

**Journalism and Its Shifting Roles in Online Social Movements: Examining Press
Coverage of Femicides in Mexico on Twitter**

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and submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Digital Innovation in Journalism Studies complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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Abstract

Journalism and Its Shifting Roles in Online Social Movements: Examining Press Coverage of Femicides in Mexico on Twitter

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Social media platforms have opened new doors for feminist movements to publicly address social issues, such as harassment, sexual assault, rape, femicides, and other forms of gender violence. At the same time, news media actors have adopted and adapted the use of social platforms when covering public affairs in general. In this digital journalism research project, I explore how Mexican news media outlets covered issues related to gender violence and femicides during International Women's Day 2022 on Twitter by analyzing content associated with specific hashtags.

To answer this question, I first pursued a thematic analysis of tweets from mainstream news media that used the hashtags *#8M*, *#8Marzo2022*, and *#DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer*, to understand the coverage's content and main narratives more closely. Secondly, I reflected on the findings of this thematic analysis through the lens of Hanitzsch and Vos' 2018 work on the 18 roles of journalism in political life. In this sense, this study also aims to expand on Hanitzsch and Vos theoretical framework to offer a reviewed approach that is more flexible and applicable to analyzing news coverage on social media in the face of current social movements.

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Introduction

“The primary purpose of journalism is to provide citizens with the information they need to be free and self-governing.”
– Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel¹

Every International Women’s Day, thousands of Mexican women unite to express their anger and defiance against femicides: *“Cantamos sin miedo, pedimos justicia, gritamos por cada desaparecida, que resuene fuerte ‘¡nos queremos vivas!’ que caiga con fuerza el feminicida...”* (Tweet video: 00:24 – 00:39).²

Figure 2. QR code Alex Ramblas



Source: [Twitter](#), 2023.³

From the Alhóndiga square, thousands of women loudly sing "Canción sin miedo" #Marcha8M

Figure 1. Alex Ramblas tweet



In sync with feminist movements worldwide, women in Mexico have gained more strength in different public spaces to encourage a new wave of social demands focused on the battle against gender violence.

¹ Kovach and Rosenstiel, “What is Journalism For”, The Elements of Journalism, Chapter 1, 2007, pp. 11-12.

² Translation: “We sang without fear, we ask for justice, we shout for each disappeared woman, let it tremble ‘we want us alive,’ and let the femicide fall hard...”: In Vivir Quintana “Canción sin miedo” (Song Without Fear), Universal Music México, 2020.

³ Alex Ramblas (@alexramblasr), Desde la explanada de la Alhóndiga, miles de mujeres entonaron con fuerza “Canción sin miedo”, *Twitter*, March 2023, 1 <https://twitter.com/alexramblasr/status/1633632225655652353>, consulted on April 30, 2023.

They now use digital platforms, such as social media, to amplify their voices, protest, and tell their stories. In this sense, different actors, including journalists, have begun using digital social platforms, finding new and innovative ways to communicate with certain sectors of society, and encouraging them to be on top of current events and consume information faster than ever before.

News production and consumption have changed at a lightning-fast pace over the last few decades, and journalism has evolved again to develop another face: digital journalism, for which several definitions exist. For example, Silvio Waisbord analyzed the meeting point between *digital* and *journalism*: “*digital as networked social action, and journalism as the reportage of news and information. Digital journalism is the networked production, distribution, and consumption of news and information about public affairs.*”⁴ So, journalists working in this field have opened new opportunities for people and online users to access and engage with news, public affairs, and social movements—such as the global #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter movements, from digital spaces.

There is constantly a great demand for new information on digital platforms. When an event becomes a *trending topic*, social media users pay more attention quickly; by doing so, we keep feeding the trend. For example, in Mexico, a country where more than 10 women are murdered every day,⁵ the public frequently learns about cases of femicide through trending stories and topics on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social media platforms. At the same time, people take the opportunity to raise awareness and tell their own stories about misogyny, harassment, sexual assaults, rape, and other forms of gender violence. They share their testimonies through hashtags and keywords, such as #MeToo, #Femicide, #JusticeFor[victim’s name], and many more.

⁴ Silvio Waisbord, “The 5Ws and 1H of Digital Journalism,” *Digital Journalism*, vol.7, No.3, p.352.

⁵ Beatriz Guillén, “Radiografía de un país que mata a sus mujeres: 17.776 asesinadas en cinco años,” *El País*, November 2022, <https://elpais.com/mexico/2022-11-25/radiografia-de-un-pais-que-mata-a-sus-mujeres-17776-asesinadas-en-cinco-anos.html#:~:text=Son%2017.776%20asesinadas%20desde%202018,lo%20largo%20de%20su%20vida.,> consulted on February, 2023.

Femicides—“the killing of women and girls because of their gender”⁶—are one of the most brutal manifestations of gender violence. According to the most recent available data compiled by the United Nations, there were around 81,000 victims of femicides worldwide in 2021.⁷ Though a global crisis, it is understood and confronted differently in every society. Mexico, for example, has been considered one of the most dangerous countries for women,⁸ and in 2021 the federal government registered 977 cases of femicide.⁹ However, news media sources (local¹⁰ and foreign¹¹) showcased an even worse scenario for Mexico, collectively reporting 1,004 femicides that same year.¹²

Each case is more than just a number, as they represent a life of a murdered woman. As the numbers rise, more organized groups are looking for new spaces to denounce gender violence: some of the most predominant slogans in Mexico to denounce femicides, particularly on digital platforms, are *#NiUnaMás* (Not one [woman] more) and *#NiUnaMenos* (Not one [woman] less), both highlighting people’s mindset of zero tolerance for another femicide case. As this crisis continues, it becomes even more critical that everyone can access helpful information and knowledge about the subject. Social media has become a recurring source for many people to access this information.

⁶ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Symposium on Femicide: a Global Issue that Demands Action!*, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/ngos/DCN5-Symposium-on-femicide-a-global-issue-that-demands-action.html>, consulted on Sep. 8, 2022.

⁷ United Nations, “Press release: Women and girls are more at risk to be killed at home, new UNODC and UN Women report on femicide shows,” *UN Women*, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/press-release/2022/11/press-release-women-and-girls-are-more-at-risk-to-be-killed-at-home-new-unodc-and-un-women-report-on-femicide-shows>, consulted on April 30, 2023.

⁸ World Population Review (WPR), *Most Dangerous Countries for Women 2022*, *WPR*, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/most-dangerous-countries-for-women>, consulted on Sep. 9, 2022.

⁹ Secretaría de Seguridad y Protección Ciudadana, *Información sobre violencia contra las mujeres*, Feb. 2022, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xH44QYX7latXz57Zx3CDfsPSICOVfeaM/view>, consulted on Sep. 12, 2022.

¹⁰ *El Financiero*, “Feminicidios en México: 2021 es el año más violento contra las mujeres,” *El Financiero* (nacional), January 20, 2022, <https://www.elfinanciero.com.mx/nacional/2022/01/20/feminicidios-en-mexico-2021-es-el-ano-mas-violento-contra-las-mujeres/>, consulted on Sept. 8, 2022. (Text in Spanish).

¹¹ Kylie Madry, “Murders in Mexico fall 3.6% in 2021, but femicides rise,” *Reuters* (world), January 21, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/murders-mexico-fall-3-6-2021-femicides-rise-2022-01-20/>, consulted on Sept. 8, 2022.

¹² Forbes staff, “Ola de feminicidios en México continúa imparable: 1,004 muertes en 2021,” *Forbes México*, January 21, 2022, <https://www.forbes.com.mx/noticias-ola-de-feminicidios-en-mexico-continua-imparable-con-1004-muertes-en-2021/>, consulted on Sep. 9, 2022.

Several breaking points in Mexico have led the feminist movement to take the spotlight in public affairs: on January 6, 2011, longtime activist Susana Chavez was found dead on a street in Chihuahua City. She was raped, and her body was mutilated. While activists considered she was a victim of femicide, local authorities concluded it was a homicide.¹³ Chavez, a well-known spokeswoman of the feminist movement in the northern part of the country, often used the slogan “*ni una muerta más, ni una menos*” in her speeches to demand justice for victims and their families. After she was murdered, the use of the hashtags #NiUnaMás and #NiUnaMenos to denounce femicides became stronger.¹⁴ And so, more femicide cases came into light, and more women took to the streets to protest.

Furthermore, we keep seeing such stories about femicides every year, especially around symbolic dates marking women's historic fight for their rights, such as International Women's Day.¹⁵ As the timeline across Figures 3 to 11 below shows, for several years, people have been posting online their stories and experiences about gender violence, demanding justice for the victims, asking for help to find their families, or spreading messages of solidarity and sorority in the face of this problem in the country:

¹³ Alberto Nájar, “A Susana Chávez la mataron por ser mujer,” *BBC Mundo*, https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2011/01/110112_mexico_juarez_susana_chavez_an, consulted on January 17, 2023.

¹⁴ La cadera de Eva, “El origen del movimiento “Ni una más”, La cadera de Eva, <https://lasillarota.com/la-cadera-de-eva/2022/3/16/el-origen-del-movimiento-ni-una-mas--361802.html>, consulted on November 24, 2022.

¹⁵ On March 8, 1917, Russian women organized the “Bread and Peace” strike, after which they obtained the right to vote. Years after, the UN continued to commemorate on that same day women’s efforts to ensure gender equality and other issues. In: United Nations, “International Women’s Day on March 8,” <https://www.un.org/en/observances/womens-day/background>, consulted on November 23, 2022.

2019¹⁶

Figure 3. QR code lizbeth



Thousands of women in the Zócalo of Mexico City protest against femicides, kidnappings of women and the macho violence throughout the country. #VivasNosQueremos #UnidasNosMantenemosVivas #NiUnaMás #AlertaMujeresMx

Figure 4. lizbeth tweet



2020¹⁷

Figure 6. AJ+Español tweet



Figure 5. QR code A+J Español



They killed my daughter!

Whoever wants to break, go and break! Whoever wants to burn, go and burn, and if you don't want to do it, then get out of the way! This is the voice of Yesenia Zamudio, mother of María de Jesús Jaime Zamudio, a victim of femicide.

¹⁶ Lizbeth (@abismada_), "Miles de mujeres en el Zócalo de la Ciudad de México protestan contra los feminicidios, los secuestros de mujeres y la violencia en el país. #VivasNosQueremos #UnidasNosMantenemosVivas #NiUnaMás #AlertaMujeresMx," Twitter, February 2019, https://twitter.com/abismada_/status/1091842716147900416, consulted on May 3, 2023.

¹⁷ AJ+Español (@ajplusespanol), "La que quiera romper, ¡que rompa! La que quiera quemar, que queme y la que no, ¡que no nos estorbe!" Esta es la voz de Yesenia Zamudio, madre de María de Jesús Jaime Zamudio, víctima de femicidio," Twitter, February, 2020, <https://twitter.com/ajplusespanol/status/123055279105769472?lang=es>, consulted on May 3, 2023.

Video translation: “And if I burn, break, and destroy this city, what’s your fucking problem? They killed my daughter (...) I do not need a political party to represent me, I represent myself (...) I have every right to burn and break, I am not going to ask anyone’s permission because I am doing this for my daughter (...) We have already broken the silence, and we are not going to allow anyone to make a circus out of our pain (...) and if someone wants to speak, speak for all of them, all the women that are violated and harassed by public servants...”

2021¹⁸

Figure 8. QR code Anai Tirado



These are the photos I took of each of the painted fences in front of the National Palace. There are 132 images with the names of victims of femicides. Let everyone read them. @antimonumenta #8M #8M2021 #vivasnosqueremos #niunamenos #collaagefotografico

Figure 7. Anai Tirado tweet

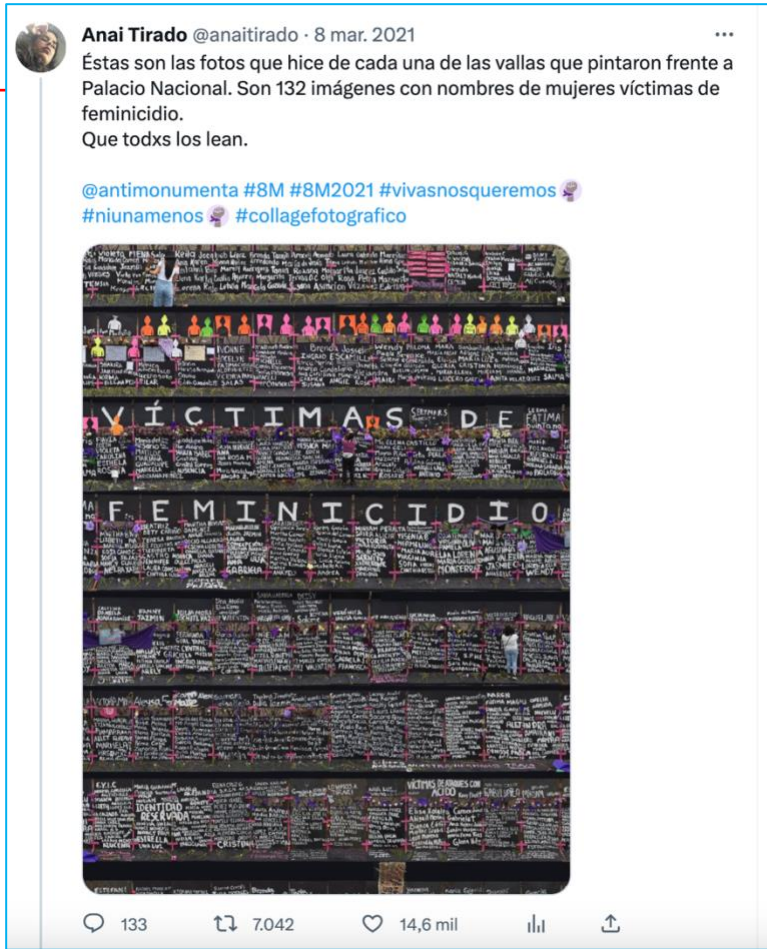
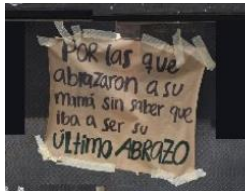


Figure 9. Anai Tirado tweet image



“For those who hugged their mothers without knowing it was going to be their last”

¹⁸ Anai Tirado (@anaitirado), “Éstas son las fotos que hice de cada una de las vallas que pintaron frente a Palacio Nacional. Son 132 imágenes con nombres de mujeres víctimas de feminicidio. Que todxs los lean. @antimonumenta #8M #8M2021 #vivasnosqueremos #niunamenos #collaagefotografico,” Twitter, March, 2021, <https://twitter.com/anaitirado/status/1369016669402718209>, consulted on April 30, 2023.

2022¹⁹

Figure 11. QR code Ivan Zaragoza

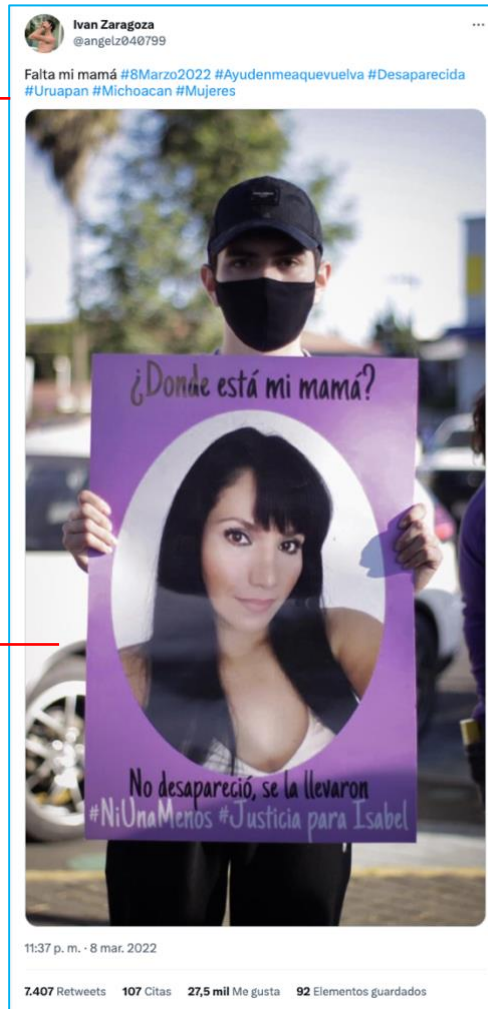


My mother is missing #8Marzo2022 #Ayudenmeaquevuelva #Desapaarecida #Uruapan #Michoacan #Mujeres

Where is my mother?
She did not disappear, she was taken #NiUnaMenos #Justicia para Isabel

...

Figure 10. Ivan Zaragoza tweet



This research explores the intersections of digital journalism, social media, and social movements against gender violence in Mexico. To clarify how these three research areas overlap in this project, in what follows I use the well-known “five Ws and one H” of journalism:²⁰ *who, what, where, when, why* and *how*:

¹⁹ Ivan Zaragoza (@angelz040799), “Falta mi mamá #8Marzo2022 #Ayudenmeaquevuelva #Desapaarecida #Uruapan #Michoacan #Mujeres,” Twitter, March, 2022, <https://twitter.com/angelz040799/status/1501416902278762501>, consulted on May 1, 2023.

²⁰ In particular, I leaned towards Waisbord’s model of digital journalism: Silvio Waisbord, “The 5Ws and 1H of Digital Journalism,” *Digital Journalism*, vol. 7, No. 3, 2019, pp. 351 – 358 (Henceforward, “The 5Ws and 1H”).

Who? To set the study's limits, I decided to concentrate on the Twitter accounts of the top mainstream news media outlets in Mexico: *El Universal News Online*, *TV Azteca News Online*, *Uno TV News Online*, *Televisa News Online*, and *Aristegui News*. The selection criteria are explained in Chapter Two.

What? I analyzed the outlets' coverage on Twitter about gender violence and femicides in the country. Particularly, I centered my efforts on answering the following question: how did Mexican news media outlets cover issues related to gender violence and femicides associated with specific hashtags during International Women's Day 2022?

Where? As a Mexican journalist, I feel I have a natural responsibility to help my country by raising awareness of such an important and serious public issue. By focusing on social media data, I was interested in analyzing the stories from Mexico as narrated through a digital lens.

When? International Women's Day represents a symbol for feminist movements every year, as it motivates different social groups to focus their efforts on gender-related causes and, for better or worse, encourages everyone to engage with such matters. In the case of Mexico, this event's agenda has shifted from decade to decade. It has focused on many different causes, including maternity rights in the 1970s and labor rights in the 1980s, to sexual and reproductive rights and guarantees in the 1990s. Since the beginning of the 21st century, the movement has focused on the battle against gender violence.²¹ With this in mind, it made sense for me to center this study around this event. However, the timeframe was one of the most challenging aspects to consider for the limits of my research. As data on social media is constantly updated, it was fundamental to set a period to obtain relevant and substantial information related to my research question, while also keeping the feasibility of this project in mind. As such, I chose a short period—the week of March 6 to 13, 2022, to focus on the coverage of International Women's Day.

²¹ Lucía Álvarez Enríquez, "El movimiento feminista en México en el siglo XXI: juventud, radicalidad y violencia", ²¹ *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales*, UNAM, No. 240 (Sep-Dic. 2020), p. 157.

Why? I expect that this research will contribute to opening new doors for innovative strategies on how to study social phenomena on Twitter by using public data from the platform. A general question that drives my interests is, how can we incorporate hashtags, tweets, likes, comments, and other interactions (retweets and shares) into research on journalism to establish patterns and tendencies that can help strengthen the discipline from a practical and theoretical level. Also, my findings could serve to dig deeper into the understanding of the primary purposes of journalism today. I hope this research will encourage others to keep debating and proposing further studies on these matters, especially in the digital sphere. Finally, as an international journalist myself, I hope that this research will transcend borders to be read by Latino audiences as much as Canadian ones, and to promote a healthy debate about matters that affect us to encourage solutions and courses of action for social problems, such as gender violence.

How? This research was conducted using a qualitative thematic analysis of tweets supported by a quantitative process of data scraping from Twitter, which I explain in detail in Chapter Two. Once I identified the narratives about gender violence news media sources presented on social media, I reflected on the kinds of work they did through Hanitzsch and Vos' framework of the 18 roles of journalism in political life and literature related to digital journalism. In addition, throughout some of this thesis' chapters, I included tweet examples accessible through QR codes, as I intend to encourage readers to engage with the data itself – when possible, as this requires having a mobile device and access to an internet connection. In line with my goal of encouraging further discussion, my hope is that readers will see the actual tweets themselves while considering my interpretations of them. Finally, even when the tweet contents are entirely in Spanish, I provide an English translation of what I consider the most critical aspects of each example.

This research is divided into four chapters and a brief section for final considerations. In Chapter One, *Literature Review and Theoretical Framework*, I explore some of the most significant academic and journalistic studies concerning the different angles of this research: understandings of digital journalism, social media and their relations to digital activism and roles in social movements. In particular, I pay attention to the

development of feminist movements through digital platforms worldwide focusing on gender violence. Then, I transition to the Mexican case to highlight how journalists have covered this issue on social media. Additionally, I also include the theoretical approaches to journalism that served as the guidelines of this research, namely Murthy Dhiraj's vision of Twitter as a news environment, and a space where users get news on demand whenever they feel like it, and Hanitzsch and Vos' theory of the 18 roles of journalism in society.

In Chapter Two, *Method: a step-by-step guide for a thematic analysis of tweets*, I explain this research's methodological approach. This chapter explains the processes I followed to obtain the core data for my social media experiment, which involved learning the basics of coding with Python and using Twitter credentials to access the information I needed. Additionally, this chapter describes each phase of the thematic analysis I pursued to find the main narratives the news media outlets focused on in their coverage through tweets.

In Chapter Three, *News media coverage on Twitter of gender violence and femicide*, I put into practice the thematic analysis, which involved the study of more than 400 tweets to find the themes – or patterns and trends – I identified to better understand how the news media outlets covered issues related to gender violence and femicides on Twitter during the context of International Women's Day in Mexico in 2022.

In Chapter Four, *Journalism's changing roles on social media coverage*, I reflect on how the themes can be understood from a theoretical perspective: do they fit into any of the roles defined by Hanitzsch and Vos? By doing so, this chapter seeks to answer my main research question by connecting the dots between the thematic analysis and theoretical literature reviewed in the first three chapters.

The conclusion of this research proposes some alternatives for how news media outlets and journalists might cover socio-political issues on Twitter. From a theoretical perspective, this chapter also seeks to expand on Hanitzsch and Vos' framework to offer a reviewed approach that is more flexible and applicable to analyzing news coverage on social media in the face of current social movements.

Finally, as an ethical disclaimer, I consider it relevant to clarify that the complete data set included in this study comes from public information available on Twitter. In that sense, I did not participate in or directly engage with any of the examples of personal stories, testimonies, and people I highlighted throughout the research. Additionally, even though the data is public and free, I do not intend to promote or encourage any derogatory behavior or backlash, such as harassment or public shame, against the Twitter users that have engaged with the tweets included in this research.

Chapter one: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This research is situated at the intersections of social media, social movements, and digital journalism studies, focusing on how they cover gender violence. A goal of this research is for it to become part of a broader conversation, and to open and encourage new opportunities for analytical debates from different angles. This chapter reviews relevant literature related to my research. In the first part, I review studies about the rise and understanding of digital journalism and how it is used to cover social movements online. Next, I explore the relationship between feminist movements and digital activism, followed by social media studies focused on gender violence in Mexico. Thus, in this review I categorized the literature into four sections: 1) social movements and digital activism, 2) digital activism and feminism, 3) gender violence in Mexico, and 4) hashtag feminist activism in Mexico.

Finally, in the second part of this chapter, I explain the main theoretical concepts that guide my reflections on this project's main research question: how did Mexican news media outlets cover issues related to gender violence and femicides on Twitter, associated with specific hashtags, during International Women's Day 2022?

1. Literature review

a. *Social movements and digital activism*

As my research focuses on journalism coverage in digital spaces, *Interactive Journalism* by **Nikki Usher**²² is an important text to consider. It focuses on how journalism and technology have found new ways to shape the production of news. Usher argues that, thanks to new journalistic skills and specialties—including hacker, programmer, and data journalists—digital and interactive journalism have evolved to reach broader publics in

²² Nikki Usher, *Interactive Journalism: Hackers, Data, and Code*, Illinois, University of Illinois Press, 2016. (Henceforward, *Interactive journalism*).

more formats and across more platforms. Similarly, **Silvio Waisbord**, in “The 5Ws and 1H of Digital Journalism”²³ explores what it is like to cover news on digital platforms with new online technologies. He reflects on how the discipline has adapted to always be “on call” and ready to produce content all day, every day. Waisbord also observes how digital journalism has opened itself to the inclusion of more actors to produce journalistic pieces in innovative formats, such as blogging and social media. He highlights the rise of mobile devices as one of the main tools to consume news on demand. Waisbord acknowledges a new role for citizens in the production of the news: they are no longer passive actors waiting for professional journalists to process and digest current events for them; rather, citizens are taking more control of those roles, too, by producing and sharing news through different means and platforms like social media. For example, in one part, Waisbord remarks how certain marketing firms, government agencies, or even non-profit organizations and other digital actors have developed strategies and agreements with social media corporations to overflow their users with a mix of news and advertisement content. On the other hand, some professional journalists have begun collaborating more with citizens – using what they shared, recorded, or published on their social media – to build their stories.²⁴

As digital journalism keeps evolving, the coverage of significant current events becomes more complex. For example, how do we understand social movements and digital activism? **George and Leidner**²⁵ describe social movements as “*beliefs and thoughts held within a population regarding how their institutional structures might change*,”²⁶ while digital activism is “*social activism mediated through digital technologies to promote social movements*.”²⁷ The scholars dissect diverse activities that fit into these definitions: from how and why people and organizations promote “likes and follows” on social media (clicktivism/slacktivism), to

²³ Silvio Waisbord, “The 5Ws and 1H, pp.351 – 358.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 353.

²⁵ George, J. J., & Leidner, D. E., From clicktivism to hacktivism: understanding digital activism. *Information and Organization*, 2019. (Henceforward, “From clicktivism to hacktivism”).

²⁶ Ibid, p.3

²⁷ Ibid, p.4

how and why they code to steal, disrupt, expose, and change sensitive information from political actors (hacktivism) in specific contexts. In between, George and Leidner describe the pros and cons, the virtues and biases, and the radicalized forms of digital activism. Through digital activism, commonly marginalized actors have begun to expand their voices and express their demands on certain sociopolitical issues to different audiences beyond physical barriers.²⁸ However, some forms of digital activism could be very inconsequential, as they rely purely on “clicks and likes” of specific content, but never fully commit or take a step further to achieve more concrete objectives.²⁹ Additionally, in their extreme manifestations, digital activism can also mean engaging in cyberterrorism and other illegal activities.³⁰

Manyu Li et al.³¹ use a more complex definition of a social movement: “a *network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups, and/or organizations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of shared collective identity.*”³² In their view, *digital activism* is a sub-category of social movements, an interpretation of a social movement in spaces like social media platforms.³³ The scholars explore concepts like engagement, conflict, and collective identity by examining the *#MeToo movement*, which was started in 2006 by African-American activist Tarana Burke to help victims of sexual assault in the US. However, in 2017, it turned mainstream after actress Alyssa Milano used it to denounce Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein for sexual assault.³⁴

Literature such as the texts described above focus on how social media platforms represent an alternative space to address social issues and promote calls to action to solve them. As described in the

²⁸ Ibid, p. 5.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 7.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 11.

³¹ Li, M., Turki, N., Izaguirre, C. R., DeMahy, C., Thibodeaux, B. L., & Gage, T., Twitter as a tool for social movement: an analysis of feminist activism on social media communities. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 49(3), 854–868, 2021. (Henceforward, “Twitter as a tool for social movement”).

³² Ibid, p. 855.

³³ Ibid, p. 856.

³⁴ Ibid, p. 857.

following section, social media has been used to highlight, connect, and strengthen specific causes within the feminist movement worldwide.

b. Digital activism and feminism

The #MeToo movement represents a pillar in debates about gender and sexual violence worldwide. Discussing such matters online was a watershed moment, especially on social media. But how can we generate knowledge from it? How can we study and research such debates? One possibility is data analysis through hashtags. What is a hashtag? According to Twitter, on a technical level, “a hashtag—written with a # symbol—is used to index keywords or topics on Twitter. This function was created on Twitter and allows people to easily follow topics they are interested in.”³⁵ However, from a more academic point of view, the meanings and uses of hashtags can be more complex than that. For example, Axel Bruns and Jean Burgess note that, “Hashtags coordinate and distribute discussions between more or less large groups of users, who do not need to be connected through existing ‘follower’ networks.”³⁶ Similarly, Dhiraj Murthy points out that, “Hashtag categories illustrate the ability of Twitter to be both an individual and communal news space simultaneously. For example, #breakingnews, a hashtag used to tweet breaking news, has been a regular hashtag topic. Any tweets with #breakingnews are aggregated into a communal meta-thread which represents what Twitter users consider breaking news at the moment.”³⁷

In recent years, a number of scholars have turned to hashtags to help shed light on online social movements. Manyu Li *et al.*, for example, focus on how people share their experiences of sexual violence on Twitter, and what some reasons behind some victims deciding not to report their assaults are. The study took

³⁵ Help Center, “How to use hashtags”, <https://help.twitter.com/en/using-twitter/how-to-use-hashtags>, consulted on November 15, 2022.

³⁶ Bruns, A., and Burgess, J. E., “The use of Twitter hashtags in the formation of ad hoc publics”, *Paper presented at the 6th European Consortium for Political Research General Conference*, University of Iceland, Reykjavik, p.1.

