a total sum of points between 3 and 4,9 were considered as having low priority to the analysis. Occurrences with 5 to 6,9 points were considered as medium priority, and occurrences with 7 or more points were considered as having a high priority.

To classify the themes of the publications, the authors considered the weight of each theme in a publication: in publications with two themes of equal relevance or weight, the publication was categorized as having themes A/B. In publications with more than one theme, but with a clearly preponderant theme, the preponderant theme was used.

In the following section, the history of the movement Ni Una Menos will be described, and the publications collected from their Instagram account will be analyzed in light of the aforementioned theoretical background.

RESULTS

1 The movement's context

As pointed out by one of NUM's participants, Argentina has a history of feminist struggles in the country which precedes Ni Una Menos. The Encuentro Nacional de Mujeres (ENM, National Women's Encounter), for example, has been carried out annually for over 30 years. Ni Una Menos is seen as an inflexion point and a multiplier of feminism within the Argentinian context (Magnani, 2019).

NUM made its first public appearance on June 3rd 2015, in a protest against the

femicide of the young Chiara Páez. In this year, when the physical manifestations of the movement known as Ni Una Menos started to happen, the collective highlighted the need to combat femicides. From the rise of Ni Una Menos, the number of participants of the ENM jumped from 35.000 in 2014 to 60.000 people in the following year (Magnani, 2019; Rédaccion La tinta, 2020).

In 2016, after the 31st ENM in October 12th, the participants organized a strike and a manifestation which were repressed by police forces. A week later, Ni Una Menos convoked their first strike in solidarity to the participants of the ENM and with the goal of exposing police repression to the pacific feminist manifestation.

2016 was also the first year of Mauricio Macri's presidency of Argentina. He put in place policies considered by NUM as regressive to the people and consequently threatening of the advances conquered in the previous year. Due to this context, the slogan #VivasNosQueremos (We Want Ourselves Alive) started to be used along with the previous one, #NiUnaMenos (Not One [Woman] Less), in addition to demanding accountability from the State and legal abortion in their calls, with the motto "*Basta de femicidios, el Estado es responsable*" (Enough of femicides, the State is responsible) (Rédaccion La tinta, 2020).

In 2017, threats from the Macri government persisted, with attempts to cut funds from the Consejo Nacional de Mujeres (National Women's Council), but so did the movement, which mobilized dozens of organizations and began to demand the legalization of abortion (Rédaccion La tinta, 2020). In the period of 2018 and 2019, NUM went through a change in their demands, and the legalization of abortion became their main goal. In 2019, there is an expansion in the actions and manifestos of the NUM movement, in which issues of sexuality, race, ethnicity, migration and housing are all linked to a strong opposition to the government's neoliberal agenda (Magnani, 2019; Rédaccion La tinta, 2020).

In the context of the Global South, it is worth highlighting Argentina's role in the South American context. NUM's actions spread nationally, besides reverberating across the world, especially in Central and South America. It is possible to notice how movements in Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Peru and Uruguay joined the organization of international mobilizations convoked by Ni Una Menos since 2017, as in La Marcha Mundial de Mujeres (Women's World March).

After the so called Pink Wave, Latin America went through a resurgence of right leaning governments, such as Mauricio Macri's in Argentina. The election of Alberto Fernandez in 2019 signaled a change in this scenario.

2. Presentation and analysis of results

In the present paper, the data gathered from NUM's Instagram were analyzed as sets of data, which were named occurrences, and can be composed of a single post or multiple posts which complement each other. Therefore, a publication which has full meaning by itself will not necessarily be a unitary occurrence, since its meaning can be complemented by other publications.

This study considered 1170 posts grouped in 464 occurrences. Three criteria were used to classify each post: 1. the presence of modalities, 2. quality of communication, and 3. engagement. Based on these criteria, 133 occurrences had high priority and 264 had

medium priority. The remaining 64 occurrences, which had low priority, were excluded from the qualitative analysis carried out in this section.