³⁷ Murthy, Dhiraj, “Twitter and Journalism”, in *Twitter: social communication in the Twitter age*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2013, pp.62-63.

a sample of almost 5,000 tweets in the US in 2018, under the hashtags *#MeToo* and *#WhyIDidntReport*. The results show that victims struggle to share what they have gone through and pursue the attackers because of the backlash and public shaming they might face.³⁸ As discussed further below, the word(s) in a hashtag can serve as a clue to the narratives one might find in the tweets they bring together. That is, in *#WhyIDidntReport*, Manyu Li *et al.* identified content about sexual assault survivors who explained why they did not report their attacks. This is a valuable way to frame and limit the scope of research: study specific hashtags linked to your subject.

In “Seeking informal justice online,”³⁹ **Anastasia Powell** argues that sexual violence, when considered taboo in public discourse, forces survivors to remain silenced as their communities could revictimize and ostracize them.⁴⁰ Powell explores how victims of sexual abuse use digital platforms as a space to seek accountability from their aggressors, like ‘outing perpetrators’ on social media.⁴¹ In her view, it is difficult to think that “informal justice” will solve sexual crimes and gender violence issues. In that sense, she touches on how digital activism is a difficult force to tame. An example of this kind of vigilantism is the campaign *#BalanceTonPorc* in France, in which the tweets identified presumed sexual assaulters by including their names and photos.

In the same vein, **Carrie Rentschler**⁴² explores how people turn to social media to expose sexual assaulters and fight back against rape culture, that is, the “*complex of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women (...)*.”⁴³ As I will discuss later, this idea is well connected to the concept of *Machismo* in countries like Mexico. But, in sync with Powell, Rentschler reflects on the DIY (do it yourself) mentality on social media, that is, when people call out or expose men, presumably sexual

³⁸ *Ibid*, p.861.

³⁹ Powell, A., “Seeking Informal Justice Online: Vigilanteism, Activism and Resisting a Rape Culture in Cyberspace.” In *Rape Justice: Beyond the Criminal Law*, edited by Anastasia Powell, Nicola Henry, and Asher Flynn, 218–237. London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 226.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p.222.

⁴² Rentschler, C., “Rape Culture and the Feminist Politics of Social Media,” *Girlhood Studies*, 7 (1), pp. 65–82, 2014.

⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 66.

offenders, to find justice by their own means. Rather than solutions, these sorts of acts tend to encourage increased polarization in opinions: on one side, there are those who believe in the importance of calling out aggressors to address gender issues, and on the other are people who believe exposing men is just another way to impose a radical feminist agenda.⁴⁴

In “Hashtag feminism: Activism or slacktivism?”⁴⁵ **Barner et al.** explore the use of hashtags as a resource to empower and constrain the feminist movement online. Through the analysis of *#YesAllWomen*, they found that certain groups of women were able to build a community to share their experiences and foster a communication network to enact an agenda focused on the battle against gender violence.⁴⁶ However, their analysis also addresses the dangers of romanticizing the use of hashtags as the primary strategy to battle deeply rooted societal problems such as gender violence, especially when a dominant group acquires the role of spokesperson of the whole movement, sometimes ignoring other groups and contexts. As Barner *et al.* describe, *#YesAllWomen* may promote visibility toward gender violence; still, it also divided women by failing to acknowledge the privilege of their promoters—white women—and, therefore, encouraged a white feminist point of view. For that, other groups countered the *#YesAllWomen* campaign with other hashtags: *#YesAllWhiteWomen*, *#SolidarityIsForWhiteWomen*, *#LatinasAreNot*, and *#NotYourAsianSidekick*, among others. Thus, hashtag feminist activism is as heterogenous as the feminist movement itself. Some research has found that sometimes, the main result of this form of activism is to encourage the “visibility” of marginalized groups.

Along those lines, **Borda and Marshall**⁴⁷ studied counter-responses within a social movement: the *#SayHerName* campaign on Twitter in the United States drew public attention to black women killed in

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 78.

⁴⁵ Barner, Briana, Masullo Chen, Gina, and Pain, Paromita, “Hashtag Feminism”: Activism or Slacktivism?” in Bachmann, Ingrid, Harp, Dustin, and Loke, Jaime (Eds.), *Feminist approaches to media theory and research*, Switzerland, Palgrave MacMillan, 2018, pp. 197 – 218.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 211.

⁴⁷ Borda, J. L., & Marshall, B., Creating a space to *#sayhername*: rhetorical stratification in the networked sphere. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 106(2), 133–155, 2020.

police interactions. This is a specific problem overshadowed by the much broader *#BlackLivesMatters* movement, which has centered its narratives on police brutality against black men. In fact, this campaign dealt with the intersectionality of gender and race in the context of a specific problem of violence: how black women have experienced police brutality and why. In contrast with Barner *et al.*, who focus on “visibility” as the main result of hashtag campaigns, Borda and Marshall describe how the circulation of *#SayHerName* was amplified by press coverage on police misconduct, helping the campaign to matter beyond “calls to action” on social media platforms. It motivated public policy proposals and criminal justice reforms in the cities where incidents highlighted with this hashtag took place.⁴⁸ In this research, Borda and Marshall step up to the next level of digital activism that I seek to address: the role of news media outlets and journalists in promoting political change within social media spaces in favor of minorities. In that sense, they highlight how these news media actors can push debates and national conversations with their stories, but they need to explore an inclusive and equalitarian approach in their coverage and be upfront in telling and leading the way regarding whose stories matter and why.⁴⁹

In the article “*#metoo* goes viral,”⁵⁰ **Starkey *et al.*** compare the online media coverage of four women from different countries, the “silence breakers” of a particular moment within the *#MeToo* movement. Through the analysis of 352 articles from 35 news websites, they categorized the main narratives for each woman in their respective countries: Susan Fowler from the US, a “brave” silence breaker; Shiori Ito from Japan, a “victim of an unjust system;” Tanushree Dutta from India, a made-up “hero” resulting from tabloid and sensationalist narratives; and Tessa Sullivan from Australia, the “attention-seeker.”⁵¹ By explaining each case, the authors dig into the debate about how cultural roots influence the media’s work, to the point that it can

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 145.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 150.

⁵⁰ Starkey, J. C., Koerber, A., Sternadori, M., & Pitchford, B., *#metoo* goes global: media framing of silence breakers in four national settings, *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 43(4), 437–461, 2019.

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 437.

impact people's perspectives on how they understand gender violence and the #MeToo movement across borders.

Finally, in "I see you, I believe you, I stand with you,"⁵² **Clark-Parsons** focuses on understanding how activists see hashtag feminist campaigns and movements rather than evaluating their results. By analyzing tweets with the #MeToo hashtag, the scholar found narratives in which users expressed contrasting points of view on moving from a personal to a collective experience. The study asked, is it fair that the only way to be seen and heard is to publicly disclose one's status as a sexual assault survivor?⁵³ This study is an excellent bridge between Starkey *et al.*'s study about the tolls and burdens of becoming the "face of a movement" and Barner *et al.*'s about the importance of encouraging visibility through hashtag activism, as Clark-Parsons also revealed people still believe this kind of activism serves to promote debates.

As the focal point of my research goes beyond the American and Canadian perspectives of feminist movements and their online presence, the following sections explore the literature on gender violence and its relation in the digital sphere in Mexico: How do women deal with these issues in this country? How is gender violence approached from the digital activism perspective?

c. Gender violence in Mexico

There are two predominant visions in the literature on gender violence in Mexico: 1) gender violence as a private problem, that is, a domestic issue that begins at home, and 2) gender violence as a problem conceived as a structural, public, and national issue that persists due to a weak state unable to protect its own people.

⁵² Clark-Parsons, R., "I see you, I believe you, I stand with you": #metoo and the performance of networked feminist visibility. *Feminist Media Studies*, 21(3), 362–380, 2021.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 368.

Castañeda et al.⁵⁴ studied gender violence in Mexico in contexts of poverty and marginalization, in which women are often oppressed by a patriarchal society, its traditions, and customs.⁵⁵ When gender violence is conceived as a private sphere problem, the Mexican state struggles to find an effective way to intervene, reduce and eventually eradicate this violence. Hence, the state fails in its fundamental role of protecting society.⁵⁶

As for the vision of gender violence as a public problem, in “*Violencia de género y feminicidios en México*,”⁵⁷ **Sánchez** explores the government’s power structures, the police, the military, and the head of state as the fundamental actors that permit – and sometimes encourage – gender violence in the country. The war against organized crime policies during Felipe Calderón’s mandate represented a turning point in violence against women in public life: between 2007 and 2017, violence in public spaces surpassed, for the first time in decades, the violence traditionally experienced in private spaces. Murders of women increased for all age groups, especially the murders of young women between the ages of 20 and 35, which tripled.⁵⁸ Hence, what Sánchez affirms is that gender violence goes beyond the private sphere and is intrinsic to a misogynist system that perpetuates the imbalance of power between genders, subjecting one to the other in a structural way.

Along the same lines, in “*Violencia feminicida, máxima expresión de la violencia de género*,”⁵⁹ **Eslava Pérez** highlights that gender violence occurs in all spaces where women operate, whether public or private, including the digital sphere. Pérez emphasizes the importance of criminalizing femicides so they can be

⁵⁴ Castañeda Salgado, Martha Patricia; Ravelo Blancas, Patricia; Pérez Vázquez, Teresa, “Femicide and Gender Violence in Mexico: Omissions of the State and Civil Demands for Justice,” *Iztapalapa, Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades*, núm. 74, enero-junio, 2013, pp.11-39.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p.13.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p.15.

⁵⁷ Sánchez, Lisa, “Violencia de género y feminicidios en México: los datos hablan,” *Letras Libres*, 2020, <https://letraslibres.com/politica/violencia-de-genero-y-feminicidios-en-mexico-los-datos-hablan/>, consulted on Nov. 12, 2022.

⁵⁸ *Idem*.

⁵⁹ Eslava Pérez, Ismael, “Violencia feminicida, máxima expresión de la violencia de género. Violación grave a los derechos humanos,” *PERSEO*, 97, 2021, <http://www.pudh.unam.mx/perseo/violencia-feminicida-maxima-expresion-de-la-violencia-de-genero-violacion-grave-a-derechos-humanos/>, consulted on Nov. 21, 2022.

pursued as a crime. This would additionally allow for more accurate data on femicides—if the system does not recognize and count femicides as femicides, then we will not know anything about the problem. For example, in 2017, Mexican authorities opened 701 files on femicides, representing only 21% of the total homicides of women that year. It is worth noting that states like Aguascalientes, Baja California Sur, and Querétaro did not report any cases of femicide, as they are still considered homicides by state law. Here, we face an obstacle, because we cannot call them femicides; they simply do not exist in legal terms. So, then, how can we analyze this problem if we face a hole in the legal system, and we cannot call them what they are—femicides?

In “Femicides and public policies,”⁶⁰ **Damián and Flores** study the implementation of “gender violence alerts” in Mexico. Conceived as an instrument from the *Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence*, the alerts refer to a process that international and civil organizations can request at the local level to demand public policies focused on stopping femicides and other expressions of gender violence.⁶¹ The result: between 2010 and 2017, 29 out of the 32 states requested an alert. While the fastest request was approved within a year, others took almost five years, as they were framed as political attacks against the current government.⁶² In any case, the researchers showcase the critical context of gender violence in the country by highlighting an undeniable situation: when 90% of a country demands specific actions and public policies to combat gender violence, then we cannot talk of a minor or regional problem—we need to talk about a national crisis.

Also, journalists, civil organizations, and researchers do meticulous work to obtain data from police records, official governmental statements, and interviews. In that sense, their work helps us better understand the gravity of the gender violence issue in Mexico. For example, in her article “The feminist movement in

⁶⁰ Damián Bernal, A. L. and Flores, J. A. “Femicides and Public Policies: Declarations of Gender Violence Alerts in Mexico, 2015 – 2017,” *Perspectiva Geográfica*, 23(2), 2018, pp.33 – 57.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 37.

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 42.

Mexico in the 21st century,⁶³ **Álvarez Enriquez** disclosed data on different types of violence in 2019: 1,000 femicides and more than 600,000 sexual abuses were registered, of which 90% of the latter were against women and half of them against children under 15 years of age.⁶⁴ Feminist groups and allies have mobilized this information in the feminist movement in Mexico, today guided by a hunger for action in the face of a passive government unwilling to prioritize gender violence as a pillar in its political agenda.

How does the feminist movement portray the context of gender violence? Álvarez Enriquez highlights that even though the data might not be complete, it is severe enough for this movement to fire up. It has taken on a number of slogans – a word or a phrase – to express an agenda focused on social justice for all women: "*Nos queremos vivas*" (we want each other alive), "*Ni una menos*" (not one less), "*México Femicida*" (femicide Mexico), "*La patria mata*" (homeland kills), "*Que arda la simulación*" (let the simulation burn), "*Si tocas a una respondemos todas*" (if you touch one, we all respond), "*Vivas y sin miedo*" (alive and without fear), "*El miedo ya no nos paraliza, nos despierta*" (fear no longer paralyzes us, it wakes us up), "*Ni una más, ni una más, ni una asesinada más*" (Not one more, not one more, not one more murdered), "*Disculpe las molestias, pero nos están matando*" (Sorry for the inconvenience, but they are killing us).⁶⁵ Each phrase can be inserted into different contexts, determined by social and economic classes, races, and cultural backgrounds.

The literature about gender violence in Mexico portrays a country in crisis. Unfortunately, this political environment constantly fails women by not acting on specific policies to address and fight back against this violence. For that, the feminist movement in Mexico has developed different strategies to make itself visible and keep demanding justice. We can see some of those strategies in digital activism.

⁶³ Álvarez Enríquez, Lucía, "El movimiento feminista en México en el siglo XXI: juventud, radicalidad y violencia", ⁶³ *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales*, UNAM, No. 240 (Sep-Dic. 2020), pp. 147-175.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.153.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.160.

d. *Hashtag feminist activism in Mexico*

In “The feminist protest in Mexico,”⁶⁶ **Cerva** details social media interactions between civil society and government regarding concrete acts of gender violence, such as rape and femicide. The scholar explains 1) what feminists demand and how they do it, 2) the authorities' narratives and responses to these demands, often considering feminist acts as political attacks, and 3) the counter-response of social groups through hashtags.

Table 1. Social media interaction between society and government

Context	Official response	Counter-response ⁶⁷
Faced with the rape of a minor in Mexico City, feminist groups protested in front of the Ministry of Public Security.	The head of government declares: "I see a radicalized climate; we are not going to respond to such provocation."	The movement counter-responds with the hashtags #AmiMeCuidasMisAmigas (My friends look out after me) and #NoNosCuidanNosViolan (They don't take care of us, they rape us).

Cerva contrasts the dynamic of feminist groups and government on social media, and she takes messages and narratives that include hashtags as slogans of feminist demands. In her view, however, pressuring certain political actors through social media to speak out on gender violence in the country, specifically through hashtag activism, has not had concrete results for the feminist movement other than adding to the visibility of the problem.

In contrast, in the essay “Building the feminist protest in hashtags,”⁶⁸ **Esquivel** compiles a set of demands to combat gender violence in Mexico, especially related to the femicide crisis (between 2009 and 2019) through 47 hashtags on Twitter. Esquivel argues that hashtags do not expire; they are often recharged and reappropriated in new contexts when new crimes (such as femicides) and other assaults come to light.

⁶⁶ Cerva Cerna, Daniela, “The Feminist Protest in Mexico. Misogyny in Institutional Discourse and Sociodigital Networks”, ⁶⁶ *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales*, UNAM, No. 240, Sep-Dic. 2020, pp. 177-205.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p.190.

⁶⁸ Esquivel, Daniela, “Building the feminist’s protest in hashtags: approaching from Social Network Analysis”, *Comunicación y Medios*, No. 40, 2019, pp.156 – 169.

Hashtags can maintain their militant meaning of denunciation. When a new hashtag trends on Twitter, e.g. *#SiMeMatan* (If They Kill Me), other more “well-known” hashtags are taken up again, such as *#VivasNosQueremos* (We want us alive), *#NiUnaMás* (Not a single more), and *#NiUnaMenos* (Not a single less). Esquivel highlights that “visibility” and “keeping the fire burning” is not easy, so it is a win if hashtag activism achieves more visibility on this problem. Like the work of Manyu Li *et al.*, Borda, and Marshall previously discussed, Esquivel’s essay is an excellent example of how a hashtag can be charged with a specific meaning, a “militant charge,” but from the Mexican context. Encouraging debate on gender violence in the digital sphere is worthwhile,⁶⁹ especially in a country where 11 women are victims of femicide daily.

Let's consider that Mexico is a country with a relatively recent history of a totalitarian political regime that only changed near the beginning of this century. Then, the fact that women are finally consolidating more debates and talking about femicides and sexual assaults on digital platforms and through small social media campaigns, is still an essential step to solve the current problem of gender violence in the country.

In that regard, the last two texts included in this review explore hashtag campaigns on Twitter from two different angles: a very straightforward hashtag and a militant one. In “Network Feminist Actions,”⁷⁰ **Olmedo** analyzes the Tweets under the hashtag *#Marcha8M* to highlight the kind of political actors that are called out on Twitter to act on and solve gender violence problems. He establishes that a positive side of using a hashtag that refers to a worldwide event—in this case the International Women’s Day parade on March 8—is that the feminist movement in Mexico can be in sync with similar protests and social demands abroad, especially with other Spanish-speaking communities. This can help to reach a wider audience and eventually pressure political actors into action.⁷¹ However, the results showed that the number of mentions particular political actors (or their accounts) receive on Twitter does not necessarily push or pressure these

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p.162.

⁷⁰ Olmedo Neri, Raul Anthony, “Network Feminist Actions: Analysis of the Hashtag *#Marcha8M* in Mexico”, *Conexión*, No.14, 2020, pp. 129 – 156.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, p.145.

actors enough to make them play a strategic or significant role in the movement. For example, the most mentioned newspaper under the hashtag #Marcha8M was *El Reforma*, which only published one Tweet with that same hashtag. Also, the account of the president of Mexico did not tweet anything on gender violence, nor did he mention, in any capacity, this hashtag, even though it was the most tagged account with the #Marcha8M hashtag. In this case, Olmedo's study shows that a hashtag campaign on Twitter can succeed in promoting conversations and debates about gender violence. However, the campaign will not necessarily get the attention and engagement of their political targets.

On the other hand, in "Analysis of the Digital Protest #NosotrasTenemosOtrosDatos on Twitter During the Covid-19 Pandemic,"⁷² **García González** carried out a thematic analysis of 5,000 tweets (from May to June 2020) to describe the debates on social media with the hashtag #NosotrasTenemosOtrosDatos (We have other data). This campaign directly responded to the presidential denials about the increased calls to 911 about gender violence issues after the country's COVID-19 lockdown measures.⁷³ The journalist came up with 30 topics, ranging from "making violence visible," "demanding justice towards victims of femicide," and "the president is a liar," among others. Additionally, García González investigated the most relevant news media platforms that published articles with this hashtag, discovering that the vast majority were alternative media.⁷⁴ Finally, the study compiles data, testimonies, and other journalistic works to call out different groups within the feminist movement to denounce gender violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. This innovative study focuses on recent data, calling attention, once again, to the vulnerability that certain groups face, ignored by the state.

This literature has helped me understand the meaning of digital activism in social movements by describing some of its most familiar faces, then grounding them on milestones, such as the #MeToo

⁷² García González, Lidia Ángeles, "Analysis of the Digital Protest #NosotrasTenemosOtrosDatos on Twitter During the Covid-19 Pandemic",⁷² *Global Media Journal México*, No. 18, 2021, pp. 71-94.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

movement. In Mexico, research has used these concepts to explore patterns and tendencies regarding what people think and do about gender violence in digital spaces, especially when femicides are on the rise. Also, these readings served as a guide for the rest of this project, as they have given me tools to understand different faces of digital activism, how research about digital and feminist activism has been done, what the general context of gender violence and femicides in Mexico is, and how this crisis has been studied through the mobilization of hashtags.

In the second part of this chapter, I address the theoretical framework that helped me form my reflections in this research as I explored the connections between my findings (detailed in Chapter 3) and the theoretical roles of journalism in covering a sociopolitical issue. So, it was fundamental to understand different points of view on how journalism works and why, with what purposes, and for the benefit of whom.

2. Theoretical framework

By grounding this research in different theoretical approaches to journalism, I explored how journalism evolves and adapts to new contexts, especially in a digital era where social media seems to cluster diverse people together, while encouraging public discussion with undefined boundaries. In the following pages, I address specific theoretical concepts to help reflect on professional journalism's role on Twitter to inform society about gender violence and femicides in Mexico.

a. Roles of journalism in public and political life

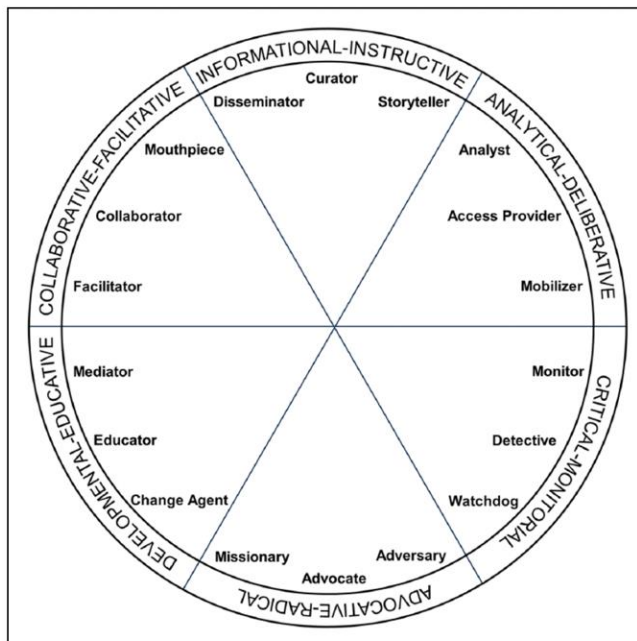
According to Hanitzsch and Vos, "*journalists are charged with acting in the roles of providing surveillance, forming opinion, setting the agenda, acting as a watchdog, acting as a messenger and public informant, and playing an active participant part in social life.*"⁷⁵ This is a common understanding in the literature of

⁷⁵ Hanitzsch and Vos, "Journalism beyond democracy: A new look into journalistic roles in political and everyday life", *Journalism*, 9(2), 2016, p.149. (Henceforward, "Journalism beyond democracy").

journalism's roles in society: the "gatekeepers" of information, a traditional point of view of journalists as the ones deciding what information is disseminated and withheld from the audience or publics. In this current research, I analyze how professional journalism accounts on Twitter covered gender violence in Mexico in the context of the 2022 International Women's Day. In this regard, the theoretical approaches I mobilize help further understand: 1) what this coverage was and what it did; and 2) the space in which it was covered and spread. Hanitzsch and Vos' reflections on the roles of journalism in political life led to the first question, while Murthy Dhiraj's approach to Twitter as an ambient news environment guided the second question.

Hanitzsch and Vos compile several theoretical approaches in which journalists are seen as the custodians of information who have the keys to the doors of what society should know. The scholars focus on 18 roles that represent the basic functions of journalism in public and political life. They further organize them into the following six categories:

Figure 12. Hanitzsch and Vos' roles of journalism in political life



Source: Hanitzsch and Vos.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Ibid, p.153.

Informational – instructive

In this category, Hanitzsch and Vos explain that journalists transmit to citizens the relevant information they need to get involved in political affairs. This is a traditional interpretation of journalists' central role in society: they are "objective" with the capacity to understand the events "as they are," so journalists can disseminate and curate the information without biases and then share it through compelling stories.

Analytical – deliberative

In contrast, analytical – deliberative journalists lean toward a more subjective point of view in their stories. They are opinionated, and they engage with the audience by providing them with the platforms they need to express themselves in political life. In this category, journalists' work goes beyond informing the people about what they should know; journalists' goal is to inform the audience so they can act on this information.

Critical – monitorial

The primary role of the critical – monitorial journalists is to keep the government accountable. They encourage an informed, open, and critically minded society. Journalists function as a "Fourth Estate," that is, they are a counterbalance to political power structures.

Advocative – radical

Like the analytical – deliberative category, advocative – radical journalists embrace subjectivity in their work and insert themselves into the stories they produce. They are part of society, so they are biased and follow different ideologies. Journalists try to become the spokespeople of society, often criticizing and even fighting their governments.

Developmental – educative

Journalists promote social and political change and focus on conciliation, finding solutions, and building bridges between society and political powers.

Collaborative – facilitative

Finally, Hanitzsch and Vos reflect on journalism that functions as an extension of the government; it is its partner and ally, so under the collaborative-facilitative category, journalists support the government's decisions and public policies. This support could be based on mutual affinities or coercion between the government and journalists.⁷⁷

In this research, Hanitzsch and Vos' diverse set of journalism roles for public affairs served as guidance to reflect on the many approaches the news media outlets focused on could have followed in their coverage of gender violence and femicides around the context of International Women's Day 2022. As I did not have any certainty of the information I would obtain from Twitter, I considered it essential to rely on, as much as possible, a solid theoretical framework that could allow me to analyze the data from many perspectives within a single coherent model. However, upon reviewing their 18 journalism roles, Hanitzsch and Vos do not necessarily focus on social media coverage. To fill that gap better, I also explored another approach to understanding Twitter as a public news space, as detailed in the following section.

b. Press coverage on Twitter

As mentioned previously, this research also focuses on how Twitter is understood as a "social space." In "Twitter and journalism,"⁷⁸ Murthy Dhiraj explores and questions the capacity of this platform to be a democratic space for news consumption. He develops three main ideas: first, Twitter functions as a "news

⁷⁷ Ibid, pp. 152 – 156.

⁷⁸ Dhiraj, Murthy, "Twitter and journalism", in *Twitter: social communication in the Twitter age*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2013, p.51. (Henceforward, "Twitter").

environment," that is, people can access news at any time, but they only consume it when "they feel like it." Users build their feeds as they want to, with unlimited topics; but if they want to know about specific events, they can type in a word or hashtag related to it, and they will have access to news. In that sense, Dhiraj argues that news is not the center of attention for users on Twitter, but more on their periphery. However, the news will be available whenever they feel the need to access it.⁷⁹

The second idea is that Twitter is a space where journalists are free to express their opinions. It is a more informal space, so Twitter challenges the notion of objectivity as the mantra of journalistic work. For that, this platform is a space where the concept of journalism is expanded, leading to the rise of different journalisms or different interpretations of journalism.⁸⁰ This idea is compatible with Hanitzsch and Vos' wheel in that there is more than just one role for journalism.

Finally, the third idea is that, while Twitter is a public space where "anyone" can engage in discussions and debates, the reality is that the Twitter community is limited because not everyone can (or wants to) participate on this platform. So then, as a disclaimer for this research, all the generalizations I write about Mexico represent just a small portion of Mexican society on Twitter.

To summarize this chapter, in the literature review, I paid attention to the meeting points between social movements and digital activism, especially for the awakening of worldwide feminist debates on gender violence through online platforms, which opened the doors to reflect on how scholars and journalists in Mexico have covered these issues on social media, in some cases recurring to a thematic analysis. In that sense, this literature helped me to know where my academic contributions may fit in, my starting points, and how I could do social media research myself. In addition, I also explained the theoretical approaches to journalism that I use as the main guidelines to evaluate how Mexican news media outlets covered issues related to gender violence during International Women's Day in 2022 on Twitter.

⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 53.

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 54.

Following some of the studies I described in this chapter, I decided to pursue a thematic analysis that could help me find general narratives and trends in the tweets from Mexican news media outlets. The next chapter is dedicated to explaining each step of the research method I pursued in my Twitter experiment: from data collection to its organization and analysis.

Chapter two. Method: a step-by-step guide for a thematic analysis of tweets

The credibility and significance of any research relies heavily on its methods. As I mentioned in the introduction, the present study followed the six-phase thematic analysis developed by scholars Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke.⁸¹ In this chapter, I describe the steps I took to obtain and analyze the information I needed from Twitter to answer my main research question.

The chapter is divided into five sections: 1) a brief description of the news media outlets I analyzed for this research; 2) the data I scraped from Twitter; 3) how I retrieved the data using Python 4) the thematic analysis of this data; and 5) the methodological limits of this study.

1. The subjects: Mexican mainstream news media outlets

My goal in this research was to analyze how traditional news media outlets covered gender violence and femicides in Mexico on Twitter between March 6 and 13, in the context of International Women's Day. I chose the news outlets included in this research based on the 2022 Reuters Institute and the University of Oxford annual *Digital News Report*,⁸² which evaluated the impact and penetration of online traditional news media in several countries, including Mexico. The report provides deep insight into the most popular sources people tend to use to consume news online. Additionally, the report is heavily cited by prestigious Mexican sources, which adds to the legitimacy of its information.⁸³ While this report included a list of the 16 most visited Mexican

⁸¹ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Using thematic analysis in psychology", *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3:2, 2006 (Henceforward, "Using thematic analysis").

⁸² Maria Elena Gutiérrez-Rentería, "México", in Reuter and the University of Oxford, 2022 *Digital News Report*, 2022, <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2022/mexico>, consulted on Sep. 10, 2022 (Henceforward, Maria Elena Gutiérrez-Rentería, "México").

⁸³ The following Mexican sources used the information published by Reuters and the University of Oxford in their 2022 Digital News Report (all the content is in Spanish):


a) José Soto Galindo, "Las noticias me deprimen. Los 10 hallazgos del Digital Newz Report 2022 del Reuters Institute – Newsletter 35º", *Economicón*, June, 2022, <https://economicon.mx/2022/06/15/las-noticias-me-deprimen-los-10-hallazgos-del-digital-news-report-2022-del-reuters-institute/>, consulted on March 14, 2023.

b) Michell García, "Digital News Report 2022: Disminuye confianza en medios de comunicación," *Verificado*, junio 2022, <https://verificado.com.mx/digital-news-report-2022-disminuye-confianza-med/>, consulted on March 14, 2023.

news media sources online, to limit the scope of this research I chose to focus on the top five: *El Universal*, *TV Azteca*, *Uno TV*, *Televisa*, and *Aristegui noticias*.⁸⁴ I took this decision after reflecting on how to keep this project manageable, while considering that I conducted the research on my own, within a limited timeframe and limited resources.

The following tables describes some of the basic characteristics of each of the five news media outlets included in this research:

Table 2. El Universal

<p>El Universal news online⁸⁵</p>  <p><i>Figure 13. El Universal logo</i></p>	<p>Description: This outlet was founded in 1916 during the Mexican Revolution.⁸⁶ It is, in fact, one of the oldest newspapers in the country. It has adapted to current contexts, going from a print-only source to consolidating its presence in digital media since the beginning of the 21st century. Its political affiliation is primarily considered centrist.⁸⁷</p>
<p>Slogan: <i>El Gran Diario de México</i> (The Great Newspaper of Mexico)⁸⁸</p>	<p>Twitter account: @El_Universal_Mx;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Followers: 7.2 million ● Following: 14.2 thousand⁸⁹

c) José Soto Galindo, “Los jóvenes evitan las noticias porque los deprimen,” *El Economista*, Junio 2023, <https://www.eleconomista.com.mx/arteseideas/Los-jovenes-evitan-las-noticias-porque-los-deprimen-20220614-0087.html>, consulted on March 14, 2023.

d) Redacción, “Hostilidad de AMLO y otros retos de la prensa mexicana: Digital News Report 2022,” *Alianza de Medios MX*, junio 2022, <https://alianzademediosmx.org/noticias/hostilidad-de-amlo-y-otros-retos-de-la-prensa-mexicana-digital-news-report-2022/1177>, consulted on March 14, 2023.

⁸⁴ María Elena Gutiérrez-Rentería, “México,” consulted on March 12, 2023.

⁸⁵ The picture was taken from the news media Twitter account: [@El_Universal_Mx](https://twitter.com/El_Universal_Mx), consulted on March 14, 2023.

⁸⁶ El Universal, “Historia breve,” <https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/historia-breve>, consulted on January 11, 2023.

⁸⁷ Frida V. Rodelo and Carlos Muñoz, *La orientación política del periódico y su influencia en la presencia de encuadres y asuntos dentro de las noticias*, Nuevo León, Univeridad de Guadalajara and Universidad de Nuevo León, 2016, p.250.

⁸⁸ El Universal, “Historia breve,” <https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/historia-breve>, consulted on January 11, 2023.

⁸⁹ El Universal (Twitter), https://twitter.com/El_Universal_Mx?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor, consulted on January 11, 2023.

Table 3. TV Azteca News Online



<p>TV Azteca News Online⁹⁰</p>  <p>Figure 14. TV Azteca logo</p>	<p>Description: TV Azteca was founded in 1993 and is considered one of the country's most influential news media corporations, alongside <i>Televisa</i> (both often seen as a TV duopoly in Mexico). It has a presence in 23 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.⁹¹ Its political affiliation has changed from favoring the party in power to a more balanced coverage of other political platforms.⁹²</p>
<p>Slogan: <i>Fuerza Informativa Azteca</i> (Aztec Information Power)⁹³</p>	<p>Twitter account: @AztecaNoticias;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Followers: 842.2 thousand ● Following: 940⁹⁴

Table 4. Uno TV News Online

<p>UnoTV News Online⁹⁵</p>  <p>Figure 15. Uno TV logo</p>	<p>Description: <i>Uno Noticias</i> was founded at the end of 2008, and quickly became one of the most popular news media outlets by joining efforts with <i>Telcel</i>, the most prominent Mexican mobile network. <i>Uno Noticias</i> pioneered sending text messages to <i>Telcel</i> users with the most important news items each day for the first time in the country.⁹⁶ <i>Uno Noticias</i> was conceived as a digital platform since its foundation.</p>
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⁹⁰ The picture was taken from the news media Twitter account: @AztecaNoticias, consulted on March 14, 2023.

⁹¹ Fuerza Informativa Azteca, "Más fuertes que nunca": TV Azteca cumple 29 años de ser imparable," <https://www.tvazteca.com/aztecanoticias/tv-azteca-29-anos-imparable-csz>, consulted on January 12, 2023.

⁹² "Los principales noticieros de (...) TV Azteca evolucionaron de coberturas que beneficiaban al PRI en 1988 a coberturas que representaban la fuerza electoral de los tres grandes partidos en 2000 y 2006" (Translation: TV Azteca evolved from a coverage that benefited the PRI in 1988 to a coverage that represented the electoral strength of the three major parties in 2000 and 2006). In: Germán Espino-Sánchez, "La transformación de la comunicación política en las campañas presidenciales de México", <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=10516855003>, consulted on January 12, 2023.

⁹³ TV Azteca, "Fuerza Informativa Azteca," <https://www.tvazteca.com/aztecanoticias/>, consulted on January 12, 2023.


⁹⁴ TV Azteca noticias (Twitter), https://twitter.com/AztecaNoticias?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor, consulted on January 12, 2023.

⁹⁵ The picture was taken from the news media Twitter account: @UnoNoticias, consulted on March 14, 2023.

⁹⁶ UnoTV, Historia de UnoTV, <https://www.unotv.com/acerca-de/historia-de-unotv/>, consulted on January 12, 2023.

<p>Slogan: <i>Las noticias más importantes de México y el mundo</i> (The most important news from Mexico and the world)⁹⁷</p>	<p>Twitter account: @UnoNoticias</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Followers: 393.3 thousand ● Following: 1.270 thousand⁹⁸
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Table 5. Televisa News Online

<p>Televisa News Online⁹⁹</p>  <p><i>Figure 16. Televisa News logo</i></p>	<p>Description: Televisa is a media enterprise founded in 1930. It was one of the first broadcasters nationwide in Mexico. Since then, it has been considered the main competitor of TV Azteca, sharing similar principles of favoring the government in turn. While Televisa is more than a news media outlet (it also produces TV shows and films), its newest project, N+, is dedicated entirely to news and current affairs. The outlet employs more than 1,600 professional journalists and producers to bring audiences around 44,000 hours of news content annually.¹⁰⁰</p>
<p>Slogan: El referente de noticias en español (The reference for Spanish news)¹⁰¹</p>	<p>Twitter account: @nmas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Followers: 3.3 million ● Following: 60¹⁰²

⁹⁷ Uno TV (Twitter), https://twitter.com/UnoNoticias?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor, consulted on January 12, 2023.

⁹⁸ Ibid.


⁹⁹ The picture was taken from the news media Twitter account: @nmas, consulted on March 14, 2023.

¹⁰⁰ EFE, "Televisa presenta N+, un nuevo proyecto de contenidos informativos en México," https://www.swissinfo.ch/spa/m%C3%A9xico-televisi%C3%B3n_televisa-presenta-n---un-nuevo-proyecto-de-contenidos-informativos-en-m%C3%A9xico/47471366, consulted on January 11, 2023.

¹⁰¹ N+ (Twitter), <https://twitter.com/nmas>, consulted on January 12, 2023.

¹⁰² Ibid.

Table 6. Aristegui News

<p>Aristegui News¹⁰³</p>  <p>Figure 17. Aristegui News logoo</p>	<p>Description: Prominent Mexican journalist Carmen Aristegui¹⁰⁴ founded this digital outlet in 2012 after she was fired from <i>MVS Noticias</i>, another popular news media site in Mexico, because of a story she and her team of professional journalists were covering about possible acts of corruption behind the acquisition of a \$7 million US mansion by former president of Mexico, Enrique Peña Nieto (then Governor of the State of Mexico). After she was fired, Aristegui and her team published the book <i>La casa blanca de Peña Nieto</i> (Peña Nieto's White House), which won the National Journalism Award and the Gabriel García Márquez Award in 2014.¹⁰⁵ Soon after, Aristegui Noticias started to be recognized as one of the most liberal independent journalism outlets in the country.</p>
<p>Slogan: <i>Desde cualquier medio, periodismo en libertad</i> (Free journalism, no matter the medium).¹⁰⁶</p>	<p>Twitter account: @AristeguiOnline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Followers: 9.4 million ● Following: 11¹⁰⁷

2. Data collected for analysis

To retrieve content relevant to this project’s research question posted on Twitter by the five news media accounts summarized above, this research relies in part on specific hashtags. As discussed in Chapter 2, a

¹⁰³ The picture was taken from the news media Twitter account: [@AristeguiOnline](https://twitter.com/AristeguiOnline), consulted on March 14, 2023.

¹⁰⁴ Carmen Aristegui considers her work independent journalism. However, she and her news media site have also been criticized for supporting conservative political elites: in Antonio Salgado Borge, “Carmen Aristegui ante la censura, presente y pasada,” *Proceso*, <https://www.proceso.com.mx/opinion/2022/2/4/carmen-aristegui-ante-la-censura-presente-pasada-280373.htm>, consulted on January 18, 2023.

¹⁰⁵ Aristegui Noticias, “#LibroCasaBlanca y la historia que cimbró un gobierno. Prólogo de Aristegui #PrimerosCapítulos”, <https://aristeginoticias.com/1810/mexico/librocasablanca-la-historia-que-cimbro-un-gobierno-prologo-de-aristegui-primeroscapitulos/>, consulted on January 12, 2023.

¹⁰⁶ Aristegui Noticias, <https://aristeginoticias.com/>, consulted on January 12, 2023.

¹⁰⁷ Aristegui Noticias (Twitter), https://twitter.com/AristeguiOnline?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor, consulted on January 12, 2023.

hashtag is more than just an aggregator of information. Social media users use hashtags to address collective issues, debate, and encourage conversations about them. In this research, by only focusing on tweets that includes specific hashtags, I obtained information linked to my main topics: gender violence, femicides, and the feminist movement in Mexico. In this sense, for each account, I analyzed tweets containing the three following hashtags:

Table 7. Hashtags

#8M (Alluding to March 8)	#8Marzo2022 (March 8, 2022)	#DialInternacionalDeLaMujer (International Women’s Day)
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There are two main things I considered when I decided to focus on these three hashtags: 1) while researching the feminist movement in Mexico, and especially the social media aspect of it, I found that users associate specific hashtags with the current context of gender violence and femicides, such as #NiUnaMenos (not one [woman] less), #NiUnaMás (Not one [woman] more), and #VivasNosQueremos (We want each other alive), among others. My initial approach involved analyzing the tweets from the five news media accounts under those hashtags. However, preliminary findings (explained in the next section) showed that these five accounts did not mobilize these hashtags in any significant way.

So, I decided to study more “straightforward” or basic hashtags that can be easily associated with the feminist movement during International Women’s Day. Literally, the three hashtags I chose describe an event and the date of the event: International Women’s Day is held on March 8. I am conscious that these hashtags included a broader spectrum of subjects linked to the feminist movement generally and may not be as focused on gender violence and femicides as hashtags like #NiUnaMenos, #NiUnaMás or #VivasNosQueremos are. A result of taking a broader approach to these hashtags was that I found press coverage unrelated to my main subjects or gender violence and femicides that I had to exclude from my analysis. However, given the complicated context of gender violence in the country, I also found valuable information on this matter, even though the three hashtags—#8M, #8Marzo2022 and #DialInternacionalDeLaMujer—were more general.

There is no precise moment in which these three hashtags became trends on Twitter for the first time. Still, it is possible that they follow the same pattern addressed by Murthy Dhiraj in relation to #breakingnews: hashtags emerge when the users consider they must talk about something at a particular moment.¹⁰⁸ In this case, Twitter users started to tweet messages with these three hashtags in the days leading up to March 8 (International Women’s Day).

With this in mind, I chose to analyze tweets between March 6 to 13, 2022—the week during which International Women’s Day took place last year. Additionally, to access Twitter data in a systematic and efficient manner, and with an ability to retrieve as much of the public information within the timeframe selected as possible, I first needed to access Twitter’s Application Programming Interface (API). The API is the bridge connecting different computers,¹⁰⁹ or “*the messenger that takes requests and tells a system what you want to do and then returns the response back to you.*”¹¹⁰ To access Twitter’s API, the social media platform requires every user to apply for a *Twitter Developers Academic Research Account*,¹¹¹ for which it is mandatory to fill out an online survey to justify your intentions regarding the use of Twitter’s information. Then, the platform proceeds to evaluate the survey’s answers. In my case, after two days, I got the permit to open the *Developers Academic Research Account*, which included access to an online dashboard with the main tools needed to pull out a monthly cap of 10 million tweets with the software or program of my preference, and requests no higher than 250 tweets per second.

In that sense, one of the most challenging aspects of this research, timewise and related to the learning curve, was to master *Python* to scrape data from Twitter. In the following section, I explain this process further, as it might be helpful to others looking for a better idea of what it means to learn coding for the first time to

¹⁰⁸ Dhiraj, Murthy, “Twitter and journalism”, p.63.

¹⁰⁹ Janetzko, Dietmar, “The Role of APIs in Data Sampling from Social Media”, in *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods*, SAGE Publications Ltd, 2016, p.12.

¹¹⁰ MuleSoft Videos, “What is an API?”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7wmiS2mSXY>, watched on September 30, 2022.

¹¹¹ For more information about this account, see <https://developer.twitter.com/en/products/twitter-api/academic-research>, consulted on March 10, 2023.

obtain and manipulate specific data from Twitter. This included variables like 1) the number of tweets per account and hashtag; 2) the content of each tweet; and 3) the likes, retweets, quotes, URLs, and replies to each tweet, among other data.

3. Data scraping with Python

Using a technical definition, “*Python is an interpreted, object-oriented, high-level programming language with dynamic semantics. Its high-level built-in data structures, combined with dynamic typing and dynamic binding, make it very attractive for Rapid Application Development, as well as for use as a scripting or glue language to connect existing components together.*”¹¹² In simpler words, Python is a programming language that can be used for a variety of tasks, from Web development to simple data analysis through coding.¹¹³ Having said that, for everyone not used to working with computer programming languages (myself included), learning the basics of Python can be stressful and challenging. Hence, it is essential to be patient, perseverant, and ready to invest time to educate yourself on the logic of this program. To do so, I watched hours of YouTube tutorials (as I even did not know how to install it on my laptop). I approached and booked meetings with professors and faculty staff from my university that I knew could help me with specific concerns. I conversed with friends and colleagues that use Python on a daily basis or for their respective jobs. In a few words, I followed a dense and rigorous process to familiarize myself with this programming language.

The first skill to learn in this process was not how to get the data I wanted from Twitter, but rather to understand how Python works, its logic, and general rules. From there, I moved to learning how to code to scrape data from Twitter. Despite the steep learning curve, this programming language is relatively easy to learn and user-friendly for people with basic computer knowledge.

¹¹² Python, “What is Python Executive Summary,” <https://www.python.org/doc/essays/blurbl/>, consulted on March 17, 2023.

¹¹³ Coursera, “What is Python Used For? A Beginner’s Guide,” <https://www.coursera.org/articles/what-is-python-used-for-a-beginners-guide-to-using-python>, consulted on March 17, 2023.

Keeping that in mind, in what follows are some lessons I took away from this experience that may be useful for other researchers considering data scraping for the first time:

a) *Install Tweepy library*¹¹⁴

Once Python is installed on the desktop computer, laptop, or any other compatible device, I recommend downloading and installing the *Tweepy library* as well, which is “an open-source Python package that gives you a very convenient way to access the Twitter API with Python. Tweepy includes a set of classes and methods that represent Twitter’s models and API endpoints, and it transparently handles various implementation details, such as data encoding and decoding (...).”¹¹⁵ In other words, Tweepy is a Python extension that facilitates communication with Twitter’s API, as it contains general commands in the coding language format that can be used to demand Twitter-specific information, such as the number of tweets by account on a specific date, the number of likes, comments, and shares, among other variables. Tweepy is one of many Python libraries, and it is constantly updated by software developers, engineers, people that know how to code or that code regularly, and other actors.

b) *Install PyCharm*

The second piece of advice is to install PyCharm, which is an editor feature for Python to test and run the coding. It will suggest some changes, and errors in case the coding is not coherent or if it is incomplete.¹¹⁶ I tend to think that *PyCharm* is to Python as the *Grammarly* app is to written English.¹¹⁷ I basically worked with *PyCharm* to obtain the relevant data from Twitter by using the following commands:

¹¹⁴ The guideline to install it on a computer can be explored in the following link: <https://www.tweepy.org/>, consulted in September 2022.

¹¹⁵ Miguel García, “How to Make a Twitter Bot in Python with Tweepy”, <https://realpython.com/twitter-bot-python-tweepy/>, consulted on March 18, 2023.

¹¹⁶ IntelliPaat, “What is PyCharm?”, <https://intellipa.com/blog/what-is-pycharm/>, consulted on March 18, 2023.

¹¹⁷ *Grammarly* is a software that helps its users develop their written English skills to produce more natural texts according to their needs and fields (academic, business, or informal communication, among others). In that sense, the software evaluates the grammar – the morphology and syntax – of the text to advise and note its users of any orthography errors and to edit phrases and

- Give me all the tweets by @El_Universal_Mx, @AztecaNoticias, @UnoNoticias, @nmas, and @AristeguiOnline, limited by 1) tweets containing the hashtags #8M, #8Marzo2022, and #DialInternacionalDeLaMujer, 2) from March 6 to March 13, 2022, and 3) tweeted only in Mexico.
- Give me the count of tweets by hashtag;
- Give me the count of likes, comments, shares, and retweets of each tweet;
- Give me the ID of each tweet's URL; and
- Save the list of tweets by hashtag in an Excel spreadsheet.¹¹⁸

However, running the coding was not enough to obtain the data I needed. While Twitter's *Developers Academic Research Account* gave me all the credentials I needed to connect with its API,¹¹⁹ there was a specific limitation that represented a time-consuming challenge to actually obtain the data: the limit of 250 tweets per second. The monthly cap of 10 million tweets was not a problem for the purposes of this research, as it was contained in smaller numbers (which I explain in the next chapter). Nevertheless, given that I did not know how many tweets I would obtain with each request, sometimes the back and forth between Python and Twitter's API surpassed the condition of 250 tweets per second. In such cases, the process stopped without retrieving any data. When that happened, I needed to do two things: 1) wait for 15 minutes before making a new request, as the communication between Python and the API would not work otherwise,¹²⁰ and 2) modify my coding to ask Twitter to take more time to get the tweets. As expected, I went through a trial-and-error process for several days to eventually find the correct formula (see in Appendix 1 for more). After I

paragraphs to better explain the ideas more professionally or naturally, especially for those who are not native English speakers. Furthermore, the *Grammarly – PyCharm* works because *PyCharm* evaluates and detects any errors (and the type of error) in the coding too, which is helpful to fix the problems faster and easier to obtain the data.

¹¹⁸ Annex one describes the coding I used with Python to obtain this data.

¹¹⁹ 1) API Key and Secret: the username and password that represents me before the API; 2) Bearer Token: the credential I need to use to request X,Y, and Z to the API; and 3) Access Token and Secret: the final checking point that ensures I'm allowed to make such requests. I interpreted these concepts from: Twitter, "Developers APP: Overview," <https://developer.twitter.com/en/docs/apps/overview>, consulted on May 2, 2023.

¹²⁰ Twitter API set a 15-minute interval between requests to be able to manage the volume of requests by all developers. In: Twitter, "Rate limits," <https://developer.twitter.com/en/docs/twitter-api/rate-limits>, consulted on May 2, 2023.

obtained the data, the next step was to analyze it. In the following section, I explain how I mobilized thematic analysis, a research method focused on finding general narratives and trends within specific data.

4. Data analyzed in this research

According to scholars Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, while thematic analysis studies are widely used in qualitative research, there needs to be clear guidelines on how to understand the approach from the conceptual to the practical level. Thus, they developed a general outline to standardize a coherent method to conduct a thematic analysis.¹²¹ While Braun and Clarke's expertise focused on psychology, their approach has been used in many other fields, including journalism and media studies.

I. Thematic analysis: general characteristics

But what exactly is a "theme?" In the scholar's words, "*a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set.*"¹²² So, a thematic analysis allows researchers to cluster similar ideas to present generalizations, tendencies, patterns, and narratives that can help us understand an overall phenomenon.

II. Constructionist approach

One way to do a thematic analysis is with a constructionist approach, which focuses on evaluating "the big picture" of a case study—that is, finding general patterns of a certain phenomenon through the lenses of a specific context. The constructionist approach "*examines the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society (...) [it] seeks to*

¹²¹Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Using thematic analysis," p.77

¹²² Ibid, p. 82.

theorize the sociocultural contexts, and structural conditions, that enable the individual accounts that are provided."¹²³

In this research, I focused on how news media outlets in Mexico interpreted and covered issues related to gender violence and femicides in the context of International Women's Day 2022 on Twitter. In this sense, a constructionist approach helped find narratives and trends in this coverage when, as noted in Chapters 1 and 2, the country was going through a particular tense moment during which diverse sociopolitical groups demanded that governments take specific actions and measures to battle gender violence in Mexico.

III. Coding the themes

To identify the themes, I used a latent–interpretative approach to code the data: I identified and examined the ideas, assumptions, concepts, and ideologies behind the semantic content of the data.¹²⁴ I followed this coding approach given that the tweets included images and videos, so I knew it was necessary to consider more than what was said in the text, but also to interpret imagery to come up with my themes.

IV. Method: the six-phase thematic analysis process

To find narratives and patterns in the data and build arguments linked to my main research question, I needed to put together a structured system that allowed me to organize information for a proper deep analysis. For this, Braun and Clarke developed a six-phase method for a thematic analysis, which I followed in this research:

¹²³ Ibid, pp. 81 and 85.

¹²⁴ Ibid, p. 84.

Phase one: Familiarizing yourself with your data

The scholars describe this phase as the process of “*transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.*”¹²⁵ So, for this research, the first step was to get to know the information in the tweets, that is, the texts, and if they included photos, videos, URLs, and any other kind of multimedia.

Phase two: Generating initial codes

The second phase refers to the process of “*coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.*”¹²⁶ In a few words, once having a general understanding of the data’s content, the next step was to start making different lists of the ideas and concepts that emerged from the tweets. In that sense, the “raw data” stopped being raw and began to form into preliminary categories. By doing so, as I will explain later in Chapter 3, I undertook a tweet elimination process; that is, I decided which tweets I would continue analyzing throughout the rest of the phases and which others I would separate to include them in an “un-themed category.”

Phase three: Searching for themes

The third phase involved “*collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.*”¹²⁷ For my research, the core of the analysis began, and the lists of concepts and ideas started to change into the first proposal of themes. The data overlapped in different themes, as the idea was to move, shape, and reshape the themes. This was expected, as Braun and Clarke explain that organizing the ideas in thematic or concept maps is helpful.¹²⁸ A fundamental aspect of this phase was to think that every theme

¹²⁵ Ibid, p.87.

¹²⁶ Ibid, p.87.

¹²⁷ Idem.

¹²⁸ Ibid, p. 89.

is, in the end, connected, and they do not exist as bubbles, separate from one another. On the contrary, all the themes are intertwined.

Phase four: Reviewing themes

According to Braun and Clarke, the purpose of phase four is to check “*if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set.*”¹²⁹ In that sense, once I came up with the first proposal of themes, I reviewed it again to refine them. As I explain in depth in the next chapter, when a theme was isolated or did not have enough information to justify its value, I reconfigured it, changed it, or included it in another theme. In some cases, such minor initial themes were eventually excluded from further analysis.

Phase five: Defining and naming themes

The next step refers to the “*ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.*”¹³⁰ Simply put, this step involved conducting a final revision of each theme. In Braun and Clarke’s own words, defining and naming the themes means “*identifying the essence of what each theme is about, and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures. It is important not to try and get a theme to do too much, or to be too diverse and complex.*”¹³¹ My goal was to find coherence in my patterns and the overall ideas I got from the data. In the end, each one of the themes has enough information to back up narratives and ideas, connected to a certain degree with each other.

¹²⁹ Idem.

¹³⁰ Idem.

¹³¹ Ibid, p.92.

Phase six: Producing the report

The last phase was also, according to Braun and Clarke's method, "*the final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.*"¹³² Here, my objective was to demonstrate the value of this analysis through the narratives from the final set of themes, their merit, and why it makes sense for them to be told and published.¹³³

5. Limits of the research

The trends and narratives I found in this research were limited to the tweets I studied. In that sense, my arguments and findings are bound only to the five news media outlets included in this study and the Twitter content associated with three hashtags, *#DialInternacionalDeLaMujer*, *#8M*, and *#8Marzo2022*. With this in mind, it is important to acknowledge news media may have covered topics related to gender violence and femicides in Mexico, during the context of the 2022 International Women's Day, in other ways and outside the context of the included tweets I present in this research. However, by establishing this limit, I came up with a more controlled study in which I could build a coherent argumentation without being too abstract and attain my goal of starting a conversation about how news media cover gender violence on social media, and where improvements might be made.

Additionally, I acknowledge that my research focused on press coverage with an audience—people, organizations, enterprises, and other entities—limited to online penetration in Mexico, specifically on Twitter. In simpler words, the richness of this study is linked only to the community that engages and cares about Twitter content and excludes coverage occurring on other platforms and in other places than Twitter.

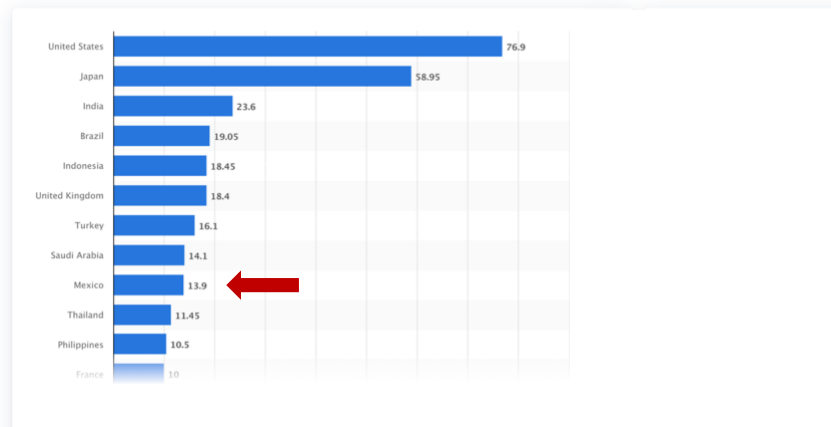
¹³² Ibid, p.87

¹³³ Ibid, pp. 87 – 93.

Figure 18. Twitter users per country

Internet > Social Media & User-Generated Content

Leading countries based on number of Twitter users as of January 2022
(in millions)



Source: [statista](https://www.statista.com/statistics/242606/number-of-active-twitter-users-in-selected-countries/), 2022.¹³⁴

Now that I have explained the methods that guided my research, I develop and test the thematic analysis in the following chapter. Every phase is described in detail and includes representative tweets that serve as examples for each of the final themes. Considering the tweets' contents are in Spanish, all the examples are translated into English.

¹³⁴ Statista, Leading countries based on number of Twitter users as of January 2022, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/242606/number-of-active-twitter-users-in-selected-countries/>, consulted on March 10, 2023.

Chapter three. News media coverage of gender violence and femicide on Twitter: a thematic analysis of the case of Mexico during the 2022 International Women’s Day

This research focused on two questions: 1) How did news media outlets in Mexico tweet about International Women’s Day in 2022? And 2) How did they address and cover the issue of gender violence and femicides on Twitter under three hashtags – #8M, #8Marzo2022, and #DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer – during that same period? This chapter details the results of the thematic analysis I conducted to help answer both questions. As explained in the previous chapter, I followed the guidelines developed in 2006 by scholars Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke for a qualitative thematic analysis, which consisted of a six-phase process: 1) familiarizing yourself with your data; 2) generating initial codes; 3) searching for themes; 4) reviewing themes; 5) defining and naming themes; and 6) producing the report.¹³⁵ Using Python to connect with Twitter’s API, I managed to scrape 408 tweets from the five Mexican news media outlets focused on in this research, from March 6 to 13, 2022. The breakdown of these tweets is summarized in Table 8 below.

Table 8. Total of tweets

Account	Username	#8M	#8Marzo2022	#DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer	Total
El Universal	El_Universal_Mx	58	54	33	145
TV Azteca	AztecaNoticias	17	6	13	36
UnoTV News	UnoNoticias	10	17	17	44
Televisa News	nmas	63	16	97	176
Aristegui News	AristeguiOnline	2	3	2	7
Total		150	96	162	408

The thematic analysis of these 408 tweets resulted in three distinct themes and seven subthemes. The following sections describe the steps I took throughout the six phases of the thematic analysis, from obtaining,

¹³⁵ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, “Using thematic analysis,” p.87.

skimming, and organizing the tweets, to creating and defining every theme. While I read and reflected on the text contained in each tweet, I also analyzed the accompanying images, videos, and URLs when those elements were present in a tweet. Every theme was conceived from a complex interpretation of all the multimedia elements included in each tweet.

1. Phase one: Familiarizing yourself with your data

In the previous chapter, I explained that I saved the tweets in three different Excel spreadsheets, each for every hashtag, which helped me organize the data. The organization of these spreadsheets is summarized in Table 9 below.