The occurrences were quantitatively analyzed based on the engagement generated by each publication, according to the criteria of quality of communication, modalities and type of media used. Since the average of publications per occurrence in the complete set of 1170 publications was three publications/occurrence, one set of publications in particular was observed with greater attention: the 10 occurrences which had 4 or more publications and high priority. It was considered that these occurrences have greater relevance for the movement, which invested more time to publish about the same subject.

These 10 occurrences represent 120 publications, which is equivalent to 10.2% of the total publications collected, and they are the most important ones according to the criteria used in this research. When observing how the 10 occurrences are distributed over the three-year period, a balanced distribution became evident, which was interpreted as a satisfactory characteristic of the selected sample.

The analysis of the complete data set was compared to the analysis of the same criteria in the 10 occurrences with high priority and 4 or more publications. When observing the quality of communication in the publications of the complete data set, the authors noticed the following distribution:

Table 3: Quality of communication in the complete data set

Quality	Average Engagement	Standard Deviation	Frequency
High	1.563,18	3.328,19	41,67%
Satisfactory	1.457,01	2.731,43	48,02%
Low	1.572,92	525,74	10,31%

Source: Authors

It can be noted that publications of satisfactory quality occur most frequently, while having the lowest average engagement and high standard deviation. Low quality publications have the lowest frequency and lowest standard deviation, but higher average engagement, which reveals a more consistent average engagement in this type of publication.

Quality doesn't appear to be the determinant factor of engagement, since publications of different qualities have similar average engagement. Standard deviation raises as quality of communication improves, reinforcing this argument.

The disconnect between the higher quality of communication and the engagement generated by higher quality publications demonstrates a possible inadequacy of this network for the purposes necessary for the construction of the movement. However, this is still a space where many people are present and have the opportunity to learn more about the movement, so the movement chooses to be present in this territory in order to seize the opportunity to connect with more individuals.

Table 4 shows the proportion of the use of each type of media in the complete data

set and in the publications which compose the 10 occurrences.

Table 4: Use of each media

	Complete data set	10 occurrences
	Use of each media	Use of each media
Art	33,42%	37,29%
Art and photo	0,09%	-
Photo	41,88%	40,68%
Photo and image	0,17%	-
GIF	0,60%	-
Image	4,70%	2,54%
Video	18,72%	19,49%
Video and photo	0,43%	-

Source: Authors

In regard to the media used in the 10 occurrences set, the authors highlight that none of the 120 publications used combined media (art and photo, photo and image, video and photo), as well as no GIF were deployed. With respect to differences in media use, the proportions hold across all media types, with the exception of arts. In this case, it is possible to note an increase from 33,42% in the complete data set to 37,29% in the 10 occurrences. Therefore, the authors highlight that the use of media did not differ within the set considered as more relevant to this analysis, and does not appear to be related to increase in engagement, quality of communication and number of modalities used.

When observing the frequency of modalities grouped according to the categories of Sensitization, Organization and Stress, the authors observe that they are distributed throughout the complete data set in the same way they are distributed throughout the 10 occurrences. In the complete data set, Sensitization, Organization and Stress modalities represent 43%, 56.6% and 0.3% of publications, respectively. In the 10 occurrences, they represent 43.8%, 55.8% and 0.4% of publications, respectively.

It is noteworthy that the publications presented few stress modalities. On the other hand, NUM carries out face-to-face stress actions with some frequency, in addition to supporting stress actions from other groups. However, as these actions do not occur in the movement's social networks, they were not counted by the present work as pressure publications. Although some publications may have presented reports of stress actions in the streets allied to a pressure action on NUM's Instagram, this was not a common case.

Table 5 shows the distribution and relevance of the themes addressed by the movement in the complete analyzed data set.