Table 9. Scraped data from Twitter

Column	Title	Description
A	Count	Tweet count
B	Handle	The tweet account to be analyzed
C	Text	The text of the tweet
D	Id	Twitter's id for each tweet (URL)
E	Author_Id	Twitter's id for each account
F	Retweet_count	Number of retweets
G	Reply_count	Number of replies
H	Like_count	Number of likes
I	Quote_count	Number of shares

Once I obtained all the tweets and their respective data, one of the most challenging steps was to decide where to start. Of course, there was not a single “correct” way to go; but, for me, working with Excel helped me visualize and comprehend the information in a structured and coherent manner that allowed me to prioritize and decide what to do and how to work with the amount of data covered in this research. So, in phase one of the thematic analysis, I took the following steps:

a) Retweet verification

Of the 408 tweets, 103 (25.2%) were “retweets.” I identified them because each tweet’s text – or copy – (column C) started with “RT.” To confirm this, I used the Id (Column D) online to see the actual tweet. It was essential to know this information for my analysis for several reasons:

1. As I mentioned in the method chapter, for this research, I considered a retweet as the news media outlet's endorsement of a message at times published by an account that did not include the five outlets I decided to study. For that, some other "external" accounts impacted the formulation of the themes.
2. The text (Column C) was incomplete for all retweets. This is because the scraped data consisted of 140 characters only when the tweet was a retweet. To fix that, in many cases I had to manually search for the tweet - using the id (Column D) to copy and paste the rest of the text in my spreadsheet.
3. The retweet verification could have been a very technical step. However, by reading the complete text and fixing my database, I started understanding the different topics the news media outlets covered.

b) The creation of an archive and the expansion of the database

While exploring the retweets online, I decided to expand my resources for a posteriori analysis:

1. I created a digital archive with a screenshot of every tweet. That is, I saved all 408 tweets in folders organized by hashtag and account.
2. I started to add more information to my database: new columns including the Tweet's URLs and whether the tweet included photos, videos, and links to additional coverage online. Also, to summarize the text, I added an “observations” column, which was very helpful for the coding phase, as I could track general ideas with keywords.

c) *The isolation of the duplicate tweets*

By going through the retweet text, I noticed that, in some cases, the same tweet included two or the three hashtags I chose for this research. So, I had to isolate all those tweets to ensure I counted them only once. Then, my database expanded again to include new variables, such as whether the tweet was a duplicate, and what hashtags were included in the text of the tweet.

Figure 19. Duplicate tweets

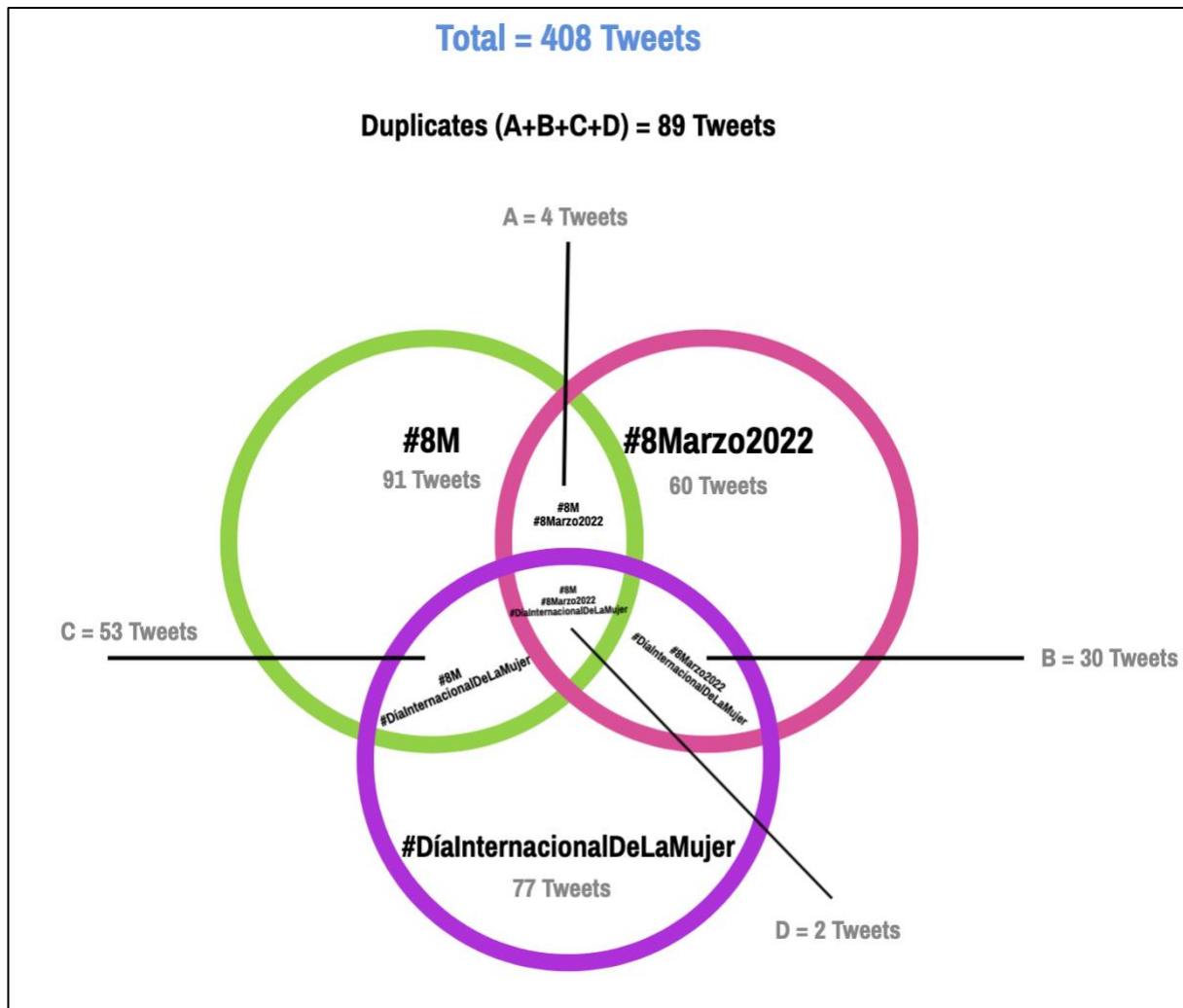


Table 10. Tweets with more than one hashtag (Type A)

Account	Username	#8Marzo2022/ DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer	#8Marzo2022/ #8M	#8M/ #DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer	#8Marzo2022/ #DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer/ #8M	Total
El Universal	El_Universal_Mx	3	1			4
TV Azteca	AztecaNoticias	1	2	7		10
UnoTV News	UnoNoticias	15	1	1		17
Televisa News	nmas	11		45	2	58
Aristegui News	AristeguiOnline					
Total		30	4	53	2	89

Table 11. Tweets without duplicates (Type B)

Account	Username	#8M	#8Marzo2022	#DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer	Total
El Universal	El_Universal_Mx	57	50	30	137
TV Azteca	AztecaNoticias	8	3	5	16
UnoTV News	UnoNoticias	8	1	1	10
Televisa News	nmas	16	3	39	58
Aristegui News	AristeguiOnline	2	3	2	7
Total		91	60	77	228

The steps followed in Phase 1 of this research thus reduced my dataset from 408 to 317 tweets: Type A + Type B): $89 + 228 = 317$. Going through Phase 1 also allowed me to start viewing the data as more than just numbers. I began to have a better understanding of the content, too. As this phase involved going reading the text associated with each tweet, I gained a clearer understanding of the photos, videos, and other materials that I needed to also include in my analysis. This first phase allowed me to develop keywords to organize the tweets under general topics that would later translate into codes, and then into themes.

2. Phase two: Generating initial codes

This phase was a subtle transition from organizing data with quantitative variables to organizing data considering its qualitative content. As Braun and Clarke (2006) reference from a study by R.E. Boyatzis,

“codes identify a feature of the data that appears interesting to the analyst, and refer to ‘the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon.’”¹³⁶ For each phase, I needed to read, analyze, reread, and reanalyze every tweet with different lenses and objectives. So, the particularity of this phase was that, by generating initial codes, I set the ground for my potential final themes.

In this section, I describe the qualitative coding steps I followed: 1) finding keywords to connect tweets to general and broad ideas; 2) establishing criteria to exclude tweets that were not relevant to answer the central questions of this research. This phase involved a systematic process of skimming data, as the analysis was still in an early stage. For every example, I created a QR code for each of the tweets referenced in this thesis, and another one for the article or news piece attached to that same tweet (if applicable). As explained in the introduction of this research, my intent behind including the QR codes was to help readers who want to access the tweets quickly and easily, in order to view the original content on a second device while considering the analysis and conclusions put forward in this research.

a) *Skimming to code: connecting ideas with keywords*

Once I had the data organized in spreadsheets, I proceeded to skim the text of every tweet, highlighting words that could denote some relation with the core subject of this research. That is, I placed added emphasis in the analysis when I found keywords in the tweets, like “gender,” “violence,” femicide,” “missing,” “sexual assault,” “harassment,” “10 femicides every day,” “*Vivas nos queremos*,” “*Ni una más*,” “*Ni una menos*,” “macho,” “*machista*,” “*Vivas se las llevaron, vivas las queremos*,”¹³⁷ “*Si me matan hoy...*”¹³⁸ among others.

¹³⁶ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, “Using thematic analysis,” p.88, referenced from Boyatzis, R.E., *Transforming qualitative information: thematic analysis and code development*, SAGE, 1998.

¹³⁷ English translation: They were taken alive; we want them back alive.

¹³⁸ English translation: If they kill me today...

Evidently, not every tweet included an explicit reference to gender violence or femicides, and I started to come across some other patterns in the tweets, such as “public disturbances,” “angry women,” or “peaceful parades.” These elements were important to set the tone of what the news media coverage looked like. They also helped me to anticipate the sort of content my eventual themes would include.

Example one. Coding with keywords¹³⁹

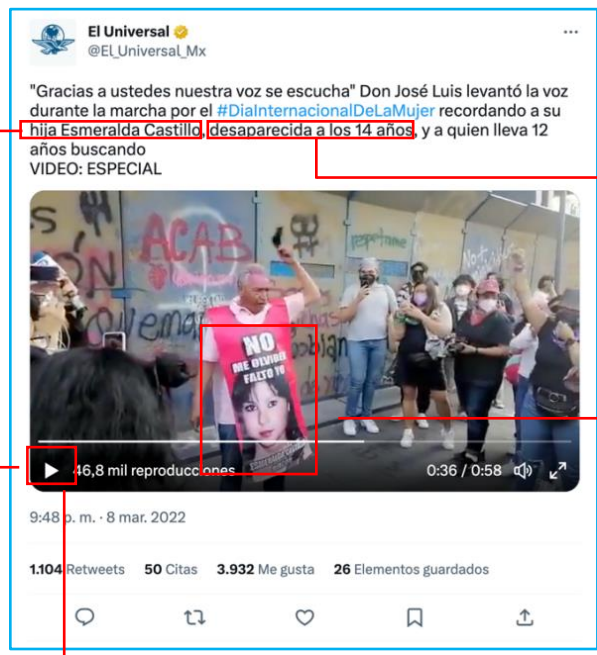
Figure 20. QR code example one, phase 2. El Universal



Personal story

Dialogue in video:
“You are not alone...”
(00:00 – 00:14)

Figure 21. Example one. Phase 2. El Universal tweet



Forced disappearance

Missing

Dialogue in video: “Thank you for raising your voice for my Esmeralda, and for all those women who have been murdered and disappeared in our country” (00:14 – 00:23)

¹³⁹ El Universal (@El_Universal_Mx), “Gracias a ustedes nuestra voz se escucha” Don José Luis levantó la voz durante la marcha por el #DiaInternacionalDeLaMujer recordando a su hija Esmeralda Castillo, desaparecida a los 14 años, y a quien lleva 12 años buscando VIDEO: ESPECIAL <https://t.co/o5zO0prNSJ>,” Twitter, March, 2022, https://twitter.com/El_Universal_Mx/status/1501389454099034116.

Tweet description: The tweet paid attention to a civilian, a father, who continues to look for his missing daughter after 12 years. He participated in the International Women's Day march supported by many women, who told him, "You're not alone."

My main objective with this example was to highlight some elements that could lead to different narratives to create themes: testimonies of gender violence, types of gender violence, live coverage of the march, etc.

Going through all the tweets and making a preliminary list of keywords helped me organize the data into different categories. However, only some of them were meant to become a theme. I created an exclusion category where I set aside all the tweets I would not analyze, but would retain for future research.

b) First round of exclusion criteria: Tweets unrelated to gender violence and femicide in Mexico

One of the most challenging aspects of this research was to focus only on the main topic when I analyzed the data: how news media outlets covered gender violence and femicides in Mexico on Twitter. Some interesting tweets dealt with various feminist subjects, such as women's contributions to science, and their latest accomplishments in entrepreneurship, sports, and gastronomy, among others. However, I limited this current study to only topics related to gender violence and femicides. In this sense, I did not analyze content unrelated to those matters. By skimming, reading, and rereading every tweet, I established solid criteria to determine 1) which tweets I could keep analyzing for the thematic phase, and 2) which ones I would not analyze because they were not related to the main topic of this research. The following is an example of an excluded tweet:

Example two. Tweet exclusion¹⁴⁰

Figure 23. QR code, phase 2.
Example two. Aristegui News



Figure 22. Example two. Phase two. Aristegui News tweet



While the tweet's text gave me a general idea of its content, I also considered other elements to decide whether the tweet should be included or excluded in the analysis, such as the images, videos, or other additional coverage in the tweet. In this example, I also read the piece by Aristegui's writing team included in the tweet.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Aristegui Noticias (@AristeguiOnline), "La Unión Africana hizo en el #DialInternacionalDeLaMujer un llamamiento a la inclusión económica y financiera de las mujeres en África," *Twitter*, March 2, 2022, <https://twitter.com/AristeguiOnline/status/1501311805620199430>.

¹⁴¹ Redacción AN/LLG, "Piden la inclusión económica de las mujeres: Unión Africana," *Aristegui Noticias*, March 8, 2022, <https://aristeguinoticias.com/0803/mundo/piden-la-inclusion-economica-de-las-mujeres-union-africana/>, consulted on March 30, 2023.

Example 2.1. Additional coverage in tweet (extract).

Figure 25. QR code. Example two additional coverage



Economic and financial inclusion

“La inclusión económica y financiera de las mujeres africanas exige que nos centremos y actuemos de manera colectiva en temas cruciales, como el acceso a recursos y servicios financieros, ampliar las capacidad en un entorno global dinámico, el acceso a la propiedad de la tierra, al patrimonio y a otros valores productivos, así como a habilidades e información para el mercado”.

Access to financial services and other resources

Land ownership

African women

Tweet description: There was no clear link between International Women’s Day and gender violence/femicides in Mexico. For this reason, I did not include this tweet in the following phases of the thematic analysis.

I followed the same process for the rest of the tweets: to be analyzed, the tweet needed to address topics related to gender violence and femicides in Mexico. That is, in the text of the tweet, in declarations and statements in the videos, images, or in the stories told in the articles and pieces attached to the tweets, in the symbols and imagery of the photos, somehow, in any of those components of the tweet, the topics of gender violence and femicides in Mexico needed to be strong for a deep and compelling analysis.

Table 12. Excluded tweets in phase 2

Type A	Type B	Total
5	48	53

After this exclusion phase, a total of 53 tweets did not make it to phase three of the thematic analysis, leaving me with 264 tweets (317 – 53 = **264 (83.3%)**). Additionally, my analysis considered 142 videos, 29 series of images, and 95 journalistic pieces. Some tweets included more than one of those elements.

Appendix 2 describes all the variables I considered to analyze the data in an Excel spreadsheet. Table 13 below breaks down the total number of tweets included per news media account:

Table 13. Total of tweets for phase three

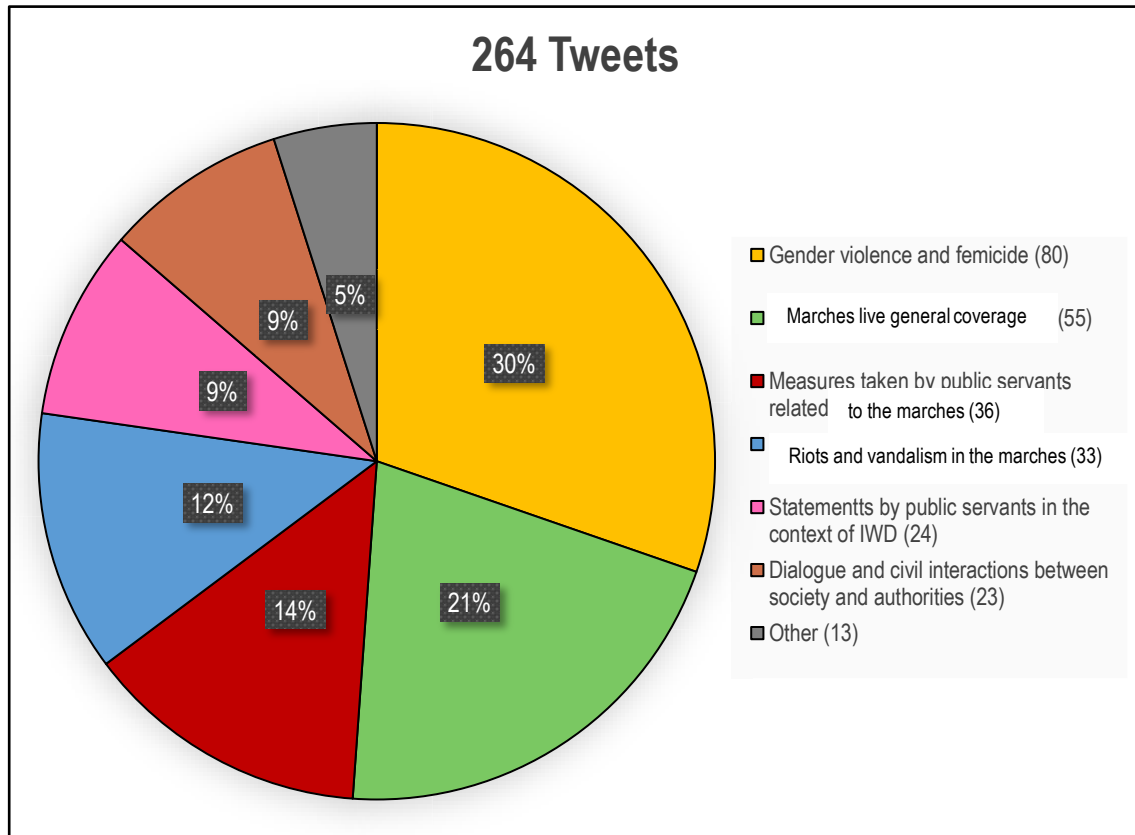
Account	Username	Type A	Type B	Total
El Universal	El_Universal_Mx	100	4	104
TV Azteca	AztecaNoticias	15	7	22
UnoTV News	UnoNoticias	10	17	27
Televisa News	nmas	50	56	106
Aristegui News	AristeguiOnline	5		5
Total		180	84	264

3. Phase three: Searching for themes

Once I had a variety of codes connecting ideas throughout the tweets, I started searching for distinct themes present among these initial codes. Braun and Clark say, “*this phase (...) involves sorting the different codes into potential themes and collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes. Essentially, you are starting to analyze your codes and consider how different codes may combine to form an overarching theme.*”¹⁴² Phase three implied a continuous process of reading and re-reading every tweet categorized under the same or similar codes to form potential themes. As I explain further below, one of the most challenging aspects of creating themes was evaluating and selecting the relevant data from the images, videos, and articles attached to the tweets. After going back and forth from one tweet to another, and from code to code, I was able to create my first set of seven themes: 1) Gender violence and femicide; 2) Parade’s live general coverage; 3) Measures taken by public servants in relation to the parade; 4) Riots and vandalism at the parade; 5) Statements by public servants in the context of International Women’s Day; 6) Dialogue and civil interaction between society and authorities; and 7) Other.

¹⁴² Braun and Clarke, “Using thematic analysis,” p.89.

Figure 26. Theme distribution in phase three



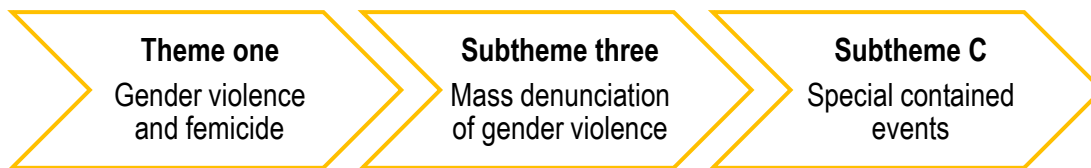
In this phase, my main objective was to group tweets together in very general narratives describing the tweet's content. In that sense, while my central research question is "How did news media outlets cover on Twitter issues related to gender violence and femicide in Mexico," in phase three I focused more on understanding what they covered. Nevertheless, the analysis was still somewhat descriptive, becoming more substantial in how they evolved in phases four and five.

This first set of themes was useful to establish the different angles I should expect to tackle in this coverage. So, instead of having an overwhelming amount of data to analyze in a sole group, now I could study the information in a more controlled and contained way. In the following pages, I briefly describe my initial thematic findings.

Coverage that fell under theme one, “Gender violence and femicide,” highlighted visual, implicit, or explicit messages, stories, and events in which society addressed concerns about gender violence and femicides in Mexico. Most of the coverage was on March 8, 2022, International Women's Day, and during the parade and marches throughout the country. There were different angles brought up related to this topic: some tweets focused on describing the Mexican context when it came to the rise of femicides in the last years, while others prioritized the mobilization of women in the marches who demanded justice and accountability for all the victims of harassment, sexual assaults, forced disappearances, femicides, and other expressions of gender violence. A clear representation of this theme can be seen in the following tweet:

a) *Theme one. Example 3. Uno TV News*¹⁴³

Figure 27. Phase three. Theme one example



¹⁴³ Uno TV (@UnoNoticias), “Este #8Marzo2022 en la ‘Glorieta de las Mujeres que Luchan’ se instaló un tendedero que se titula ‘Yo denuncié pero...’,” Twitter, March, 2022, <https://twitter.com/UnoNoticias/status/1501315572457295875>, consulted on May 6, 2023.

Figure 29. QR code. Phase three.
Theme one example

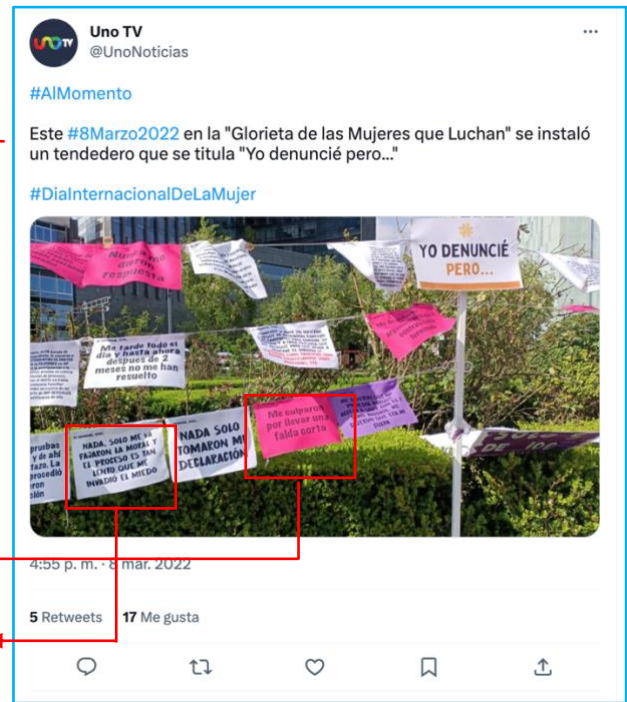


#AIMomento
This #8Marzo2022 at the “Roundabout of the Women’s Struggle” a clothesline was installed entitled “I denounced but...”
#DialInternacionalDeLaMujer

They blamed me for wearing a short ...

Nothing, they just lowered my moral and the process is so slow that I got scared.

Figure 28. Phase three. Theme one example (tweet)



Tweet description: The tweet highlights different scenarios in which women denounced gender violence actions against them without getting help from the authorities. I interpreted the image of the clothesline of messages as a reminder that these cases are often experienced in private life.

This content fits the characteristics of Theme One, as there is an explicit message about gender violence. The messages could apply to any woman, so I included them in subtheme three; however, this installation was not accessible to everyone—it was contained in a particular presentation and place, so it also fits in subtheme C.

I justify theme two, “Parade’s ‘live’ general coverage,” under the argument that one of the leading causes for going outside and marching during International Women's Day in Mexico was to denounce gender violence. In that sense, the live Twitter coverage of the marches undoubtedly included subtle references to gender violence and femicides. However, the main difference between this theme and the first one is how they covered this matter: in theme one, the content’s core was to address gender violence, while in theme two, the focus was more directed to what was going on around that topic, highlighting the different actors

participating in the marches, what they wore, where they met, and how they were participating on the streets through live coverage. The following example serves as a visual explanation of this theme's coverage:

b) Theme two. Example 4. Televisa News (RT)¹⁴⁴

Figure 30. Phase three. Theme Two example



Figure 32. QR code. Phase three. Theme two example



#AlMomento
This #8Marzo2022 at the “Roundabout of the Women’s Struggle” a clothesline was installed entitled “I denounced but...”
#DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer

Figure 31. Phase three. Theme two example (tweet)



Video translation (excerpt)

Journalist (Genaro Lozano): - As reported by the city government, 40 people required medical attention, but the majority were due to dehydration and heat stroke; only eight were taken to the hospital, six police officers and two masked participants. In addition, authorities confiscated 293 dangerous objects from different people.

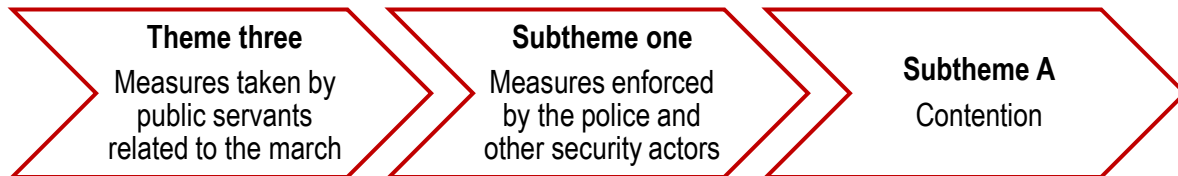
¹⁴⁴ NMás (@nmas), RT Foro_TV “#8M De acuerdo con datos oficiales, más de 75 mil personas marcharon esta tarde en la Ciudad de México para conmemorar el #DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer. Hora21 con @genarolozano,” Twitter, March, 2022, <https://twitter.com/nmas/status/1501401453486825476>, consulted on May 4, 2023.

Tweet description: While it was visible that women were protesting on the streets, their reasons and stories were not covered. This tweet focused on “numbers”: how many people attended the march, how many incidents occurred, and how many objects were confiscated. Gender violence is in the background of this coverage, fitting the characteristics of Theme Two.

As for theme three, “Measures taken by public servants related to the parade,” I describe the news media coverage related to the roles and involvement of authorities before, during, and after the International Women's Day marches. This theme focused not on the people and civilians participating in those events, but on the actors in charge of public security, first aid assistance, and logistics. Here is an example of this theme:

c) *Theme three. Example 5. El Universal*¹⁴⁵

Figure 33. Phase three. Theme three example



¹⁴⁵ El Universal (@El_Universal_Mx), “En la marcha de este #8Marzo2022, algunos contingentes se encontraron con la policía en donde las autoridades trataron de impedir el paso a la estatua de ‘El Caballito’ #NiUnaMenos #Foto Fernanda Rojas,” Twitter, March, 2022, https://twitter.com/El_Universal_Mx/status/1501327292831711232, consulted on May 4, 2023.

Figure 35. QR code. Phase three.
Theme three example



In the march of #8Marzo2022, some contingents met the police, who tried to prevent them from passing the statue of "El Caballito" #NiUnaMenos #Foto Fernanda Rojas

Figure 34. Phase three. Theme three example (tweet)



Tweet description: The images show an engagement between the police and the protesters. As it is mentioned, authorities tried to prevent people from passing close to a monument. I included this content in the Subtheme "contention" as one of the objectives of the police was to stop protesters from damaging public spaces.

In Theme Four, "Riots and vandalism at the parade," I included tweets that depict acts of violence during the marches in different cities of the country. One of the main differences between this theme and the previous one is that the attention is placed on what the protesters did instead of what the authorities were supposed to do. In most cases, the tweets did not include a clear message from the people participating in the marches nor an analysis of any kind to explain, with accuracy, what happened. Whether the intention behind such tweets was to cover the events live or contribute to a narrative of extremist feminists taking over the parade is unclear. I encourage readers to use the QR code or click on the URL to watch the video included in the tweek of this theme's example:

d) Example 6. TV Azteca¹⁴⁶

Figure 36. Phase three. Theme four example

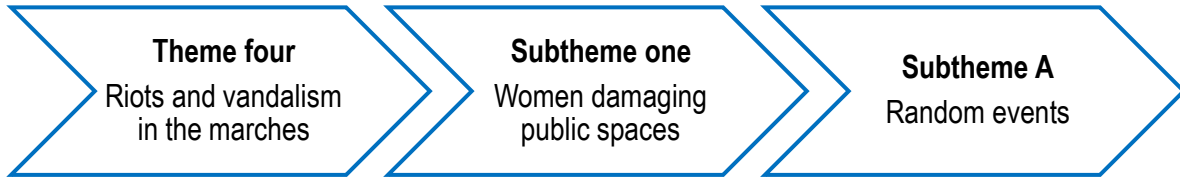


Figure 38. QR code. Phase three. Theme four example



During #8M, protesters burn barricades that protect the Government Palace in Tuxtla Gutiérrez #Chiapas #8Marzo2022

Figure 37. Phase three. Theme four example (tweet)



Tweet description: There is no clear context of what is happening and why. Instead, the theme and subthemes focused on what can be seen without any deep analysis: women damaging (burning) public property.

In theme five, “Statements by public servants in the context of International Women’s Day,” the news media outlets shared statements, opinions, and decisions taken by high-level political actors concerning

¹⁴⁶ Fuerza Informativa Azteca (@AztecaNoticias), “En el marco del #8M, manifestantes queman barricadas que protegen el Palacio de Gobierno de Tuxtla Gutiérrez, #Chiapas,” Twitter, March, 2022, <https://twitter.com/AztecaNoticias/status/1501372016472903689>, consulted on May 4, 2023.

International Women's Day, and the marches, and any other protests and social demands on gender violence.

More than the texts, what helped me better to define this theme was the multimedia aspect of the tweets:

e) *Theme five. Example 7. Televisa News*¹⁴⁷

Figure 39. Phase three. Theme five example

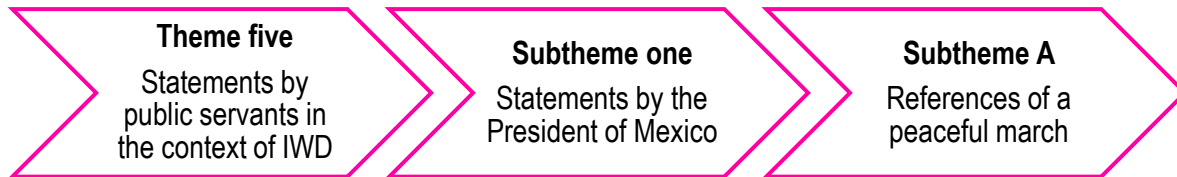


Figure 40. QR code. Phase three. Theme five example



President Obrador congratulates women for peaceful marches in Mexico for #8M. He talked about it during his morning daily conference. #Despierta with @daniellemx_

Figure 41. Phase three. Theme five example (tweet)



Video translation (excerpt)

President Obrador: I want to let all the people of Mexico know that yesterday the marches for International Women's Day were peaceful throughout the country. There were some incidents, but women need to be congratulated for their causes against gender violence and femicides...

¹⁴⁷ Nmás (@nmas), "AMLO felicita a mujeres por marchas pacíficas en México por el #8M. Así lo expresó en su conferencia mañanera. #Despierta con @daniellemx_," Twitter, March, 2022, <https://twitter.com/nmas/status/1501567273550716931>, consulted on May 4, 2023.

Tweet description: Every morning, the president goes live to talk about his daily agenda. On March 9, 2022, he acknowledged the peaceful character of the International Women’s Day marches, so the tweet is in sync with the characteristics of this theme.

In theme six, “Dialogue and civil interactions between society and authorities,” the content of the included tweets focused on conversations, dialogue, and messages exchanged between civil society and public authorities. Most of these interactions took place in the marches. A clear difference between this theme and others in which people and authorities interacted with each other is that in this theme, there was no element of violence present between the actors. The following tweet represents the content of this theme:

f) *Theme six. Example 8. TV Azteca*¹⁴⁸

Figure 42. Phase three. Theme six example



¹⁴⁸ Fuerza Informativa Azteca (@AztecaNoticias), “Son auténticas guerreras, la conmemoración del #8M para ellas es una prueba de fuego. Las mujeres policía siempre retornan con el deber cumplido. Hoy, su labor fue reconocida por las mismas manifestantes. #DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer,” Twitter, March, 2022, <https://twitter.com/AztecaNoticias/status/1501433148516843522>, consulted on May 4, 2023.

Figure 44. QR code. Phase three. Theme six example



They are true warriors, the #8M commemoration is a litmus test for them. Policewomen always accomplished their duties. Today, their work was recognized by the protesters too.
#DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer

Figure 43. Phase three. Theme six example (tweet)



Video translation (excerpt)

Policewomen in the march: - women, policewomen, we join the contingent.
Chief policewomen: - It was a very generous gesture on their part. Some colleagues told me that the protesters took off their hoods and one of them kissed them on their hands. Thank you very much for that gesture. We can say that more than half of the march was peaceful. It helped that we were here on the lines.

Tweet description: The tweet focused on the roles of policewomen during the marches, highlighting a positive statement by a chief officer about their interactions with the protesters.

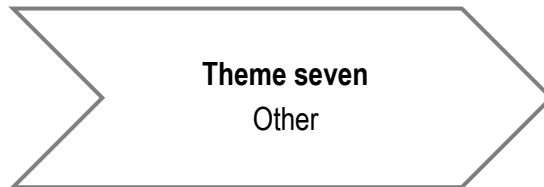
The objective of this theme was to explore the content related to women engaging with authorities on the field and how some of these interactions were civil.

Finally, theme seven, “Other,” merged all the tweets I could not be included in any of the previous six initial themes. Braun and Clark said, “*it is perfectly acceptable to create a ‘theme’ called ‘miscellaneous’ to house the codes – possibly temporarily – that does not seem to fit into your main themes.*”¹⁴⁹ In that sense,

¹⁴⁹ Braun and Clarke, “Using thematic analysis,” p.90.

some tweets did not fit into the other themes. The coverage was too random, or they did not have enough information for a narrative or trend. However, I was not ready to exclude them from the analysis at this point, as I saw a slight potential for building a theme related to my main subject:

Figure 45. Phase three. Theme seven example



g) Example 9. Televisa News (RT)¹⁵⁰

Figure 46. QR code. Phase three. Theme seven example



This Tuesday #8deMarzo, during #DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer, the Sinaloa Congress approved the decriminalization of #aborto up to 13 weeks of gestation. #Hora21 with @genarolozano

Figure 47. Phase three. Theme seven example (tweet)



¹⁵⁰ Nmás (@nmas), RT Foro_TV “Este martes #8deMarzo de 2022, en el marco del #DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer, el Congreso de Sinaloa aprobó la despenalización del #aaborto hasta las 13 semanas de gestación. #Hora21 con @genarolozano,” Twitter, March, 2022, <https://twitter.com/nmas/status/1501401420947415041>, consulted on May 5, 2023.

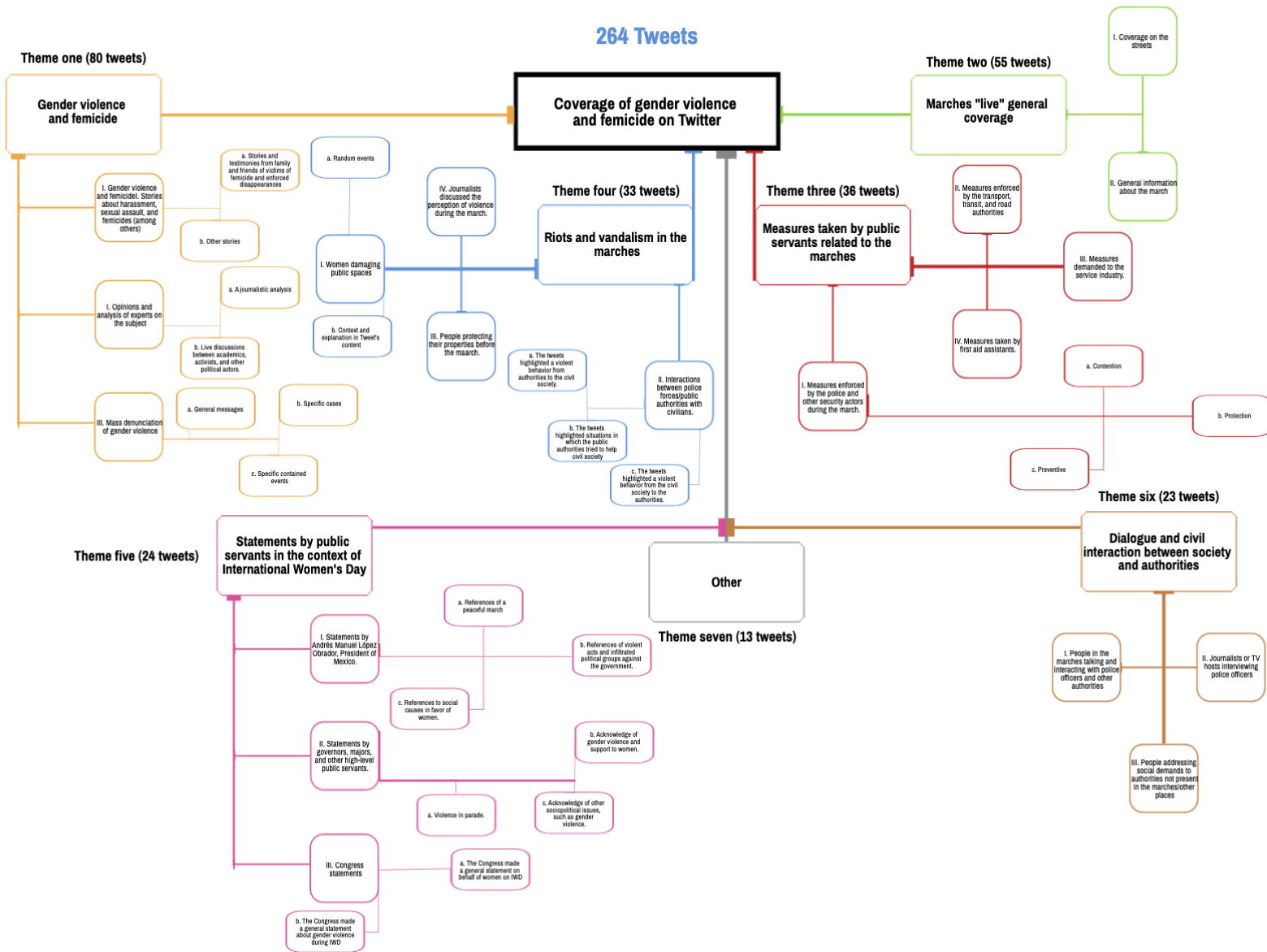
Video translation (excerpt)

Journalist Genaro Lozano: - Sinaloa became the eight state in Mexico to decriminalize abortion up to the 13th week of pregnancy. The local congress approved "the right to decide" with 28 votes in favor, two against, and nine abstentions. The Congress voted during the commemoration of International Women's Day. Outside the congress, activists of the so-called "green wave" celebrated this decision.

Tweet description: There is no clear message of gender violence or femicides in this tweet. However, the cause in itself, "the right to abort," exists within a more extensive debate on gender violence. Additionally, it is possible to see women wearing purple, a color generally associated with this topic.

However, the content of this tweet is short, so its messages are not that explicit. In that sense, I preferred to separate it from the other themes to keep reflecting on it for the subsequent phases of the thematic analysis.

Figure 48. Phase three. Initial thematic map



4. Phase four: Reviewing themes

Once I had my first set of initial themes, I let them simmer before moving to phase four. This study required a constant process of going back and forth between each tweet. I read every piece of text and linked article, analyzed all the images and photos, and watched every video countless times. After completing phase three, I needed to pause this process to decrease the possibility of incurring biases when analyzing the data. Detaching myself from the experiment for a couple of days allowed me to come back with fresh eyes to observe elements I may have not paid attention to before. In that sense, taking a break between phases is a valid and essential step within the thematic analysis. In phase four, my main objective was to improve my themes' clarity, logic, and validity. For Braun and Clarke, reviewing themes denotes a refinement process in which *“it will become evident that some candidate themes are not really themes (e.g., if there are not enough data to support them, or the data are too diverse), while others might collapse into each other (...) and other themes might need to be broken down into separate themes.”*¹⁵¹ Before moving to the description of what the second reviewed batch of themes looked like, it will be helpful to explain some of the main changes from phase three to phase four:

a) Fewer themes:

While a couple of themes maintained most of their integrity from phase three into phase four, some merged to form a new theme, while others got absorbed by an existing theme. One main reason for this was the erroneous interpretation of specific codes or subthemes as themes. As Braun and Clarke explained, if there is not enough data to support a theme, it may not be a theme at all. This is where the reviewing process is integral. Additionally, there were some shifts and changes among subthemes as well: 1) just like in the case of the main themes, some of the subthemes did not have enough data to justify their existence; 2) by shifting from one theme to another, the subthemes needed to be adapted, so I needed to reframe them to explain

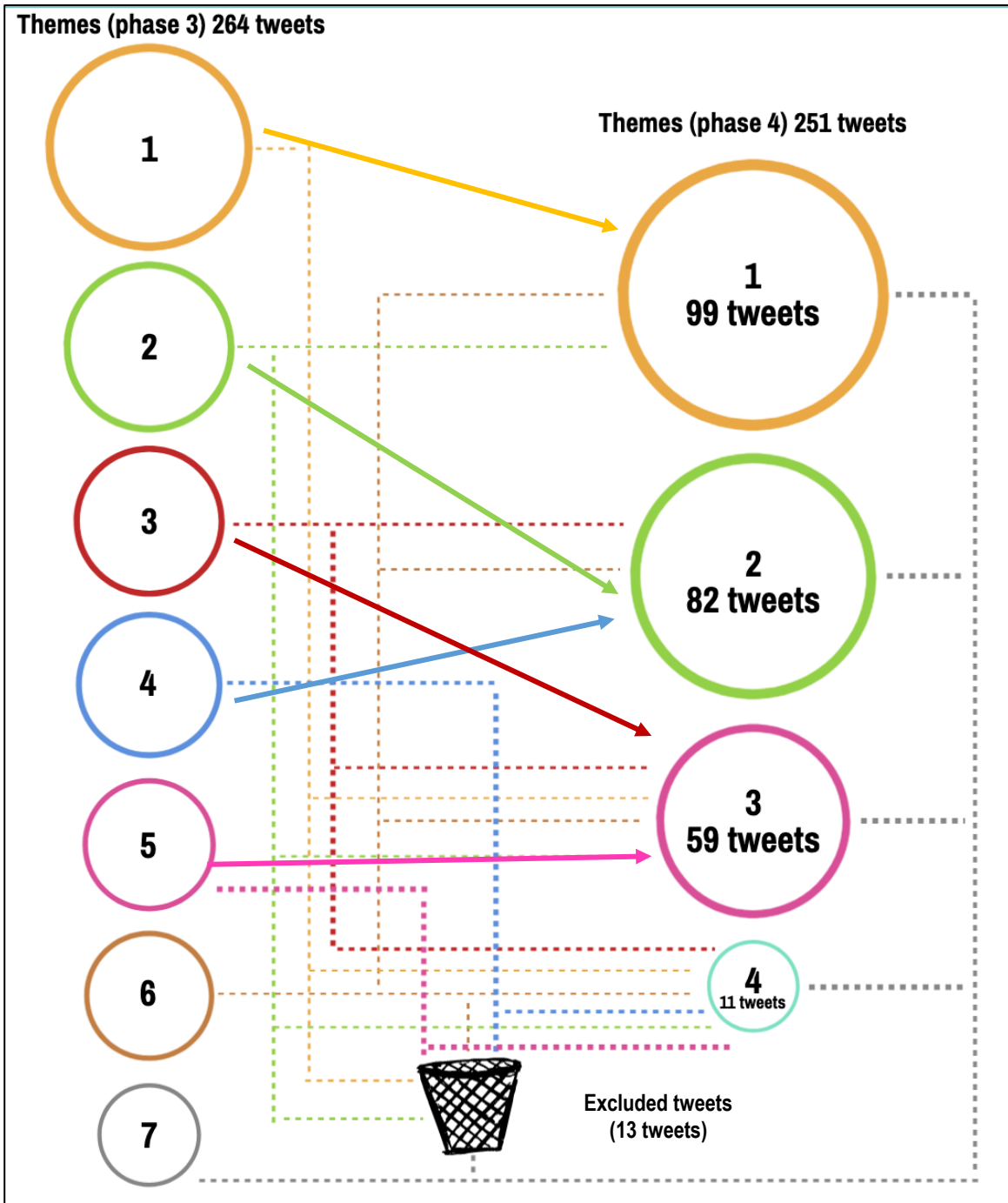
¹⁵¹ Braun and Clarke, “Using thematic analysis,” p.91.

their content better, or 3) some subthemes ceased to exist because I stopped analyzing the data, when it did not connect directly to the focus of this research (as explained earlier in this chapter in phase two, pp. 66 – 69). Such tweets were removed from the main dataset and placed into the "excluded" category.

b) More solid narratives:

The revised set of themes explains much better how the five news media outlets covered Twitter issues related to gender violence and femicides during the context of International Women's Day in Mexico on a conceptual level, rather than a descriptive one. Briefly, the revised themes are less general or dispersed, and help explore the main research question from more analytical angles. The following graphic shows the most significant shifts from the themes between phases three and four:

Figure 49. Shifting themes



Most of the tweets shifted from one theme to the other.



Some tweets moved to the new themes.

As can be seen, most of the content from themes one, “Gender violence and femicide,” and two, “Parade’s ‘live’ general coverage,” in phase three remained as similar themes in phase four: “Socially-mediated views on gender violence and femicides” and “Peaceful/respectful vs. aggressive/violent actions during The International Women’s Day marches,” respectively. With certain exceptions, themes three, “Measures taken by public servants related to the parade,” and five, “Statements by public servants in the context of International Women’s Day,” merged into a new theme three, “Government responses to gender violence and femicides.” The initial theme four, “Riots and vandalism at the parade,” was collapsed into the revised theme two, “Socially-mediated views on gender violence and femicides.” However, some other themes—“Dialogue and civil interactions between society and authorities” and “Other”—disintegrated completely, and their content was moved to new themes or went directly to the excluded category.

To summarize, the revised themes in phase four are: 1) Socially-mediated views on gender violence and femicides; 2) Peaceful/respectful vs. aggressive/violent actions during the International Women’s Day marches; 3) Government’s responses to gender violence and femicides; and 4) Deep journalism/context on gender violence and femicides.

The revised Theme One, “Socially-mediated views on gender violence and femicides,” included noticeable changes, such as the names of the subthemes, as they became more analytical than descriptive; they address the issues the news media covered more clearly. Also, the data was merged into fewer subthemes, and the tweets were less dispersed, so each subtheme had more content to work with:

c) Theme one. Example 10. Aristegui News¹⁵²

Figure 50. Phase four. Theme one example

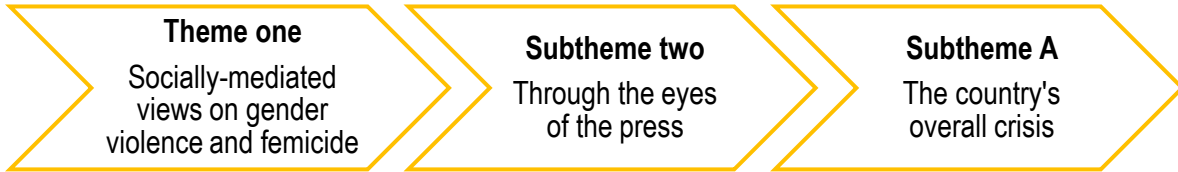


Figure 52. QR code. Phase four. Theme one example



#8M Women write “Mexico femicide” on the fences installed around the National Palace.

Figure 51. Phase four. Theme one example (tweet)



¹⁵² Aristegui Noticias (@AristeguiOnline), “#8M Mujeres escriben ‘México feminicida’ en vallas de Palacio Nacional,” Twitter, March, 2022, <https://twitter.com/AristeguiOnline/status/1501183935329587203>, consulted on May 4, 2023.

Example 11. Article excerpt¹⁵³

Figure 54. QR code. Phase four. Theme one example (additional coverage)



Figure 53. Phase four. Theme one example (additional coverage)

Grupos de mujeres se acercaron este lunes a Palacio Nacional, en la víspera de la marcha por la conmemoración del Día Internacional de las Mujeres, para **protestar por la violencia feminicida en México**.

Tras la instalación de las vallas metálicas en el zócalo capitalino, **las mujeres escribieron en éstas la frase ‘México feminicida’**, además de que colocaron carteles con los rostros de las mujeres que han sido asesinadas en el país.

Más temprano, un grupo de militares instalaron las vallas de más de tres metros de altura, que se suman a las que se instalaron desde el pasado viernes en la Catedral y el Palacio de Bellas Artes.

Durante la acción, el colectivo *Antimonumenta Vivas Nos Queremos* envió un mensaje al presidente Andrés Manuel López Obrador, quien durante su conferencia matutina llamó a las mujeres a manifestarse sin violencia debido a que el gobierno tiene información de que “se están preparando con marros, sopletes, bombas molotov”, **lo que es una “postura conservadora, reaccionaria” en su contra y de la cuarta transformación**.

“**Señor Presidente: conservadora la impunidad que protege asesinos, violenta su omisión; provocadora su demagogía, nosotras buscamos justicia**”, apuntaron en su mensaje.

Translation:

This Monday, on the eve of the march to commemorate International Women’s Day, groups of women approached the National Palace to protest against femicide violence in Mexico.

After the installation of the metal fences in the downtown public square, the women wrote on them “Mexico femicide” and placed images with the faces of the women who have been murdered in the country.

Soldiers installed these three-meter-high fences in addition to the ones installed in the Cathedral and the Palace of Fine Arts last Friday. In response to this action, the “*Antimonumenta Vivas nos queremos*” collective sent a message to President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who, in his daily morning conference, demanded women to protest without violence, as he mentioned that the government had information that “women were preparing blowtorches and Molotov cocktails, demonstrating a conservative and reactionary position” against him and the fourth transformation.

The *Antimonumenta* responded: “Mr. President, the impunity that protects murderers is conservative, your omission is violent, your demagoguery is provocative, we only seek justice.”

Tweet description: The coverage centered on the counter-response of feminist groups towards the statements of the President of Mexico about having information regarding the infiltration of conservative groups within the march to damage his image.

In both the tweet and the linked article, there was a clear point of view from the news media outlet to prioritize the social demands on gender violence and femicides in light of the president’s stance.

¹⁵³ Aristegui Noticias “8M: Mujeres escriben ‘México feminicida’ en vallas de Palacio Nacional,” *Aristegui Noticias*, March, 2022, <https://aristeguionoticias.com/0803/mexico/8m-mujeres-escriben-mexico-feminicida-en-vallas-de-palacio-nacional/>, consulted on May 4, 2023.

The main change of Theme two, “Peaceful/respectful vs. aggressive/violent actions during the International Women’s Day marches,” was the result of the incorporation of the majority of the tweets under the initial “riots and vandalism” theme of phase three. I decided to include them in this new theme, as their content was also linked to the live coverage of the marches throughout the country. For that, the configuration of the subthemes changed drastically. This theme balances the content of several tweets that centered the attention towards the behavior of the protesters: were they violent or peaceful?

d) Theme two. Example 12. El Universal¹⁵⁴

Figure 55. Phase four. Theme two example



Figure 57. QR code. Phase four. Theme one example



The encounter between police offices and a self-proclaimed “radical” feminist group in the #DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer protest in Toluca
Video: Claudia González – El Universal

Figure 56. Phase four. Theme one example (tweet)



¹⁵⁴ El Universal (@El_universal_Mx), “Así fue el encuentro en Toluca de policías con un grupo de feministas autodenominadas radicales en las protestaas del #DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer Video: Claudia González – El Universal,” Twitter, March, 2022, https://twitter.com/El_Universal_Mx/status/1501402728538517512, consulte don May 4, 2023.

Example 13. Televisa News¹⁵⁵

Figure 58. Phase four. Theme two example (2)



Figure 60. QR code. Phase four. Theme two example (2)



Live #8M: Activists with drums and shells walk towards the downtown public square of Mexico City in complete calm. #DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer

Figure 59. Phase four. Theme two example (2, tweet)



Tweets description: Both examples include a short clip of people behaving accordingly to the tweet's text. There is no analysis of any sort in any of the tweets; it seems the main objective was to say whether the march was violent or not. There were several tweets like these two—random clips without context—to inform the audience of how the protesters acted at a particular moment.

We can see two faces of the marches, demonstrating that both cases fit this theme.

My main objective for Theme Three, “Government’s responses to gender violence and femicides,” was to highlight the coverage of the government’s position on gender violence and femicides during one of the most symbolic events for the feminist movement. This theme intends to explain the connections between

¹⁵⁵ Nmás (@nmas), “Minuto a minuto #8M: Caminan activistas con tambores y caracoles rumbo al Zócalo de CDMX en completa calma. #DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer,” Twitter, March, 2022, <https://twitter.com/nmas/status/1501328414388600833>, consulted on May 5, 2023.

what the authorities declared and what they did in relation to this day, but mainly regarding the marches. The following tweet represents the content of this theme:

e) Theme three. Example 14. TV Azteca¹⁵⁶

Figure 61. Phase four. Theme three example

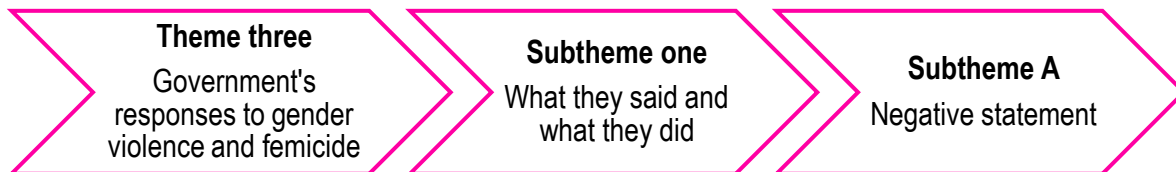


Figure 62. QR code. Phase four. Theme three example



"We have information that certain groups are carrying dangerous instruments that can harm other people," said Martí Batres.

The priority of the government of Mexico City is to protect the general population attending the march #8Marzo2022

Figure 63. Phase four. Theme three example (tweet)



¹⁵⁶ Fuerza Informativa Azteca (@AztecaNoticias), "Por la información que tenemos, hay grupos que están llevando instrumentos peligrosos que pueden dañar a otras personas", señaló Maartí Batres. La prioridad del gobierno de la #CDMX es proteger a la población en general que asista a la marcha #8Marzo2022," Twitter, March, 2022, <https://twitter.com/AztecaNoticias/status/1501045042038775812>, consulted on May 4, 2023.

Example 15. Article excerpt¹⁵⁷

Figure 65. QR code. Phase four. Theme three example (additional coverage)



Figure 64. Phase four. Theme three example (additional coverage)

Prioridad en marcha Día de la Mujer 2022 será proteger a mujeres

Martí Batres explicó que la prioridad del gobierno de la CDMX es proteger a las personas, a las mujeres y población civil en general que asistan a la marcha 8M por el Día de la Mujer 2022.

Agregó que el exhorto continuará siendo que la movilización sea pacífica y que el gobierno de la CDMX dará información de cómo se desarrollará la marcha 8M.

Martí Batres sostuvo que la **violencia** que se registraría en la marcha 8M por el Día de la Mujer 2022 no es justificable, pues existe un marco jurídico que castiga la **violencia** hacia las **mujeres**.

"Es una **violencia** machista que pone en peligro a otras mujeres. Las movilizaciones deben ser pacíficas, por convicción y por ordenamiento jurídico, la **violencia** en la marcha no se justifica de ninguna manera porque hay políticas públicas en contra de la **violencia** hacia las mujeres, las mujeres en la Ciudad de México no están solas, señalamos aquí que la prioridad será proteger a la población", dijo el secretario de Gobierno de CDMX.

Se espera que durante la marcha del 8M haya más de 3 mil mujeres policías desplegadas en la ruta de la movilización para contener agresiones.

Translation:

The priority during the Women's Day march will be to protect women.

Martí Batres explained that the priority of the government of Mexico City is to protect people, women, and the civilian population who attend the 8M march for Women's Day 2022.

He urged the people to march peacefully and added that the government would provide information on how the 8M march will unfold.

Martí Batres argued that the expected violence during the march would not be tolerated since there is a legal framework that punishes violence against women.

"This is sexist violence against women. The protests must be peaceful, by conviction, and by legal order. Violence in the march is not justified under any circumstance because there are public policies against gender violence. Women in Mexico City are not alone. Our priority will be to protect the population," added the Government Secretary of the city.

It is expected that, during the 8M march, more than 3,000 policewomen will be deployed to contain any possible aggression.

Tweet description: Martí Batres' statements about the expectations of a violent march were an important discussion topic for some of the news media outlets. As can be read in the article attached to the tweet, the government of Mexico City decided to deploy security forces to prevent and contain any acts of violence.

This content inspired the names of the different subthemes in this theme, as I merged all the tweets that demonstrated a coherence or contrast between what public servants stated and the actions they endorsed regarding the marches and people's claims.

¹⁵⁷ Fuerza Informativa Azteca, "CDMX identifica a grupos que causan violencia en Día de la Mujer 2022," Fuerza Informativa Azteca, March 7, 2022, <https://www.tvazteca.com/aztecanoticias/cdmx-violencia-8m-dia-de-la-mujer-2022-eb>, consulted on May 4, 2023.