Table 5: List of themes and frequency of appearance

Theme	Frequency	Theme	Frequency
Events of the Feminist Movement	14,2%	Matters Related to the Environment	2,2%
Reproductive Rights	12,5%	Inequality and Negligence Related to COVID	1,9%
Gender-Based Violence	10,1%	Public Services	1,9%
Institutionalized Gender-Based Violence	8,0%	Geopolitics	1,5%
Institutionalized Political Violence	7,4%	Communitarian Networks of Solidarity and Care	1,3%
Matters Related to the LGBTQIA+ Community	5,9%	Attacks to Activists	0,9%
Labor Rights	5,8%	Secular State	0,8%
Organization of the Movement	5,4%	Matters Related to Non-White Communities	0,7%
Institutional Politics	5,0%	Matters Related to Feeding and Nutrition	0,6%
Housing	4,0%	Sports	0,5%
Matters Related to Indigenous Peoples	3,2%	Matters Related to Migration	0,4%
Social Debt	3,0%	Political Art	0,3%
Legacy	2,6%		

Source: Authors

It was possible to categorize 25 different themes from the 1170 analyzed publications. Among the publications analyzed, the most prominent themes were Events of the Feminist Movement, Reproductive Rights and Gender-Based Violence. The first refers to publications which portrayed broad meetings of the feminist movement or even strikes whose theme was not so specific, in many cases integrating different organizations, such as the Encuentro Plurinacional de las que Luchan and the Foro Latinoamericano en Porto Alegre. The second refers to publications dealing with issues related to the legalization of abortion and sexual education. The third gathered publications on cases of femicide, transvesticide, transfemicide, and sexual harassment and abuse.

The frequency of appearance of the other themes denotes a breadth and diversity of NUM in which varied guidelines are treated with relevance and in an integrated and complementary way, which was objectively stated by the movement itself in many publications. Just as the movement made no differentiation between, for example, cisgender heterosexual women and those who were not cisgender and/or heterosexual, our classification of gender-based violence reflected that position. The fact that the LGBTQIA+ Issue is not at the top of the list does not mean that lesbian, bisexual, transvestite, transgender, queer, non-binary people are not treated with relevance by the movement. This appears, for example, in the campaign for the legalization of abortion, which used inclusive language to speak about people with the ability to gestate, instead of defending it

only for cisgender women.

The theme of Institutionalized Gender-Based Violence also reveals a part of the movement's strategy, which stands against the injustices committed by the country's judicial system. The movement organizes protests and demonstrations in front of courts on trial days when they consider the trial unfair, in order to press for a feminist judicial reform which does not reinforce the injustices which currently disadvantage cisgender, transgender, transvestite women and non-binary people. Such injustices range from inaction in the face of the disappearance of cisgender, transgender, transvestite women and non-binary people to the – sometimes illegal – eviction of women and their families.

The integration of different themes is shown in the explanation of the violence present in practices which are treated as natural and that, for the movement, should be discussed and debated so as to be eradicated. A large amount of publications mentioned more than one topic, which led the present authors to take the methodological decision to consider only the most apparent one as the official topic of a publication. The authors considered that a publication had more than one topic only when two or more topics had similar weights for the publication, which occurred in 10.7% of the cases.

3. The activist use of Instagram by Ni Una Menos

To deepen the understanding of what are the means used by NUM to seek the promotion of democratization through the use of Instagram, the 10 occurrences already highlighted were also analyzed in the light of the instrumental freedoms described by Sen (2000).

It is important to point out that NUM places great relevance in street action, which can be perceived in their Instagram publications. Face-to-face assemblies, protests, mobilizations and cultural events are frequently depicted in their posts, and social media is used to invite potential participants and inform of past events to those who could not attend. According to Milan (2013: 173), this places NUM closer to the insider tactics. Their use of the media is closer to capillarized communication than to mass communication. The movement also adopts "*a cooperative attitude towards institutions*", and places high importance in legal gains, such as the approval of laws. Additionally, NUM uses "*open policy windows to advance their demands*". Milan's theory frames these attitudes and decisions as insider tactics, since the movement recognizes the legitimacy of existing institutions to assist them in advancing their goals.