Example 16. Televisa News¹⁵⁸

Figure 66. QR code. Phase four. Theme three example (2)



Around the City Hall building and the Mexico City government headquarters, policewomen from the sic [Banking and Industrial Police] PBI prepare for the march of the #8M2022 #DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer

Figure 67. Phase four. Theme three example (2, tweet)



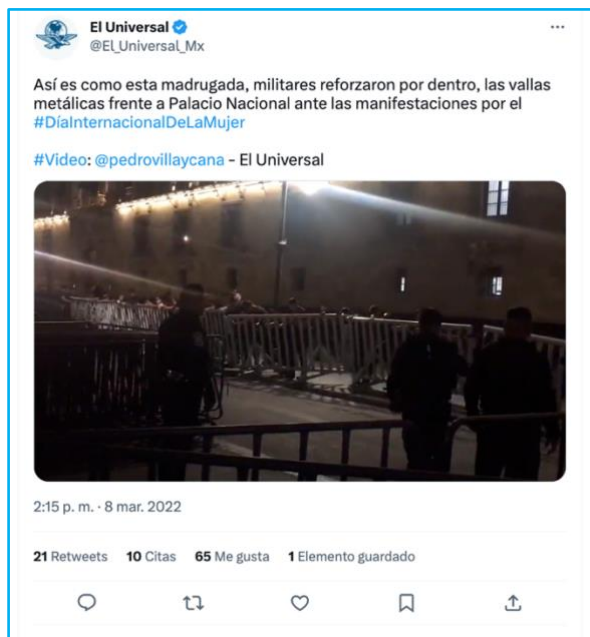
Example 17. El Universal¹⁵⁹

Figure 69. QR code. Phase four. Theme three example (3)



This morning, the military reinforced the metal fences in front of the National Palace before the protests for #DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer
#Video: @pedrovillaycana – El Universal

Figure 68. Phase four. Theme three example (3, tweet)



¹⁵⁸ Nmás (@nmas), "En los alrededores del edificio del ayuntamiento y de la jefatura del gobierno de la Ciudad de México mujeres policías de la PBI se preparan para la marcha del #8M2022 #DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer," Twitter, March, 2022, <https://twitter.com/nmas/status/1501244456124575744>, consulted on May 5, 2023.

¹⁵⁹ El Universal (@El_Universal_Mx), "Así es como esta madrugada, militares reforzaron por dentro, las vallas metálicas frente a Palacio Nacional ante las manifestaciones por el #DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer #Video: @pedrovillaycana – El Universal," Twitter, March, 2022, https://twitter.com/El_Universal_Mx/status/1501275362600361989, consulted on May 5, 2023.

Example 18. Televisa News¹⁶⁰

Figure 71. QR code. Phase four. Theme three example (4)



Live #8M: In the National palace, two women contingents from the National Guard and the Navy were mobilized to carry out some kind of rehearsal. #DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer

Figure 70. Phase four. Theme three example (4, tweet)



Tweets description: As can be seen in examples 14 and 15, just as Martí Batres declared, policewomen were preparing to participate in the marches; however, in examples 16 to 18, we can also see that other security forces were ordered to participate, such as the Army, the National Guard, and the Navy.

So, all these examples are coherent with their subtheme “what they said, and what they did,” as the content test the veracity of the public servant’s words.

Finally, theme four, “Deep journalism/context on gender violence and femicides,” is entirely new, too. Since it started to emerge, I knew this “miscellaneous” theme would be transitional, and its content would be absorbed in other themes for the next phases. It would not make the final cut because its content is included in the other three themes. Having said that, I had two main objectives with this temporary theme: 1) to contain the tweets that explored, to a certain degree, the angles from all the other themes (an intersectional theme);

¹⁶⁰ Nmás (@nmas), “Minuto a minuto #8M: En Palacio Nacional fueron movilizados dos contingentes de la Guardia Nacional y la Marina, ambos integrados sólo por mujeres, para realizar una especie de ensayo. #DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer,” Twitter, March, 2022, <https://twitter.com/nmas/status/1501280648794816512>, consulted on May 5, 2023.

2) to have tweets with more complex and analytical content from career and recognized journalists. Most of the tweets in this research did not include the names of the journalists behind their content.

While some columns and short pieces were published under the author's name (especially in theme one), there were only a few of them that actually brought up an analysis that tackled all the subjects, or some of the subjects, from the other themes in one single discussion, debate, or article. With that in mind, I created three subthemes: 1) contrast between government statements and the perception of a peaceful march; 2) reflections on the structural problem of gender violence; and 3) the role of security forces in the marches. The following example shows the content of this theme:

f) *Theme four. Example 19. El Universal*¹⁶¹

Figure 72. Phase four. Theme four example



¹⁶¹ El Universal (@El_Universal_Mx), "El #8Marzo2022 'no es una fiesta,' indica @ValeriaMoy 'sí te mueve muchas cosas, pero hay que verlo así, como un reclamo de generaciones enteras,' y recuerda que es mucho más que entregar flores a las policías," Twitter, March, 2022, https://twitter.com/El_Universal_Mx/status/1501767710962823175, consulted on May 5, 2023.

Figure 74. QR code. Phase four. Theme four example



The #8Marzo2022 “is not a party,” indicates @ValeriaMoy “it is emotional, but we need to go further and understand the claims for entire generations.” This is so much more than giving flowers to police officers.

Figure 73. Phase four. Theme four example (tweet)



Translation (43:25 - 47:00):

Valeria Moy: Look, I don't know if cheerful is the adjective I would use because after going and seeing all the things that the women claim for, saying that the march was cheerful, I don't know. I think it was an important march. Personally, I'm not too fond of crowds, and I wasn't planning to attend. Still, when I heard Martí Batres' statements this Monday intimidating the women so they wouldn't go to the march, it was then that I decided to go, not only because no one was going to intimidate me but because it is important to see what happens. It is very impressive to hear the stories. You are in shock when you hear some stories of abuse, violence, and aggression against girls, women, adolescents, and daughters. It is very impressive.

Yes, it was a festive atmosphere in the sense that there was no violence. Still, it was not a party (...). It must be seen as a claim from entire generations of violence, abuse, and disdain that has torn apart a part of the Mexican population.

The images of women handing flowers to the police are fine. That works very well for marketing and social networks, but that was different from what the march was about, and I hope the authorities could read it for what it was and not just something nice.

David Aponte: not only did they not read it correctly, they processed it badly, anticipating that there would be violence.

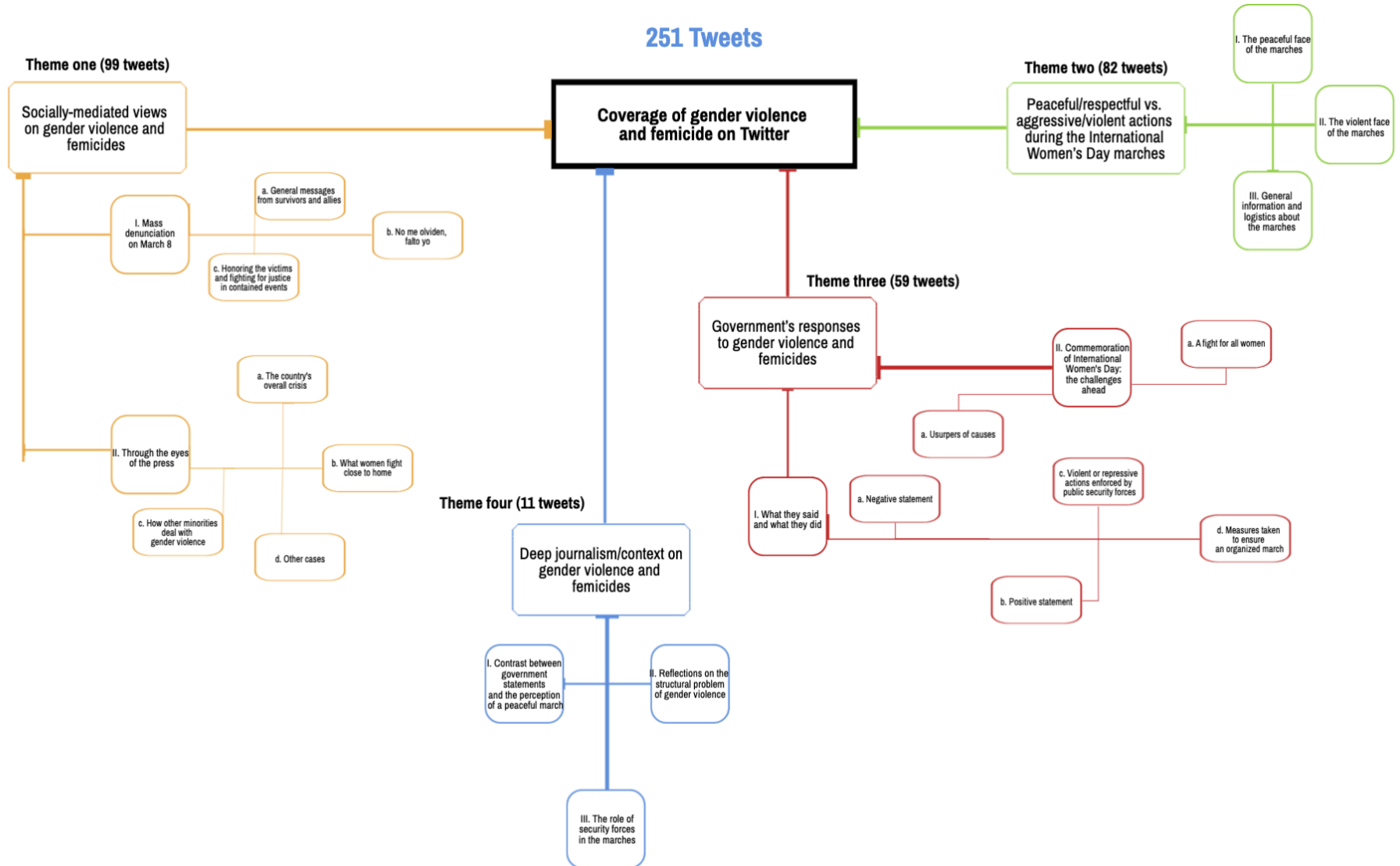
Maite Azuela: Like Valeria, I felt intimidated, although I did plan to go to the march from the beginning. Martí Batres's statements were chilling, he almost described the axes and machetes to us, and he was excited when he explained the tools to which he may have had access and which he thought could be seen in this march. I have attended several marches, and although this one might not have been cheerful since it is difficult to find a description that explains this event's emotion, there were spaces where what was commemorated was empathy...

Tweet description: Academics and journalists discussed for over 15 minutes their take on what the march was about versus the government's expectations regarding the same event.

The content of this tweet was one of the few with a complex and deep overall analysis of the International Women's Day march and the protesters' claims on gender violence and femicide.

As mentioned, this theme was transitional, and it served me to separate the tweets that included a deeper analysis of the subject they covered.

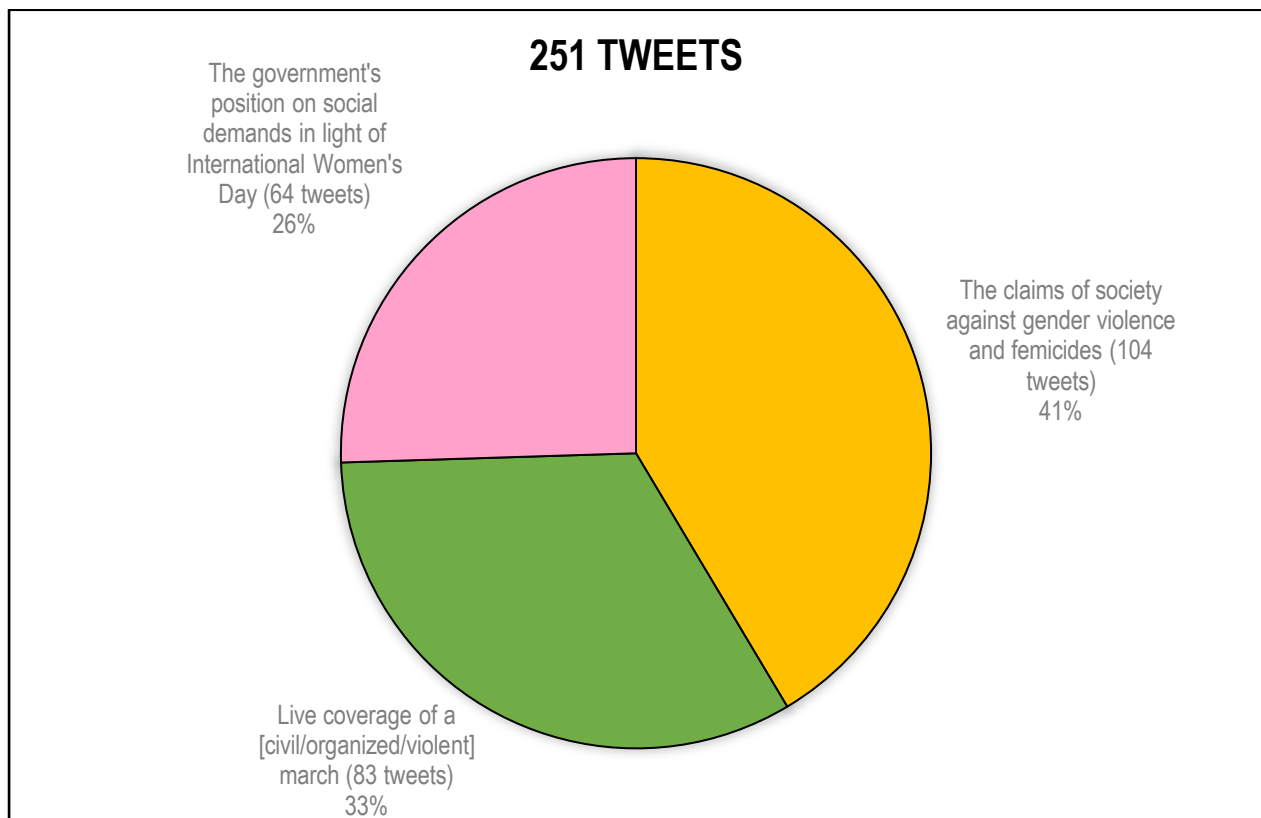
Figure 75. Phase four. Developed thematic map



5. Phase five: Defining and naming themes

By this point in the thematic analysis process, the main objective is “*identifying the essence of what each theme is about (...) and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures. It is important not to try and get a theme to do too much, or to be too diverse and complex.*”¹⁶² Taking that into consideration, I created three final themes; three main narratives that showcase the overall coverage of the five news media outlets I studied in this research: 1) societal claims against gender violence and femicides; 2) live coverage of a [civil/organized/violent] march; and 3) government responses to social demands (in light of International Women’s Day).

Figure 76. Phase five. Theme distribution



¹⁶² Braun and Clarke, “Using thematic analysis,” p.92.

The first theme, societal claims against gender violence and femicides, covers content related to the motives, reasons, and actions behind people's decision to participate in the International Women's Day marches. The tweets I included in this theme explored personal stories from survivors and people close to victims of gender violence and femicide. In some cases, the testimony is the story's center, while in others, it serves as a prelude to explore in-depth the structural problem of gender violence in Mexico. While some analysis focused on the big picture, that is, the rise in numbers of femicides throughout the country, I also found more local content in which the particular cases of specific regions and states was better explained.

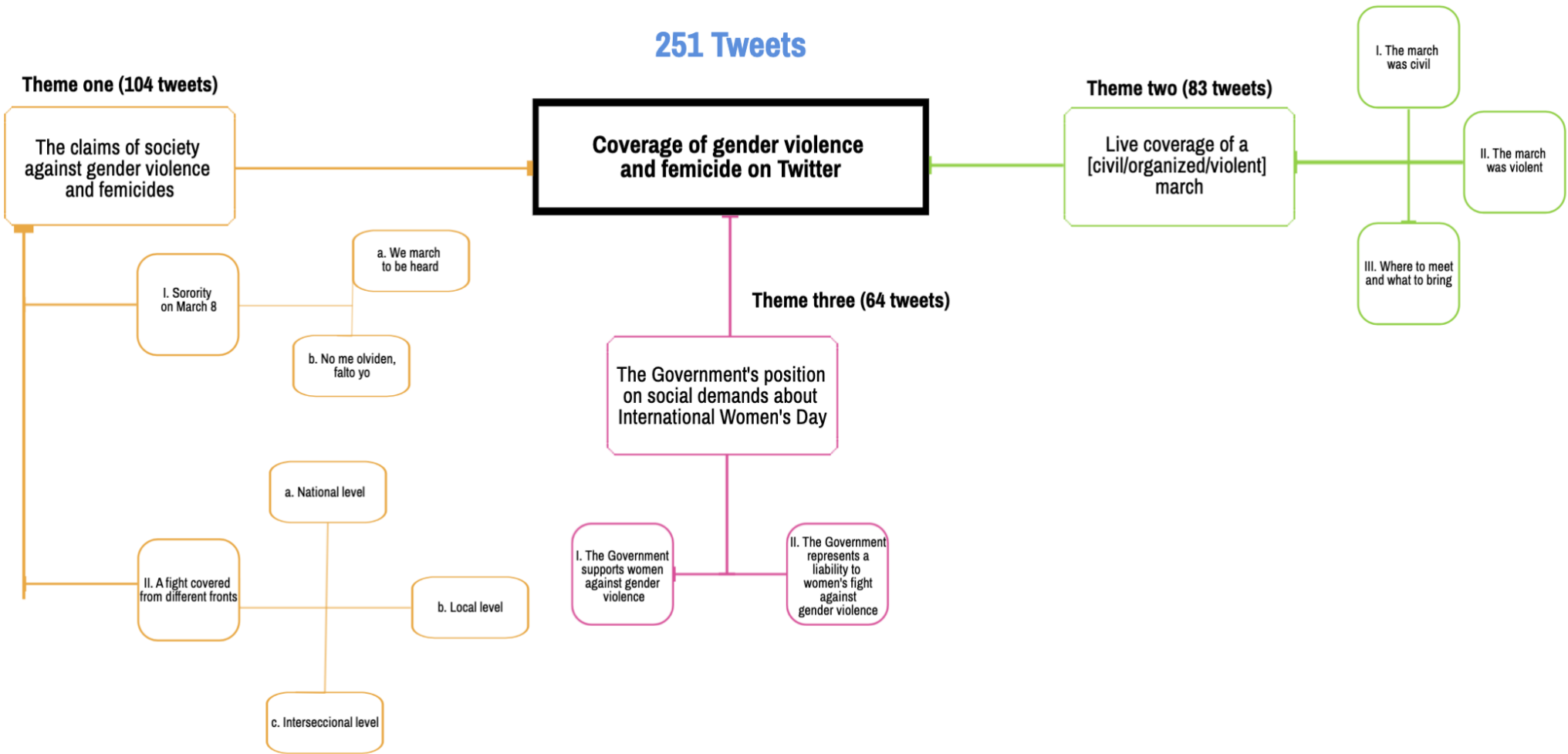
The second theme, live coverage of a [civil/organized/violent] march, explores how the news media outlets covered the activities in the marches: on one hand, some tweets provided information about how to participate in the marches, what to bring, what to avoid, and where to go. In some cases, the information included the meeting points of certain contingents and particular events within the marches. On the other hand, most of the tweets dealt with the perception of how the marches took unfolded, and whether they were civil or violent. Starting in phase three of this analysis, I maintained that this theme is fundamental for this research because it revolves around live coverage from different angles of what people did and how they protested on the streets about gender violence and femicides during International Women's Day.

Finally, theme three, government responses to social demands, pays attention to how politicians and public servants perceived International Women's Day events and acted upon those perceptions. In this theme, the news media outlets focused on speeches and statements by these actors as much as on their decisions and the measures taken for public events, in which people expressed discomfort, anger, and frustration for the opacity of the government to stop gender violence and femicides in the country.

In the next and final section of this chapter, I explain these three final themes in detail, highlighting some of their most emblematic tweets. In that sense, in this phase I explore my final findings on the different narratives that the five news media outlets covered on Twitter regarding gender violence and femicides in

Mexico. While the tweets contained in each theme varied, the three examples are balanced in relevance, as they go hand in hand to cover the same phenomenon.

Figure 77. Phase five. Final thematic map



6. Phase six: Producing the report

I had two objectives in this phase: following Braun and Clarke, the final phase of the thematic analysis served “to tell the complicated story of your data in a way which convinces the reader of the merit and validity of your analysis. It is important that the analysis (...) provides a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive and interesting account of the story the data tell – within and across themes.”¹⁶³ I also decided to include a brief quantitative analysis of my database, focused especially on the distribution of the tweets per theme and account.

Each theme explores a different narrative of International Women’s Day was lived in Mexico and how gender violence and femicides were understood and discussed from a social media – Twitter – perspective. In theme one, civil society and the women marching were the focal points, the protagonists highlighted by the news media outlets, who provided them a platform to tell their stories and voice their messages in the digital realm. In theme two, the main actors are the journalists and their teams, as the content seemed to have been conceived through the eyes of those people recording the marches, sometimes highlighting or promoting a particular event. However, others turn on a camera to cover live, without filter or context, what they witnessed on the streets. Finally, theme three revolves around those in power, the statements, and actions of government figures regarding the protesters’ demands and their own visions and understandings of gender violence in the country.

a) *Theme one. The claims of society against gender violence and femicides*

The theme's name remained the same since phase 4, as it captures the essence of what the tweets covered: the voices of women, family, and friends demanding concrete actions to fight gender violence. The theme captures the claims of one person voiced by many, and the claims of many represented in one person. This theme was reconfigured in its lower levels, where the subthemes and subtitles expressed better the context

¹⁶³ Braun and Clarke, “Using thematic analysis,” p.94.

and stories the news media outlets highlighted on Twitter. I organized the information in two directions: 1) the coverage of how society expressed its demands, frustration, and anger, but also solidarity, empathy, and sorority in the face of the crisis of gender violence and femicides in Mexico; and 2) the coverage of this structural problem from the national, local, and intersectional level.

I. Sorority on March 8

In this subtheme, I included all the tweets that showcase a common cause among participants in the International Women's Day marches, a sort of sisterhood established through protesting together against the femicide crisis in the country. The word "sorority" is commonly associated with the feminist movement, especially in subjects related to women's fight against gender violence. Therefore, I considered it appropriate to name this subtheme "Sorority on March 8," as it explicitly points out what women demanded on this symbolic day for the feminist movement. In this subtheme, I found two dominant directions:

a. We march to be heard.

The activities in commemoration of International Women's Day are only a representation of what thousands of women do every day to keep the spotlight on structural, deeply-rooted problems in a patriarchal society. The symbolic representation of this fight in the marches is an opportunity to reach out to more people, inform them, and engage them in a cause that involves everyone. I named this subtheme "We March to be Heard," as I saw in the tweet's coverage an explicit claim and wake-up call from women to the rest of the population to denounce gender violence. Here are some examples:

Example 20. Televisa News.¹⁶⁴

Figure 79. QR code. Phase six. Theme one (1.a)



The rape culture and sexual violence against women has been perpetuated throughout history, but the time for a change has come
 #DíaInternacionaalDeLaMujer
 #8Marzo2022 #8M2022

Figure 78. Phase six. Theme one tweet (1.a)



Example 21. Article excerpt.¹⁶⁵

Figure 81. QR code. Phase six. Theme one (1.a, additional coverage)



Figure 80. Phase six. Theme one (1.a, additional coverage)



“We can clean the walls, but women can’t come back.”
 “We are the voice of those [women] who are no longer here.”

¹⁶⁴ NMás (@nmas), “La cultura de la violación y la violencia sexual contra las mujeres se ha perpetuado en la historia, pero ha llegado el momento de cambiar. #DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer #8Marzo2022 #8M2022 <https://t.co/XDIJmKrY5G>,” Twitter, Mach 8, 2022, <https://twitter.com/nmas/status/1501211610337136646>.

¹⁶⁵ Jessica Campos, “¡No es no!: La violación y el abuso sexual contra las mujeres,” *nmas*, marzo 2022, <https://noticieros.televisa.com/especiales/violacion-y-agresiones-sexuales-en-las-relaciones-sociales-contra-mujeres/>.

Additionally, I included some paragraphs from the article that reflect well why this tweet belongs in this theme, as they dig into women's protests after the backlash, slut-shaming, and revictimization they receive when facing a case of gender violence.

Las frases como "para qué tomó tanto", "por qué viajaba sola", "por qué estaba sola", "para qué salió tan tarde", "es su culpa por vestirse así", "ella se lo buscó", "ella lo provocó", "estaba borracha", "estaba inconsciente", "estaba drogada", "es lo que quería", "si bien que sabía lo que buscaba" y otras tantas ideas nefastas, violentas y erróneas **están haciendo una apología de la violación** al igual que muchas manifestaciones políticas, artísticas, literarias y hasta musicales, que promueven el abuso sexual contra las mujeres de manera "natural", lo han hecho desde tiempos inmemoriales.

Figure 82. Phase six. Theme one (1.a, additional coverage, 2)

Expressions such as "Why did she drink so much," "Why was she traveling alone," "Why was she alone," "Why did she go out so late," "it was her fault for dressing like that," "She asked for it," "she was drunk," "she was unconscious," "she was intoxicated," "she wanted it," and many other violent and erroneous ideas make an apology for rape that have been always present in political, artistic, literary, and even musical expressions promoting sexual abuse against women as something natural.

Figure 83. Phase six. Theme one (1.a, additional coverage, 3)

"and it was not my fault, nor where I was, nor how I dressed..."

"Y la culpa no era mía, ni dónde estaba, ni cómo vestía..."

"... El violador eres tú"

A finales de 2019, el caso de una joven que denunció la violación de un grupo de policías que abusó de ella en una patrulla cuando regresaba a su hogar de una fiesta con sus amigos sacudió a la Ciudad de México y aumentó el tamaño de la llama que muchos creían extinta; **colectivos feministas y de mujeres en contra de la violencia de género, cuerpas de defensa a las víctimas de agresión sexual** y compañeras de todo el mundo se sumaron a una lucha contra el sistema, el estado, **la cultura de violencia y la ineficiencia por parte de las autoridades para detener a los agresores.**

"... You are the rapist"
At the end of 2019, the case of a young girl who reported she was raped by a group of police officers in their patrol car when she was returning home after partying with her friends shook Mexico City (...) feminists and women groups such as "cuerpas de defensa" against sexual assault joined the efforts against the system, the culture of violence, and the inefficiency of authorities to stop the assaulters.

Figure 84. Phase six. Theme one (1.a, additional coverage, 4)

Tweet description: The tweet and its linked article focus on why women march on International Women's Day. As my subthemes describe, women participated together to be heard and expose the violence they deal with constantly because of their gender.

b. No me olviden, faltó yo (Do not forget me, I'm still missing)

The case of Esmeralda Castillo is well-known throughout the country, as her father keeps looking for her 12 years after her disappearance. Every year, he marches with the photo of his daughter and the slogan, *no me olviden, faltó yo* (seen in example one, p.65), translated to "Do not forget me, I'm still missing." In that sense, I named this subtheme after this phrase, as it reflects the personal stories from family and friends of victims of gender violence and femicides covered in the tweets.

Example 22. El Universal¹⁶⁶

Figure 86. QR code. Phase six. Theme one (1.b)



One year after the femicide of her 7-year-old daughter, Cecilia Palafox, she regrets that "they have not solved anything." For her, this #8Marzo2022 march is an opportunity to demand justice: "we have come to demand justice for my girls and for those who are no longer here."

Figure 85. Phase six. Theme one (1.b, tweet)



"We are all Nicole"

¹⁶⁶ El Universal (@El_Universal_Mx), "A un año del femicidio de su hija de 7 años, Cecilia Palafox lamenta que "no han resuelto nada". Para ella esta marcha del #8Marzo2022 es porque claman justicia "venimos a aclamar justicia por ni niña y por aquellas que ya no están". Video: Laura Arana <https://t.co/sPQ3CjvWX>," Twitter, March 8, 2022, https://twitter.com/El_Universal_Mx/status/1501373568445292548.

Translation (video):

Interviewer: What can you tell everyone about the protest?

Cecilia: This is the first year that we participate in this march, and we demand justice for my girls and for those who are no longer here.

Interviewer: What would you say to those who think that you all only come here to disturb?

Cecilia: Well, we are only asking for justice, peacefully, so that they [authorities] pay attention to us. We are not here to disturb anyone.

Interviewer: What was your daughter's name?

Cecilia: Nicole Santos.

Tweet description: In this case, the content was centered on the testimony of a family member of a victim of femicide, in which she declared that she intended to demand justice for her daughter. This tweet is an emblematic example of theme one, particularly the subtheme "*No me olviden, faltó yo*," as it personalized one of the leading causes for why women marched on International Women's Day 2022.

II. A fight covered from different fronts

In this subtheme, the news media outlets covered the femicide crisis from three angles: the rising of cases at a national level; the mobilization of women in certain states demanding justice for victims; and an intersectional approach, in which the main objective was to raise the voices of other minority groups and their struggles to find respect, peace, and justice in a context of constant violence.

a. National level.

The tweets that covered the panorama of gender violence throughout the country focused on comparisons between the cases of femicides in 2022 and previous years. As seen in the example below, this subtheme is very data-driven, in the sense that it provides, in some cases, different statistics that helped build the narratives of gender violence as a national crisis:

Example 23. Aristegui News¹⁶⁷

Figure 88. QR code. Phase six. Theme one (2.a)



These are the data that reflect the situation of women in Mexico on #8Marzo2022.

Figure 87. Phase six. Theme one (2.a, tweet)



Example 24. Article excerpt¹⁶⁸

Figure 90. QR code. Phase six. Theme one (2.a, additional coverage)



Figure 89. Phase six. Theme one (2.a, additional coverage)

Las mexicanas llegan al **8 de marzo, Día Internacional de la Mujer**, con avances en la política y en sus derechos reproductivos, pero con una de las brechas económicas más grandes de la región y una ola de violencia machista que mata a más de 10 mujeres al día.

Estos son los datos clave que reflejan la situación de las mujeres en México, donde hay 66,2 millones de ellas, que representan el **52 % de la población**.

La violencia machista

El Gobierno registró **1,004 víctimas de feminicidio en 2021**, como se tipifica el asesinato motivado por la violencia de género, un 2,66 % más que en 2020.

Al sumar las 2,747 víctimas femeninas de homicidio doloso, un total de **3,751 mexicanas murieron asesinadas el año pasado**, lo que representa más de 10 al día.



Foto: Cuartoscuro

¹⁶⁷ Aristegui Noticias (@AristeguiOnline), "Estos son los datos clave que reflejan la situación de las mujeres en México este #8Marzo2022 <https://t.co/Lz71ZL92Xu>," *Twitter*, March 8, <https://twitter.com/AristeguiOnline/status/1501271593774899206>.

¹⁶⁸ Redacción AN/SH, "Esta es la situación de las mujeres en México este 8M," *Aristegui Noticias*, March, 2022, <https://aristeguinoticias.com/0803/mexico/esta-es-la-situacion-de-las-mujeres-en-mexico-este-8m/>.

Significant advances for women in politics and reproductive rights, but they deal with one of the most critical economic gaps in the region and a wave of gender violence that kills more than ten women per day.

These are the most important data that reflect the situation of women in Mexico, representing 52% of the total population (66.2 million).

Gender violence

The Government registered 1,004 victims of femicides in 2021 – the murder of women motivated by their gender – a rise of 2.66% compared to 2020.

When including the 2,747 homicides of women, we had 3,751 Mexican women murdered last year, more than ten women per day.

Tweet description: The tweet describes a critical context for women in Mexico in 2022, especially regarding the number of homicides and femicides, which encouraged them to protest on March 8.

b. Local level.

The content of this subtheme is mostly "retweets," in which the primary news outlet account retweeted stories covered by the branches at the local level. It was interesting to come across content dominated by only a few states, such as San Luis Potosí, Oaxaca, Puebla, and Querétaro. These tweets highlighted some cases of femicide from states that mobilized and encouraged people to protest during International Women's Day.

Example 25. El Universal¹⁶⁹

Figure 92. QR code. Phase six. Theme one (2.b)



#PorSiNoLoViste (in case you missed it) Two years after the pandemic, there was a new attendance record in the marches for International Women’s Day on #8Marzo2022 in the capital of San Luis Potosí.

Figure 91. Phase six. Theme one (2.b, tweet)



Example 26. Article excerpt.¹⁷⁰

Figure 93. QR code. Phase six. Theme one (2.b, additional coverage)



More than 10 thousand women marched in San Luis Potosí; They demanded justice for all victims of femicide.

Two years after the pandemic, there was a new attendance record in the marches for International Women’s Day in the capital of San Luis Potosí.



Figure 94. Phase six. Theme one (2.b, additional coverage)

¹⁶⁹ El Universal (@El_Universal_mx), “@ElUniversal_SLP: #PorSiNoLoViste 🧡 A dos años de la pandemia, se registró una asistencia récord en la movilización por el Día Internacional de la Mujer este #8Marzo2022 en la capital potosina” (retweet), *Twitter*, March, 2022 https://twitter.com/El_Universal_Mx/status/150156712188882692.

¹⁷⁰ Fabiola Juárez, “Más de 10 mil mujeres marcharon en SLP; exigen justicia para víctimas de feminicidio,” *El Universal San Luis Potosí*, March 8, 2022, <https://sanluis.eluniversal.com.mx/sociedad/mas-de-10-mil-mujeres-marcharon-en-slp-exigen-justicia-para-victimas-de-feminicidio>.

More than 10 thousand women marched in San Luis Potosí; They demanded justice for all victims of femicide.

Two years after the pandemic, there was a new attendance record in the International Women's Day marches in the capital of San Luis Potosí.

A contingent of 10 thousand women, girls, and adolescents left the *Plaza de Armas* towards the State Attorney General's Office to demand justice for all those women who have been assaulted and those who have been murdered.

Relatives of femicide victims led the contingent. Upon arriving at the prosecutor's office, they asked for a permanent "Specialized Unit for Femicide" as the years went by, and they still have not found justice for Xiomara, Odalys, Karla Pontigo, Lupita, or Silvia. In addition, a journalist raised her voice for Lourdes Maldonado and Michel Pérez Tadeo, women journalists murdered in 2022.

Tweet description: The tweet pays attention to women's particular demands in San Luis Potosí, where they explicitly referenced femicide victims in that state. The article focused on the state's context, which is aligned with the narratives this subtheme is intended to showcase.

c. Intersectional level.

Finally, in the last subtheme of theme one, I merged all the tweets that covered the issue from an intersectional perspective, as the cases explored had extra layers of complexity. For example, the journalists told stories from other minority groups, such as 1) Indigenous women and their struggles to fight against gender violence in their communities; and 2) minors and sexual assault.

Example 27. Televisa news¹⁷¹

Figure 96. QR code. Phase six.
Theme one (2.c)



Indigenous women march in Chenalhó, during International Women's Day, for their rights, dignity, and asking for peace before the violence they live in Chiapas.

Figure 95. Phase six. Theme one (2.c, tweet)



Example 28. Tweet's article¹⁷²

Figure 97. QR code.
Phase six. Theme one
(2.c, additional coverage)



Indigenous women march for peace and women rights in Chiapas.

More than a hundred women marched more than three kilometers until they arrived to Acteal, where they demanded a stop to the violence generated by armed groups settled in the mountains of that region in Chiapas that intimidate women and children.

In the protest, Indigenous and peasant women demanded respect for their individual rights, the optimization of health services and demilitarization, a great State debt.

Figure 98. Phase six. Theme one (2.c, additional coverage)



¹⁷¹ Nmás (@nmas), "Mujeres indígenas protestan en Chenalhó, en el #DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer, por sus derechos, la paz y la dignidad ante la violencia que se vive en el estado de Chiapas. <https://t.co/YBygCSzW4I>", Twitter, March, 2022, <https://twitter.com/nmas/status/1501307471390027777>.

¹⁷² María del Rocío Ángeles Rivero, "Indígenas marchan por la paz y los derechos de la mujer en Chiapas," Nmás, March, 2022, <https://noticieros.televisa.com/ultimas-noticias/indigenas-marchan-por-la-paz-y-los-derechos-de-la-mujer-en-chiapas/>.

Las **mujeres** de la región todavía recuerdan la **masacre de 45 indígenas**, en su mayoría mujeres, en 1997, por lo que pidieron un alto a los feminicidios y justicia para las víctimas.

Guadalupe Vázquez Luna, feminista indígena de Chenalhó y miembro de la organización Las Abejas de Acteal, expresó a Efe que continúan con la lucha pues “tristemente no se ve que respeten” los derechos de las mujeres. “Y este año han aumentado los feminicidios”, dijo.

“(Este día es) un motivo más para continuar, seguir luchando y enfrentándonos a la realidad, sobre todo hablando, no quedándonos calladas”, agregó.

The women of the region still remember the 1997 massacre of 45 indigenous people, most of them women, for which they called out for an end to femicides and justice for the victims.

Guadalupe Vázquez Luna, Indigenous feminist from Chenalhó and member of the organization “Las Abejas de Acteal” expressed the fight is still ongoing, as sadly women rights are still not respected, and femicides are on the rise.

“This day is a motive to keep fighting, facing reality without being silenced”.

Figure 99. Phase six. Theme one (2.c, additional coverage, 2)

Tweet description: The tweet focuses on the demands of Indigenous women in Chiapas, who constantly deal with armed groups that perpetrate acts of violence against them.

This tweet exemplifies the content of this subtheme, as the narrative revolves around the specific experiences of a minority group in the context of gender violence.

b) Theme two. Live coverage of a [civil/organized/violent] march

Theme two underscores three main ideas about how the news media outlets perceived the marches: the marches were civil, violent, and/or well-organized. The coverage focused on what people could do to participate in the marches and what they actually did. In contrast with theme one, where the content, at its core, told stories and highlighted demands related to gender violence in Mexico, in this case, the tweets mostly covered the different ways people expressed those demands. In turn, the resulting narratives were more inclined to display how people protested during International Women's Day.

II. The march was civil.

The tweets center the attention on videos and images of how people engaged in pacifist activities during the marches to express their causes and communicate their messages: they sang, danced, and they gave flowers

to police officers; they painted their bodies, skated, and recited poems, among other activities. In every case, the tweets included an element that helps identify the causes behind people's actions.

Example 29. Uno TV ¹⁷³

Figure 101. QR code. Phase six. Theme two (1)



Hooded woman approaches the police officers to give them flowers: "we are one," she says while uncovering her face.

Figure 100. Phase six. Theme two (1, tweet)



Tweet description: Several tweets exemplify some moments and events in which the protesters expressed their demands peacefully during the International Women's Day marches without incurring any violent acts. In that sense, this tweet captures the essence of this subtheme.

III. The march was violent.

On the other hand, a significant number of tweets covered violent acts during the marches, where people engaged in dangerous activities, damaging public spaces, and injuring both participants and authorities at

¹⁷³ Uno TV (@UnoNoticias), "#AIMomento Encapuchada se acerca a las vallas de la policía para regalarles una flor, ellas las Atenas desconcertadas las reciben, "somos una" le dice la manifestante quien se destapa la cara #DialInternacionalDeLaMujer #8Marzo2022 <https://t.co/jzXiEIT1sm>," *Twitter*, March, 2022, <https://twitter.com/UnoNoticias/status/1501303065491623936>.

those moments. In many cases, the tweet contents offered no clear explanation of what was happening or the reasons behind the violent behavior. In any case, these tweets dramatically contrasted people's actions with respect to the previous subtheme.

Example 30. El Universal¹⁷⁴

Figure 103. QR code. Phase six.
Theme two (2)



Members of the black bloc were injured during the #8Marzo2022 protests after breaking windows at one of the entrances to the Hidalgo metro station in Mexico City.

Figure 102. Phase six. Theme two (2, tweet)



Tweet description: In contrast with the previous example, some other tweets focused on the acts of violence that some protesters engaged in during the marches. The content of this tweet captures the essence of this subtheme, as it is possible to see how people destroyed the glass cage, even though some others were still under it. However, there is no explanation of what this cage was or represented, nor why it was there.

There is no explanation of what the "black bloc" is.

"Mexico feminicida" is a recurrent slogan on March 8, and it alludes to the idea that the Government is also an accomplice of femicides.

We can see the protesters wearing purple and green, symbolic colors of the feminist movement.

¹⁷⁴ El Universal (@EL_Universal_Mx), "Integrantes del bloque negro de las protestas del #8Marzo2022 resultaron heridas luego de romper cristales en una de las entradas al Metro Hidalgo de la Ciudad de México VIDEO: ESPECIAL <https://t.co/umH27vnsQH>," Twitter, March, 2022, https://twitter.com/El_Universal_Mx/status/1501309404435685377.

IV. Where to meet and what to bring.

The third and final subtheme dealt with some of the marches' logistics. The main objective of this coverage was to inform people where to meet, what to avoid, and how everyone could participate. Even though these tweets did not explore a concrete story, it was still possible to find subtle references addressing women's fights before and during these events on International Women's Day.

Example 31. El Universal¹⁷⁵

Figure 105. QR code. Phase six.
Theme two (3)



Figure 104. Phase six. Theme two (3, tweet)



During International Women's Day, the protesters will march from the Ángel de la Independencia to the Zócalo.

¹⁷⁵ El Universal (@El_Universal_Mx), "En el marco del #DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer, en ma CDMX, se alista una megamarcha que avanzará del Ángel de la Independencia al Zócalo capitalino.," *Twitter*, March, 2022, https://twitter.com/El_Universal_Mx/status/1501063991451435011.

Example 32. Tweet’s article.¹⁷⁶

Figure 107. QR code. Phase six. Theme two (3, additional coverage)



This will be the route and schedules for the 8M women’s march.

For International Women’s Day, a massive march will take place in Mexico City, from the *Ángel de la Independencia* to the *Zócalo*.

Figure 106. Phase six. Theme two (3, additional coverage)

Mapa. Así será el recorrido, horarios y cortes viales para la marcha de mujeres del 8M

En el marco del Día Internacional de la Mujer, en la Ciudad de México se alista una megamarcha que avanzará del Ángel de la Independencia al Zócalo capitalino

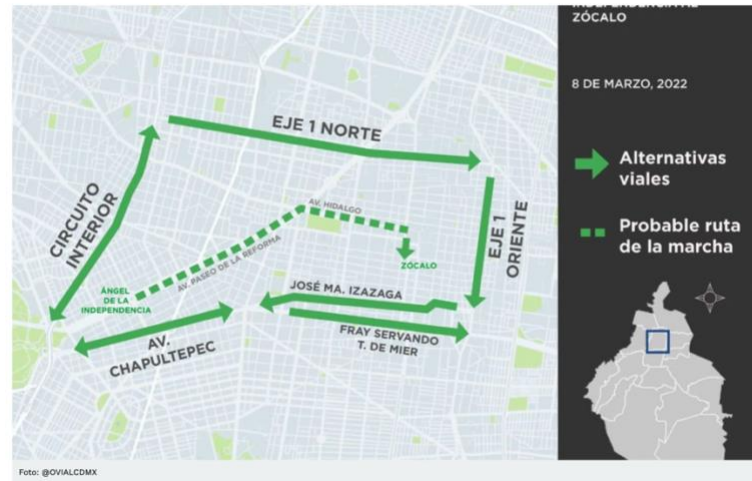


Foto: @OVALCDMX
METRÓPOLI | 07/03/2022 | © 21:05 | Redacción null | Actualizada © 21:05

El punto de partida de la marcha convocada por la **Coordinadora 8M** será del **Ángel de la Independencia** : la cita es a las 16:00 horas, para que en punto de las 16:30 horas los colectivos puedan iniciar la **manifestación**.

En ese sentido, los **colectivos feministas** tendrán la siguiente ruta: Paseo de la Reforma y en la exglorieta a Colón se detendrán para hacer un posicionamiento en la recién llamada “**glorieta de las mujeres que luchan**”.

People are expected to arrive at 4:00 p.m., so they can march at 4:30 p.m.

The feminists can join the following route: from *Paseo de la Reforma*, they will arrive to the *exglorieta a Colón*, now called “*glorieta de las mujeres que luchan*” [roundabout of the women’s struggle] to make a statement.

Figure 108. Phase six. Theme two (3, additional coverage, 2)

Tweet description: As seen in this tweet, some of the live coverage focused on providing general information about the logistics of the marches to those interested in attending. In that sense, this tweet included some routes and stops, schedules, different departing points, and groups participating throughout the city.

¹⁷⁶ rdmd/rcr, “Mapa. Así será el recorrido, horarios y cortes viales para la marcha de mujeres del 8M,” *El Universal*, March 7, 2022, <https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/metropoli/mapa-asi-sera-el-recorrido-horarios-y-cortes-viales-para-la-marcha-de-mujeres-del-8m/>.

My reasoning behind keeping these kinds of tweets in the analysis was driven by my knowledge of Mexican history and the context of the feminist movement in the country. In some cases, the references to gender violence were more implicit than evident, such as in this case, where the tweet vaguely addressed a "call" that a feminist group did on the roundabout of the women's struggle. While I analyzed this tweet, I considered this place well-known as a meeting point for women to protest for their rights¹⁷⁷ and against gender violence. In that sense, I considered that the content of this tweet informed people where to go if they wanted to listen and join a group that was going to protest for those causes.¹⁷⁸

c) Theme three. The Government's position on social demands about International Women's Day

Finally, the third narrative merged all the tweets about the government's involvement in women's demands on gender violence and femicides. This involvement went from speeches and statements by the president of Mexico, national and local congresses, governors, majors, and other high-level public servants about their decisions and measures implemented during the International Women's Day marches. In this theme, it is possible to contrast the rhetoric and the actions behind authorities' assumptions and expectations of what women would do and how they would protest on that day. The rhetoric aspect was centered on what public servants said and how they perceived women's demands. In contrast, the active aspect is more inclined to show what the police did and how security forces interacted with the protesters. The two subthemes that emerged pointed in two directions: whether the government sympathized with, and at times encouraged, women's protests against gender violence, or whether they represented a problem for the government.

¹⁷⁷ "The Glorieta of the Women's struggle has played a center stage for much of the women's movement in Mexico City. The glorieta has also been the center of some controversy for a few years. The monument itself has been the symbolic center-stage of the women's marches, protests, and civil action," in: Gobierno de la Ciudad de México, "Women's Struggle Monument," <https://mexicocity.cdmx.gob.mx/venues/glorieta-de-mujeres/>, consulted on April 8, 2023.

¹⁷⁸ "The Jardín de la Memoria and the Tendedero de Denuncias, as well as the Antimonumenta de las Mujeres que Luchas," symbols that conform the roundabout – which was taken over on September 25, 2021 by the mothers of victims of femicides and disappearances – as a place of memory and to remind the Government its omissions for these crimes" in: Sharenii Guzmán, "Glorieta de las Mujeres que Luchan se queda: acuerdan que antimonumenta no será retirada en CDMX," *Animal Político*, October, 2022, <https://www.animalpolitico.com/sociedad/glorieta-mujeres-luchan-antimonumenta-cdmx>, consulted on April 8, 2023.

II. The government supports women against gender violence

This coverage portrayed a government as an ally to women's causes against gender violence, in which both politicians and public authorities claimed that their actions on International Women's Day were directed to ensure public safety during the marches and a willingness to keep improving the respect for women's right and the continuing efforts to end gender violence and stop femicides throughout the country.

Example 33. Televisa news¹⁷⁹

Figure 110. QR code. Phase six. Theme three (1)



#Ahora Police operation for the #8M2022 march. #DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer We talked about it with two policewomen.

Figure 109. Phase six. Theme three (1, tweet)



¹⁷⁹ NMás (@nmas), "#Ahora | Operativo policial para la marcha del #8M2022 #DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer. Platicamos al respecto con dos mujeres policías. #Despierta por TW: <https://t.co/McG5Jj2MMf>, FB: <https://t.co/xFILDYXcY8> y YT: <https://t.co/ZTCELzywBU> <https://t.co/42ju2nqaO4>," Twitter, March, 2022, <https://twitter.com/nmas/status/1500816412494884866>.

Example 34. Interview excerpt.¹⁸⁰

Figure 112. QR code.
Phase six. Theme three
(1, additional coverage)



Figure 111. Phase six. Theme three (1, additional coverage)



Translation (video excerpt 20:33 – 21:30):

Interviewer: - We have seen in recent years, in videos of the marches in which the police have participated, that sometimes women are contained due to the possibility of being armed with Molotov cocktails, so you needed to contain them and demand them to handover this kind of material.

Police officer: - Yes, we need to contain the groups causing some damage at a particular moment so the rest of the people participating in the marches do not get hurt. We converse with the groups and invite them to leave the artifacts they carry, which could be dangerous.

Tweet description: In this tweet, it is possible to understand better the role of policewomen during the International Women's Day marches. According to them, their primary responsibilities were to protect the protesters, keep them safe from harm, and join them in their causes against gender violence.

From this point of view, there was a sense of cooperation and understanding between the authorities and the women that attended the marches.

III. The government represents a liability to women's fight against gender violence

Finally, this subtheme included all the content in which the news media outlets addressed a negative perception of what the government said or did in light of International Women's Day. As seen in the following example, journalists reported on how the government deliberately sabotaged the marches by claiming that

¹⁸⁰ Nmás, "Despierta: programa complete 7 marzo 2022", YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5L3iGD3vOM>, consulted on April 2, 2023.

armed criminal groups planned to attend the marches to disrupt the population. In this subtheme, the coverage highlights a narrative in which public servants delegitimize women's claims and where security forces seemed to be engaging in violent acts against protesters, failing their primary responsibility of maintaining public peace.

Example 35. Televisa news¹⁸¹

Figure 114. QR code. Phase six. Theme three (2)



Mexico City's government tried to sabotage the #8M march by stating they expected violent acts. Additionally, the army reinforced the fences of Palacio Nacional: @rivapa in #TercerGrado. Follow the broadcasting here:

Figure 113. QR code. Phase six. Theme three (2, tweet)



¹⁸¹ N más (@nmas), ““El Gobierno de CDMX trató de sabotear la marcha del #8M argumentando actos violentos. Además, las Fuerzas Armadas fueron a reforzar las vallas de Palacio Nacional”: @rivapa en #TercerGrado. Sigue el programa aquí: <https://t.co/OR6JiVcdeb> <https://t.co/As8Mvo7jWJ>,” Twitter, March, 2022, <https://twitter.com/nmas/status/1501794488863363073>.

Example 36. Video excerpt 1:28 – 2:31¹⁸²

Figure 115. QR code.
Phase six. Theme three
(2, additional coverage)



Riva Palacio: “Bartres, Secretary of Government, tried to sabotage the parade by attempting to discourage people from going, when he mentioned he had information about 14 organizations in possession of cargo from the “war in Ukraine” to be used during the march. [laughs] Obviously, I’m exaggerating, but he said ‘we have information’ [he replicates Bartres’ words], what does that even mean? If you have information, then take care of it without saying anything. In addition, how is it possible that he sent the navy to protect the iron fences around the National Palace, and we haven’t even discussed that they placed those fences...”

Tweet description: This tweet was centered on the reflections from journalists about the negative statements by Martí Batres, a high-level public servant, about his expectations of a violent march during International Women’s Day.

According to the journalists, his point of view was aimed at intimidating society to discourage people from attending the march, which caused a negative impact between the government and protesters.

The composition and proportion of each theme varied from account to account, highlighting the complexity and richness of each outlet’s coverage of my main research topic. In the next chapter, I explore the themes’ particularities to reflect on how journalism theory and practice overlap on this subject. Once my themes were ready, my research question was partially answered, as I had an idea of how the five news media outlets in Mexico tweeted about International Women’s Day last year in relation to gender violence and femicides. However, as noted in Chapter One (pp. 37 – 42), I also aimed to insert that question into a more comprehensive theoretical discussion, which is the focus of the next chapter.

¹⁸² To watch full disucssion: Nmás, “Tercer Grado – 9 de marzo 2022,” Facebook, March, 2022, https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=380116760595812.

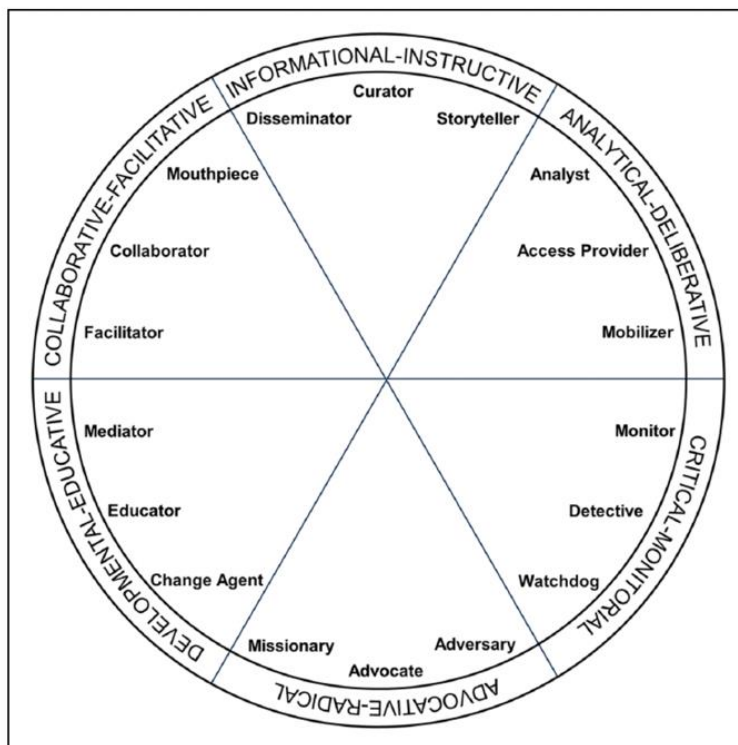
Chapter four. Journalism's changing roles on social media coverage

As outlined in the previous chapter, the thematic analysis of the tweets included in this research resulted in three main themes: 1) societal claims against gender violence and femicides; 2) live coverage of a [civil/organized/violent] march, and 3) government responses to social demands on International Women's Day. A particular objective of this research was to understand, from a theoretical perspective, how five Mexican news media outlets covered gender violence and femicides on Twitter, in the context of International Women's Day 2022. By emphasizing the "how" in my research question, I wanted to bring attention to a more theoretical reflection of the ways professional journalism sources "do their job" on a social media platform—in this case, Twitter.

In this chapter, I consider the three resulting themes through Hanitzsch and Vos' theory of the roles of journalism in political life. That is, I explore their arguments about the many shapes journalism can take, in this case by focusing on journalistic coverage of a social movement on social media. By applying Hanitzsch and Vos' theoretical approach to this specific context, my goal is to highlight what Mexican news media outlets "do" when they cover gender violence and femicides on Twitter.

Additionally, there are two reflections I address in the following pages: 1) what could it mean to incorporate a "digital" element in the roles originally developed by Hanitzsch and Vos, and 2) how might subjective understandings of the roles summarized in Hanitzsch and Vos's wheel identify the boundaries and overlaps between their definitions of the different functions of journalism? As in previous chapters, I include tweet examples from each theme to illustrate how the Mexican media covered the issue at hand and my reflections on the results from a theoretical perspective. Finally, I include some reflections and suggestions on how Hanitzsch and Vos' model could be applied to journalistic practice on social media, at least regarding coverage related to gender violence and femicides.

Figure 116. Hanitzsch and Vos' roles of journalism in political life



Source: Hanitzsch and Vos.¹⁸³

1. Reviewing the Roles of Journalism in political life

As previously described in Chapter One (p. 37 – 40), Hanitzsch and Vos describe 18 roles, organized into six categories, that journalists can follow when doing their job, that is, when they are covering and producing news on matters of public interest. In that sense, gender violence and femicides are, undoubtedly, matters of public interest. With these wide-ranging roles, one may be inclined to think it would be easy to find one or more that align with news media outlets' coverage of gender violence and femicides around International Women's Day 2022 in Mexico. However, during my analysis I noticed certain elements that needed to be

¹⁸³ Hanitzsch and Vos, "Journalism beyond democracy," p.153

added to the theoretical conceptions of these roles, which led me to reevaluate my approach and the applicability of this model in this research.

First, there was what I call "the social media element." In Hanitzsch and Vos's 18 roles, there is only one explicit mention of journalistic coverage on social media, namely the *curator*, which the scholars consider a recent development: "*in the news media, the informational – instructive function is addressed by three roles, two 'classic' and one fairly recent: (...) The curator is a relatively new role that has gained relevance in a time when information is available un abundance and be shared via social media.*"¹⁸⁴ In that sense, it could be possible to argue that their model does not strongly emphasize social media coverage, even though, as discussed in my literature review in Chapter One, journalists and news media have been paving their way into social media platforms for several years, exploring new and alternative ways to do their jobs and cover public affairs. However, Hanitzsch and Vos were open about the possibility of updating their model, as they also affirmed that these roles "*set the parameters of what is desirable in a given institutional context, and they are subject to discursive (re)creation, (re)interpretation, appropriation, and contestation.*"¹⁸⁵ Considering this, I propose reviewing their model to offer a new interpretation that adapts the roles of digital journalism on social media.

This proposal was inspired by the work of Silvio Waisbord in "The 5Ws and 1H of Digital Journalism," previously discussed in the literature review section of Chapter One. In general terms, Waisbord "repurposes" the traditional guide that some journalists follow to produce their pieces: the *who, where, what, when, why, and how*. He incorporates digital elements into each of these questions, adapting journalism studies to more current contexts in which "the digital" has also gained relevance in journalism practice: "*What is distinctive about DJ (digital journalism) are networked settings and practices that expand opportunities and spaces for reporting news. DJ broadens conventional understandings of journalism and news – who produces daily*

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 153.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 160.

information for large-scale consumption as well as what is socially considered and used as news."¹⁸⁶ He is explicit in differentiating traditional and digital journalism.

I agree with Waisbord's vision because he is not entirely discrediting traditional practices of journalism; on the contrary, he is adapting them to be more coherent with the new tools and platforms we use to produce news. Along these lines, I propose to use Hanitzsch and Vos's wheel of the roles of journalism in political life as a base, and to add an extra layer of "digital" variables. For example, in *What is Digital Journalism Studies?* Steensen and Westlund explain that digital journalists consider "*analytics and metrics to understand better what news material engages their readers.*"¹⁸⁷ But what does this mean? They expand on this explanation in general terms:

Analytics refer to the technological infrastructures, systems, and tools for gathering and analyzing metrics about audiences and their behaviors. Such metrics, which trace data such as page impressions, time spent on pages and sites, completion of article reads, and so on, are being used to guide editorial processes and decisions such as what types of leads journalists prioritize and how online editors and algorithms prioritize the exposure different news articles receive. ¹⁸⁸

Following this idea, I propose three variables journalists and professional news media outlets, among other news sources, take into consideration when they produce digital journalism, especially on social media (in this case, Twitter), which influence the traditional model developed by Hanitzsch and Vos: 1) the half-life of posts; 2) social media algorithms; and 3) the format of the platform, the tweet's anatomy. In what follows, I briefly explain each of these variables and included a tweet example for illustrative purposes.

a) *The half-life of a post*

The first element, the half-life of a post, refers to "*the amount of time it takes for a post to receive half of its total engagement (such as likes, shares, and comments).* The data can help inform strategic and tactical

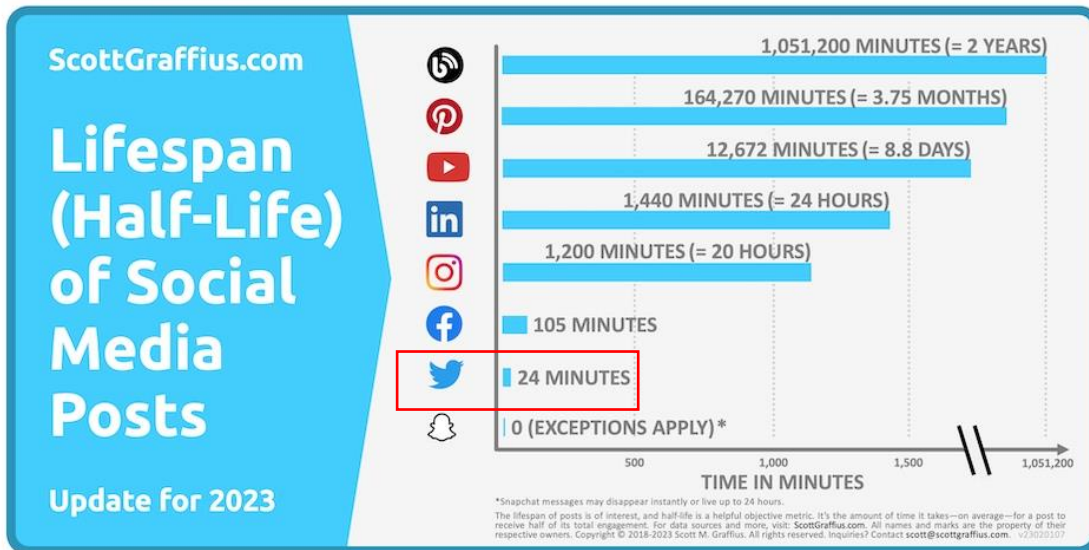
¹⁸⁶ Silvio Waisbord, "The 5Ws and 1H," p.352.