Regarding the 10 occurrence set, three of them were related to the struggle for legalization of abortion in Argentina. During the years of campaigning for the approval of this law, NUM has framed this as a matter of public health due to all of the deaths linked to the many clandestine abortions made in the country, instead of a choice that should be related to moral or individual principles. Most importantly, NUM has not only fought for the approval of law 27.610, but also organized a network of doctors and nurses who were willing to perform the procedure in people who needed it, and displayed this list of names and hospitals in their online platforms. Face-to-face protests, assemblies and events were allied to calls for actions, displays of past events and conscientization posts in their Instagram account.

According to Sen (2000), these actions can be interpreted as a way of increasing access to rights related to basic health services, which is classified as a social opportunity. They

can also be seen as an increase in transparency guarantees, since it shows transparency from others and promotes access to information of public interest.

According to the report released by the Argentine government, the number of public health officials who performed voluntary terminations of pregnancy grew around 60% from 2020 to 2022. This points to the growing reliability of performing this procedure, as much as the continuous studies being carried on by the Health Ministry of Argentina to understand which procedures and medicines are safer (Isla, Zárate and Papadópolos, 2022). The Ministry has also accompanied reports of health employees who refused to perform the voluntary terminations of pregnancy and capacitated 2.434 professionals to handle these cases.

Four of the 10 occurrences were related to the organization of events in which NUM would participate or was organizing: one national encounter, one event on March 8th (International Women's Day), one convocation for the 4^o international women's strike and one day of the annual protest organized by NUM to mark the movement's anniversary. Events linked to basic feminist demands, such as the decrease in femicides, are commonly done by NUM, which is directly connected to the numbers of violence in the country. Even with growing investments by the government, the cases of murder will not decrease in Argentina over the last 14 years (Crucianelli and Ruiz, 2023). These demands are connected to protective security, since NUM struggles for the avoidance of abject deaths, not because of situations of extreme hunger and unemployment, as exemplified by Sen, but because of the right of women to remain alive and safe from extreme sexist violence (Sen, 2000).

Another two occurrences were linked to international matters, in this case, the election of Jair Bolsonaro for the presidency of Brazil. As the fourth most populous country in Latin America, the third largest GDP in the region and the second largest territory, Argentina has an important influence in the subcontinent's economic and political matters. Aware of that and of the potential for a new "pink wave", NUM organized the "*Argentina Rechaza Bolsonaro*" campaign after the Brazilian elections in 2018, showing mass events which generate pressure and the possibility of criticism against the president of Brazil and Argentina at the time. This was due to the promotion of a program of anti-democratic, neoliberal ideals which manifested values of religious fundamentalism in the Brazilian campaign. NUM also supported the "Ele Não" (Not Him) campaign in Brazil, which was happening right before the elections, through social media and in face-to-face events.

The actions promoted political freedom, as they were connected to participation in public debate and the election of representatives, in Brazil as much as in Argentina. Both countries are highly important to Latin America politics, and promoting the expansion of freedoms in the region's biggest and most populous country generates effects for all of the neighboring nations. The online side of the campaign involved the publication of a photo showing posters used in the events, a plaque of the former Brazilian councilor Marielle Franco, murdered in 2018, and many people gathered for the protest.

Finally, one of the occurrences focused on problems related to work, and specifically requested the approval of a law which guarantees a labor quota for transgender people. According to the Association of Transvestites, Transsexual and Transgender People of Argentina (ATTTA), "90% of trans people are not in the formal job market and almost 95% are in extreme marginalized prostitution situations" (Agencia AFP, 2020). Since unfair working conditions and unemployment affect transgender people with a higher intensity, NUM defends more access to formal jobs, better wages and shorter working hours, placing

a firm opposition to the current insecure working conditions of many people in Argentina.

In this case, NUM promotes protective security, as they demand that the government ensures minimal dignity conditions and meets the necessities of people in situations of extreme unemployment, as is the case of the transgender population. It also claims for more economic facilities, which means adequate conditions to consumption, production or trade of goods among individuals or private entities.

Additionally, Santos' (2016) note regarding the incompatibility between capitalism and the effective democratization of social rights is evident in these cases in which social rights don't generate apparent short-term profitability and are therefore seen as irrelevant. The astonishingly high levels of unemployment have probably remained for decades until the quota law was passed, in mid-2021, demanding that the State takes action in face of this urgent social demand.

NUM's perspective and strategy embodies the promotion of contradictory projects and understandings and the construction of territories pointed out by Halvorsen (2018). In the case of Operación Araña (Operation Spider), NUM found a creative way to occupy spaces usually used for other activities – subway stations. In this action, a space which is usually seen as more neutral, where many people meet during transit, was occupied by activists who sang, carried posters, and dressed all in green, in an effort to raise awareness to the importance of legalizing abortion on the country.

Some of their actions, however, were potentialized by social media, such as the singing of songs and a prayer, both created especially for the event². Considering the noise produced by the moving trains and people's conversations, such face-to-face performances could not reach such large audiences. When transported into a video, on the other hand, they can be more clearly listened to, which facilitates the comprehension of their message and their reach. This way, the occupation of territories happens both in the digital and the presential realms, although with different functions.

NUM builds new relationships which manifest the construction of the reality desired by the movement, congregating marginalized communities to the imagination and construction of territories that will later be built outside the limits of social movements (Bacallao-Pino, 2016). For that, they integrate face-to-face events and social media publications, expanding their reach so that different groups of people can be informed of their happening and consider participating in following events.

As previously pointed out, NUM's Instagram's most used media are photos. This is accompanied by objective and realistic messages, which show the reality of what the movement's participants see and hear from their daily lives in Argentina. This way of displaying information reveals a positioning of the movement in regard to their communications, pursuant of showing their followers multiple realities, which cannot be accessed by regular people who do not transit in so many territories as these activists.

Such construction also occurs, for example, in events such as the Plurinational Meetings of Women, Lesbians and Trans, which are opened for the vocalization of demands and the search for short, medium and long-term solutions to social problems. The event name itself – previously called “National Meeting of Women” – was modified according

² Available at <https://www.instagram.com/p/CHaVGYkgRPA/?next=%2F> and <https://www.instagram.com/p/BmJPttUBDp6/?next=%2F>, respectively. Accessed 01/03/2023.

to the demands of other groups in society that pressed for the inclusion of their political projects for Argentinian territories. In this way, the contradictions of the Meeting were perceived and added to the event, besides being clearly shared by NUM in their Instagram posts, using photos and videos to explain such a change.

Over time, the broadening of NUM's perspective can be seen in the movement's publications, manifestos, in events – such as Interrupciones Feministas (Feminist Interruptions), educational videos on different topics, videos of face-to-face assemblies, etc. This broadening of their perspective can be perceived in the movement's tactics and actions, as well as in their Instagram account.

NUM openly bring forward on their publications the claims debated in events in which they participate, and later promote new events that have already incorporated these suggestions and reveal the change in the group's tactics according to the different voices that form it.

By observing the use of Instagram by NUM, it was possible to perceive that it is not a strictly digital movement, but one with a constant presence in physical spaces which invests in creating exchanges with other organizations, and uses digital networks to enhance them.

Although the slogan Ni Una Menos is recent, the feminist movement in Argentina and Latin America is fairly old, and NUM is just a current exponent of it. The history of social movements in Argentina is of great weight for NUM, which derives, in part, from the organization of the Madres de Plaza de Mayo. Ni Una Menos is responsible for carrying the legacy of these mothers who achieved great results with many years of their struggle for justice.

Final Considerations

According to the information gathered by the present work, it was possible to observe some characteristics of Ni Una Menos. The complete data set of NUM publications was initially classified according to the criteria of communication quality, engagement and use of modalities. Subsequently, these criteria were used to generate a classification of the occurrences, categorizing them as having a higher or lower priority for the analysis.

The type of media used with the higher frequency by the movement are photos, followed by arts and videos, a picture that does not change in the set of 10 occurrences with the highest quality of publications, engagement and quantity of modalities used. Within these 10 occurrences, the arts were most used in general. Sensitization modalities used more photos, while Organization and Stress modalities used arts more frequently. The Organization modalities are the most frequently used, followed by Sensitization modalities.

Entering the analysis in the light of the instrumental freedoms proposed by Sen (2000) in the 10 occurrences set, it was possible to observe the promotion of all 5 freedoms by Ni Una Menos in different degrees. While political freedoms were promoted in all of the occurrences, economic freedoms were promoted in only two.

The analysis of the 10 selected occurrences reveals a wide range of tactics and demands posed by the movement in different ways, demonstrating ways in which democratization can be promoted by social movements by means of social networks, as a tool to maximize the scope of these changes and their impact on individual freedoms.

The 10 occurrences are representative of the 3 years studied in this work, and, based on the analysis made from Sen's theory (2000), the results found in this set can be extended to the actions of the NUM in general. The focus on some freedoms and not others may be strategic, or it may be due to the fact that, on Instagram, it is more productive to work with the promotion of these rather than other individual freedoms. There is a prioritization of some freedoms to the detriment of others, but that does not mean that the expansion of other freedoms is not sought by the movement in different spaces.

Considering the limitations intrinsic to the most used social media websites – which are controlled by Big Techs –, NUM creates their own strategy to use Instagram and reterritorialize it. As the movement's leaders are aware of the importance of their Instagram followers, they make an effort to use it in the best way possible to keep them interested in the movement's updates. The present authors point out, however, that this use may impact the reach of their publications, since the content of their posts is not always aligned to what Instagram's algorithm usually suggests.

It is also worth noting that Big Tech tools are not favorable to the demands of the Global South, since they are constantly attempting to influence other cultures and create new territories on top of existing ones (Halvorsen, 2018; Zuboff, 2018). From this perspective, it is strategic that NUM do not use social networks as the main territory of action, but rather put a strong emphasis on the action of the streets. Since this work did not use interviews with the leaders of the movement, the authors cannot state that this is the motivation for their choice. However, NUM's actions reflect the consciousness that meeting people face-to-face is an important tool for the discussions which create new territories, and for the creation of territories itself.

The movement also make an intense use of their Instagram account to show their own perspective over the problems and solutions encountered by activists, creating their narrative of the events and allowing this narrative to be more widely spread, which is more easily done by social media than by physical means. As discussed by Malin and Soares de Freitas (2018), digital technologies have the potential to reduce the degree of participatory democracy, since tools such as bots and fake news are used to manipulate public debate and public opinion. This manipulation also affects social movements, which did not have as great a power to build their own narrative as they have today, with social media.

Besides, the echo chambers created in social media difficult debates around some themes, such as the legalization of abortion. Digital illiteracy also has a role in hindering public debate, and it may prevent people from accessing relevant information. In 2020, NUM took a part in the presidential campaign that elected Alberto Fernández, playing their part in opposing these manipulative tactics by using social media in integration with face-to-face tactics.

A limitation of the present research was its focus on only one social network used by the movement. This eliminates the possibility of actions carried out by e-mail, in person, or in other channels used by the movement being perceived. Therefore, only one part of the movement's action repertoire was perceived: the part which made use of Instagram. Stories were not a part of the analysis, which has an impact on the information considered as a part of the dataset. An automated extraction of data would also be of importance to collect more information, in case other researchers wish to further study the Instagram accounts of other social movements.

Additionally, this work only considered one possible use of social networks to increase democratization in a country. This might be extended to other social movements, but is certainly not applicable to all of these groups, especially considering the important differences among their courses of action and the context in which they exist.

Different measures of engagement can also be used to gauge the interaction between an Instagram page and their audience: visualization of videos, comments and visualization of stories. However, in order to standardize the analysis, the present authors chose to work with likes, since this is a measure applicable to all types of media. The analysis of comments, on the other hand, might imply in a qualitative, and not only quantitative analysis, which was not the option selected for this work, especially due to the restrictions of manual collection and treatment of data.

Furthermore, the authors did not have any direct contact with activists of the movement (through interviews, for example), which could have clarified specific questions and the lack of some pieces of information. The present authors suggest that, in future studies, these issues are taken into consideration in order to delve more into the strategies which guide the choices behind the movement's plans to digital territories.

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