¹⁸⁷ Steen Steensen and Oscar Westlund, *What is Digital Journalism Studies?* Abingdon, Routledge, 2021, p.27.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, p.30

decisions, such as the frequency/scheduling of posts.”¹⁸⁹ In a study by marketing consultant Scott M. Graffius, the *half-life* of a tweet was identified as 23 minutes in 2022 and 24 minutes in 2023:

Figure 117. Half-life of social media posts



Source: [Scottgraffius.com](https://scottgraffius.com)¹⁹⁰

On that note, it is possible to infer journalists and news media outlets value this information, as they try to engage and promote their content with the social media platform’s users. For example, in the 2020 study “Dimensions of Social Media Logics,” journalists and scholars Alfred Hermida and Claudia Mellado discussed how Twitter encourages its users, including journalists, to participate in a dynamic built on what is happening at the moment or the most updated information of a current event—that is, “*the platform is designed to be in the now, as reflected in its cue to users – “What’s happening?” The structure signals an ideal for use of the platform – the transmission of short bursts of just-in-time information that relate something that has just*

¹⁸⁹ Scott M. Graffius, “Lifespan (Half-Life) of Social Media Posts: Update for 2023,” Scott M. Graffius Blog, January 2023, <https://scottgraffius.com/blog/files/social-2023.html>, consulted on May 30, 2023.

¹⁹⁰ Idem.

*happened.*¹⁹¹ In that sense, because of how Twitter works, there is an expectation for journalists to keep unfolding current events while they are still happening, so people can engage with those stories as they develop.¹⁹² Then, the tweet half-life can help journalists and news media outlets set the timing of their content, as they are more aware of how much time (on average) they have to engage with users. However, it could also influence or force them to keep posting just for the sake of being “in the now.”

b) Social media algorithms

Twitter has a complex internal process to build the timelines of its users. According to its engineering website, the social media platform follows three main steps:

1. Fetch the best Tweets from different recommendation sources in a process called **candidate sourcing**.
2. **Rank** each Tweet using a machine learning model.
3. Apply **heuristics and filters**, such as filtering out Tweets from users you’ve blocked, NSFW content, and Tweets you’ve already seen.¹⁹³

While these steps are vague and very technical – as it might be possible that Twitter does not want to disclose the specifics of its algorithms – what I consider more valuable for this research is the fact that these steps play a significant role in how users, in this case, news media outlets, can engage with an audience. Hence, the news media outlets and journalists have less control over their public in the face of social medial algorithms than they did on television, radio, and in print. For example, there are algorithms solely to recommend content to users based on their preferences. Then, journalists and news media sources face the challenge of penetrating more users’ timelines when algorithms are not recommending their content. So, these actors are now more aware of what to do on social media and what sort of algorithms to consider

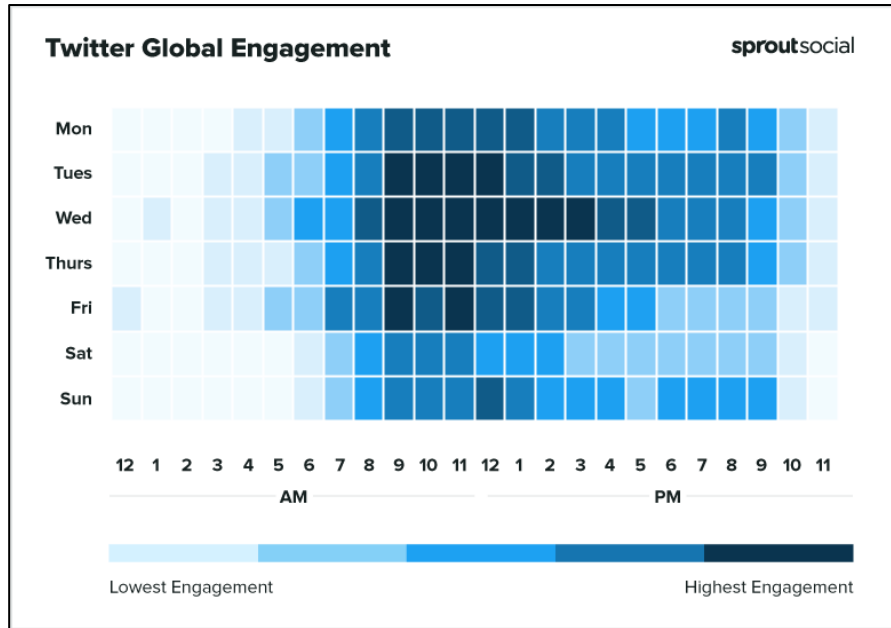
¹⁹¹ Alfred Hermida and Claudia Mellado, “Dimensions of Social Media Logics: Mapping Forms of Journalistic Norms and Practices on Twitter and Instagram,” *Digital Journalism*, 8:7, 2020, p. 868.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, p. 873.

¹⁹³ Twitter, “Twitter’s Recommendation Algorithm,” *Twitter*, March 2023, https://blog.twitter.com/engineering/en_us/topics/open-source/2023/twitter-recommendation-algorithm, consulted on May 30, 2023.

if they want to increase the possibilities to engage more with the audience, like, for example, posting tendencies:

Figure 118. Best time to post on Twitter



Source: [Sprout social via American Marketing Association](#)¹⁹⁴

Nowadays, there are analyses of social traffic and engagement on social media platforms, which allow users to develop their posting strategies. According to the information in Figure 118, one can interpret that the best time to publish on Twitter on a Tuesday in 2022 was from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., and then from 1 to 9 p.m.¹⁹⁵ Then, posting on social media requires a mindset capable of incorporating variables that did not play a role in traditional print and broadcast news media.

For example, before online news and social media, most people would normally wait for the newspaper every morning to get the news or turn the radio or TV on at a particular moment for the afternoon

¹⁹⁴ Katie Powers, "The Best Times to post on Social Media," *American Marketing Association*, March 8, 2022, <https://www.ama.org/marketing-news/the-best-times-to-post-on-social-media/>, consulted on May 30, 2023 (Henceforward, "The Best Times.")

¹⁹⁵ International Women's Day 2022 was on a Tuesday.

and evening newscasts. In a sense, the news was framed within a “working day dynamic,” so journalists produced their content according to that dynamic. There was no need to think too hard about “when” to put out the news, as the process of printing and delivering the newspaper was already decided, and the radio and TV news schedules were already fixed.

In contrast, news can be available all the time on social media from limitless sources, so users can immediately consume them whenever they want. For that, journalists must be more strategic about when to post if they want to get the attention of an audience that is constantly exposed to all kinds of information on Twitter and other social media platforms. In addition, when journalists and news media outlets tweet, they may be conscious that the clock is ticking, and they will have, on average, 23-24 minutes to produce the most engagement on the platform.

c) Tweet's anatomy

Additionally, there is a limit of 280 characters per tweet, so journalists need to make the best of every word they use.¹⁹⁶ The character cap has even encouraged a sort of “tweet slang,” meaning that emojis, numbers, symbols (such as #s), or shortened words substitute complete words or phrases. In that sense, news media sources need to know their audiences and communicate with them accordingly. They may use cleaner text when targeting older generations and more informal phrasing for younger ones.

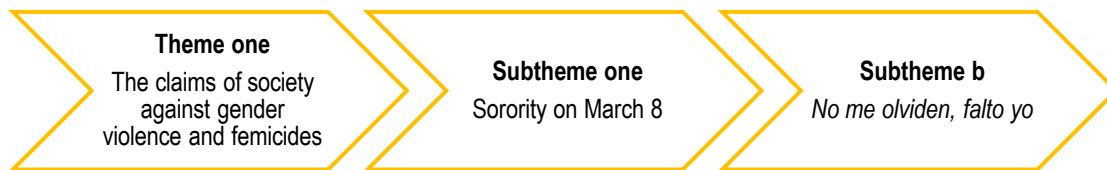
As Murthy Dhiraj reflects, Twitter functions as an awareness system. That is, it adapts and gets activated according to what the users need, want, or search for.¹⁹⁷ When treated as a news space, Twitter catches people's attention through all the resources embedded in the tweet caption. Hence, news media outlets must know what language to use to engage people. If a journalist is covering International Women's Day, including a hashtag related to that topic in the caption can increase the tweet's engagement.

¹⁹⁶ Also known as the “Tweet copy” or the text of the tweet.

¹⁹⁷ Dhiraj, Murthy, “Twitter,” pp.53-54.

Also, other elements could be included in the tweet: tags,¹⁹⁸ images, videos, gifs, and links that redirect users to other websites. On that note, behind every tweet, there is an ongoing complex analytical and strategical machine for news media outlets to wrestle with, as illustrated below (the tweet is also **Example one** of this research, p. 65):¹⁹⁹

Figure 119. Tweet route in thematic analysis. Example of tweet anatomy



¹⁹⁸ The user account of another person or organization on Twitter.

¹⁹⁹ The tweet example is cited and described on p. 65.

Figure 121. QR code. Tweet anatomy



The caption is clear: a father, who is looking for his missing daughter, protested on International Women's Day. A case of gender violence that can be accessed easily by the mentioned hashtag.

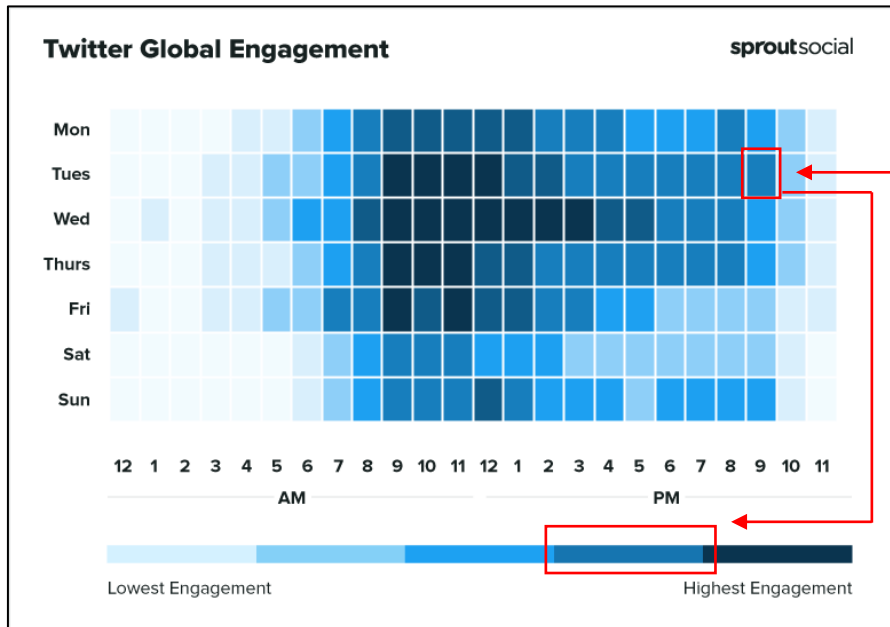
It included a video, on the ground, that highlighted the case.

The Tweet's engagement metrics. One of the highest among all the analyzed tweets.

Figure 120. Tweet anatomy



Tweeted within the last hour of a high range on a Tuesday night.

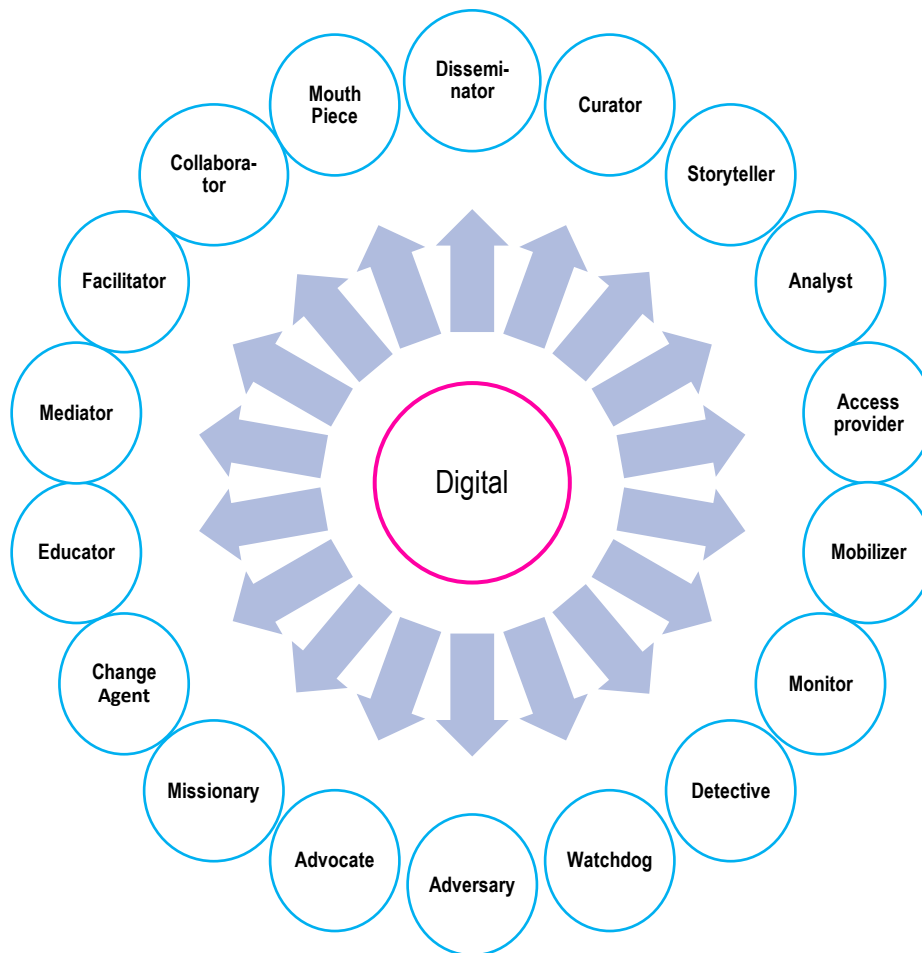


Source: Sprout social via the American Marketing Association²⁰⁰ Figure 122. Best time to post on Twitter

²⁰⁰ Katie Powers, "The Best Times."

So, these three variables – the half-life of posts, algorithms, and the platform format – are specific to digital journalism on social media. While Hanitzsch and Vos’ model does not fully envision them, it would be hasty to disregard the journalistic roles they put forward. What I propose is to add the "social media element" to Hanitzsch and Vos’ model that considers their current 18 roles through a digital journalism lens.

Figure 123. Digital roles of journalism

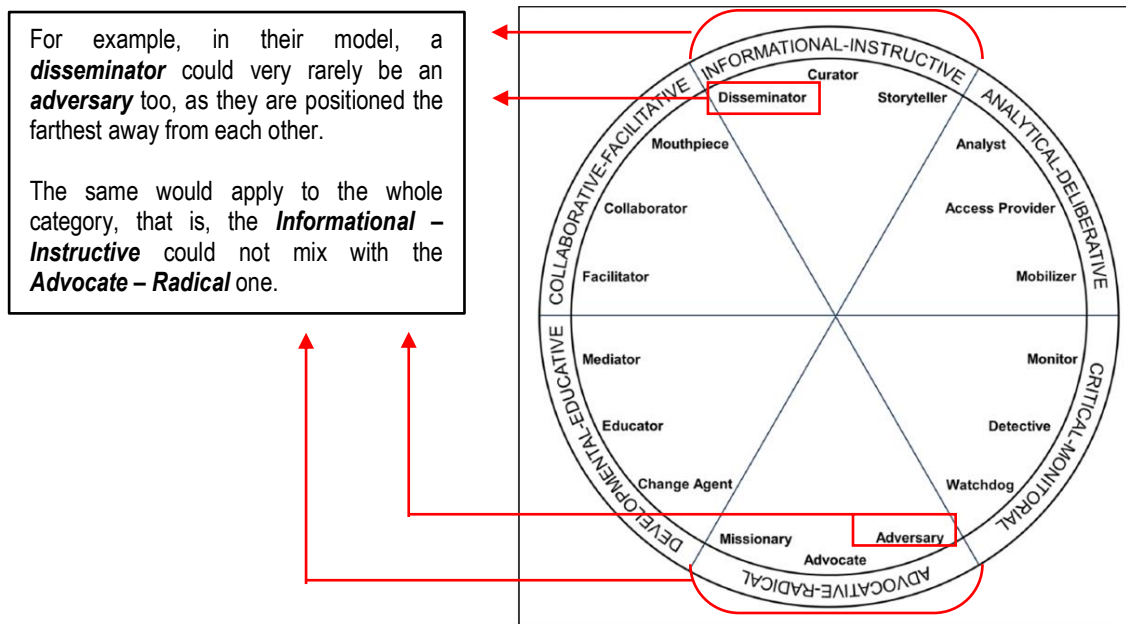


Additionally, in the following section I explain the second element essential to reevaluating Hanitzsch and Vos' wheel of journalism in political life in digital journalism studies: the possibility roles overlapping with each other.

2. Overlapping roles of journalism in political life

Hanitzsch and Vos' model offer a clear and organized interpretation of the journalistic roles they propose. But, as is, it falls into a deterministic logic: "we arrange *ideal-typical* roles of journalists within a circular structure to reflect similarities between roles. A given role bears more similarities with the roles next to it than within those farther away."²⁰¹ Then, as a continual process, Hanitzsch and Vos do not leave much room for more connection between the roles that are farther away from each other.

Figure 124. Reviewing Hanitzsch and Vos' roles of journalism in political life



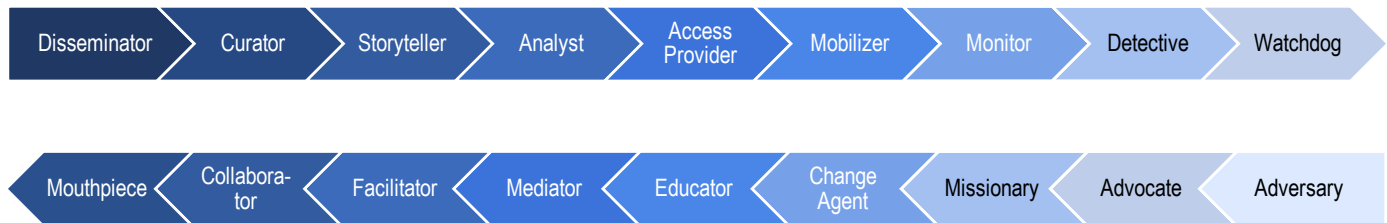
Source: Hanitzsch and Vos.²⁰²

In that sense, their model is, somehow, very linear, and could potentially also be represented in the following graphic:

²⁰¹ Hanitzsch and Vos, "Journalism beyond democracy," p. 152.

²⁰² Ibid, p.153

Figure 125. Continual process of journalism's roles

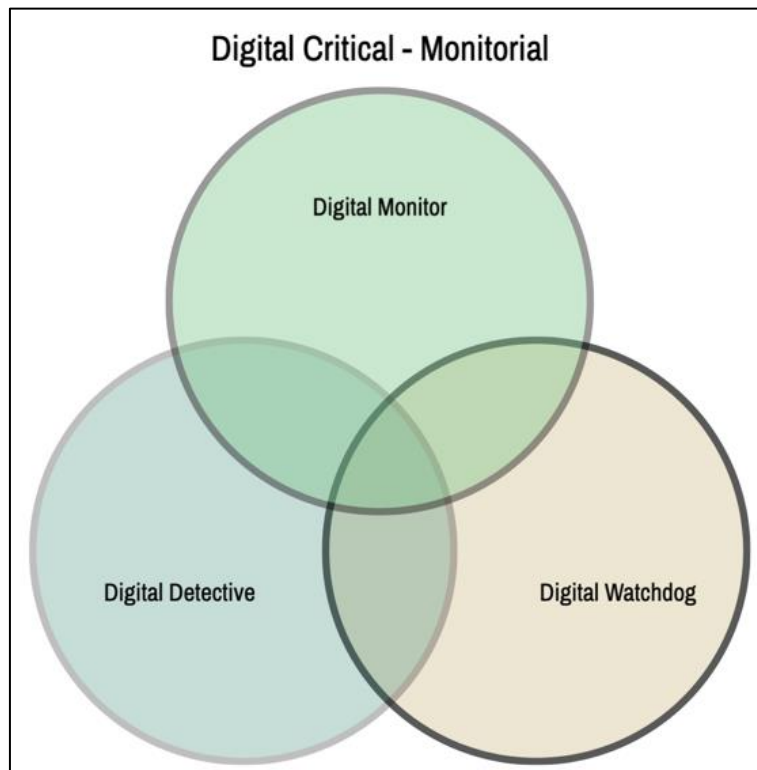


However, I consider that there is room for more open interpretations, in which we might accept that a particular issue can be covered from different roles simultaneously, and that interpretations of these roles will differ from person to person: what I might categorize as "disseminator coverage," someone else may see it as "adversary coverage" or both, depending on the coverage's elements that are being considered, and the position they are being considered from. In any case, roles are not necessarily in opposite extremes all the time, as I explain in the following pages.

Hanitzsch and Vos do bring up this idea in their conclusion: *"furthermore, journalists usually embrace multiple roles simultaneously, often depending on situation and context. Not always do these roles harmonize with one another, which is then a source of role conflicts."*²⁰³ On that note, I propose a new interpretation to explain more straightforwardly how the roles overlap. Instead of slicing a pie into perfect pieces, I present a Venn Diagram to represent each reviewed category; that also incorporates the "digital social media element" explained at the beginning of this chapter:

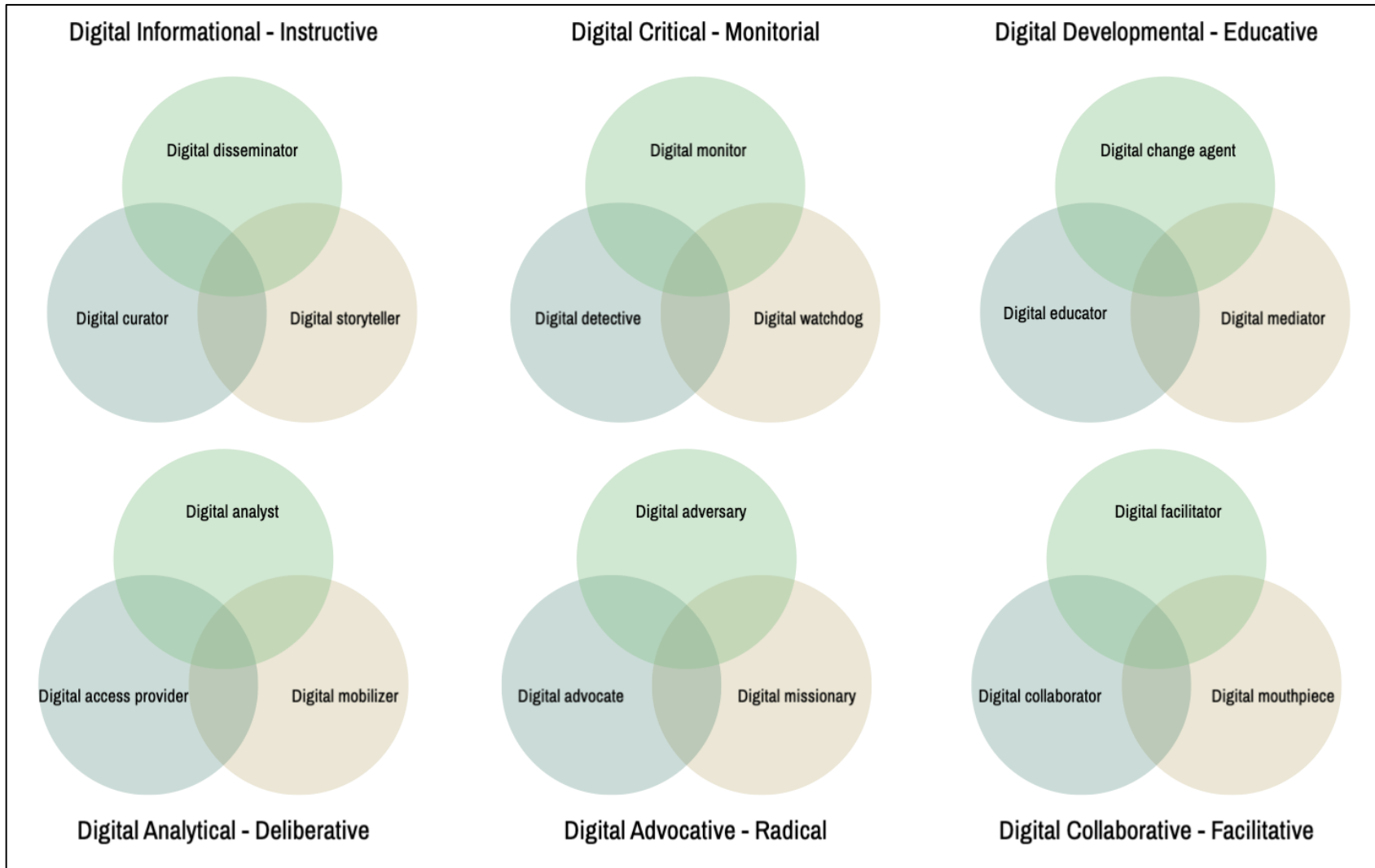
²⁰³ Ibid, p. 160.

Figure 126. Overlapping roles 1



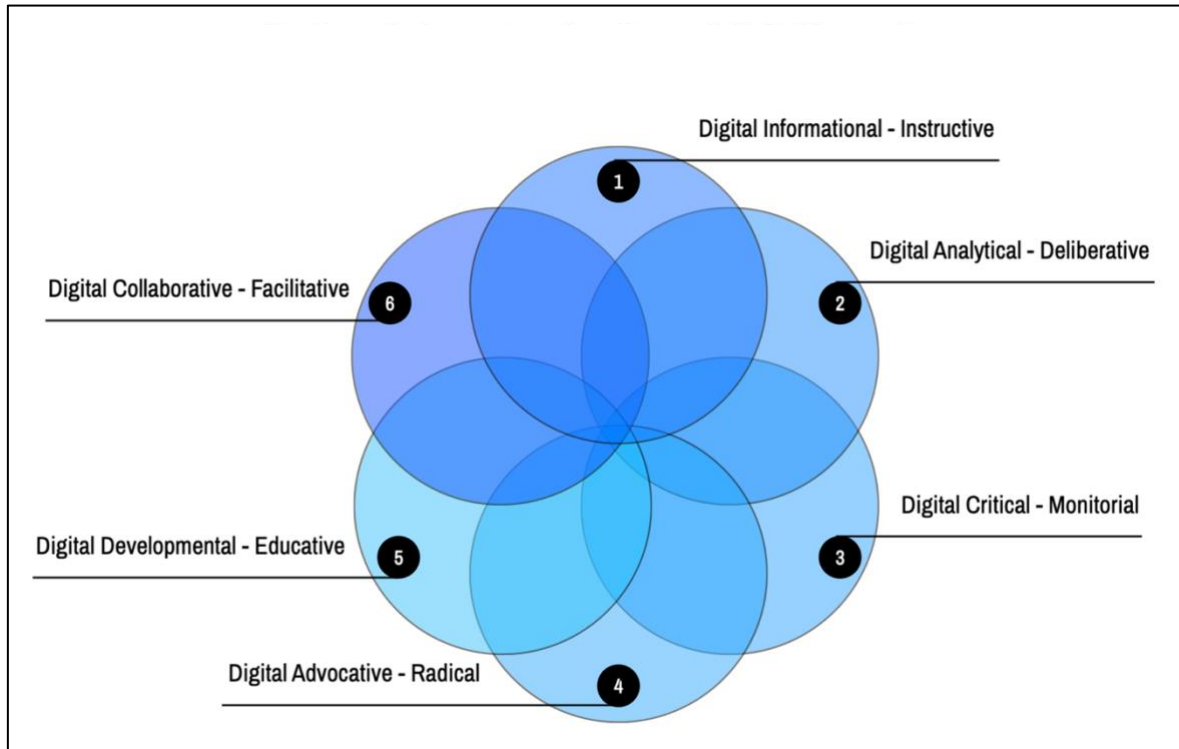
With this diagram, my main objective is to acknowledge that the different roles in journalism can overlap. The boundaries between the roles are not completely set, so there will always be room for interpretation and re-interpretation. In that sense, it is possible to assume the rest of the six main categories developed by Hanitzsch and Vos can follow the same logic, in which there are blurred lines between the roles:

Figure 127. Overlapping roles 2. Complete model



Pushing these ideas further, it is possible to think that the roles can also overlap among different categories, or what Hanitzsch and Vos named "elementary functions," meaning that every role can overlap with others simultaneously, as visualized below.

Figure 128. Reviewed elementary functions of journalism

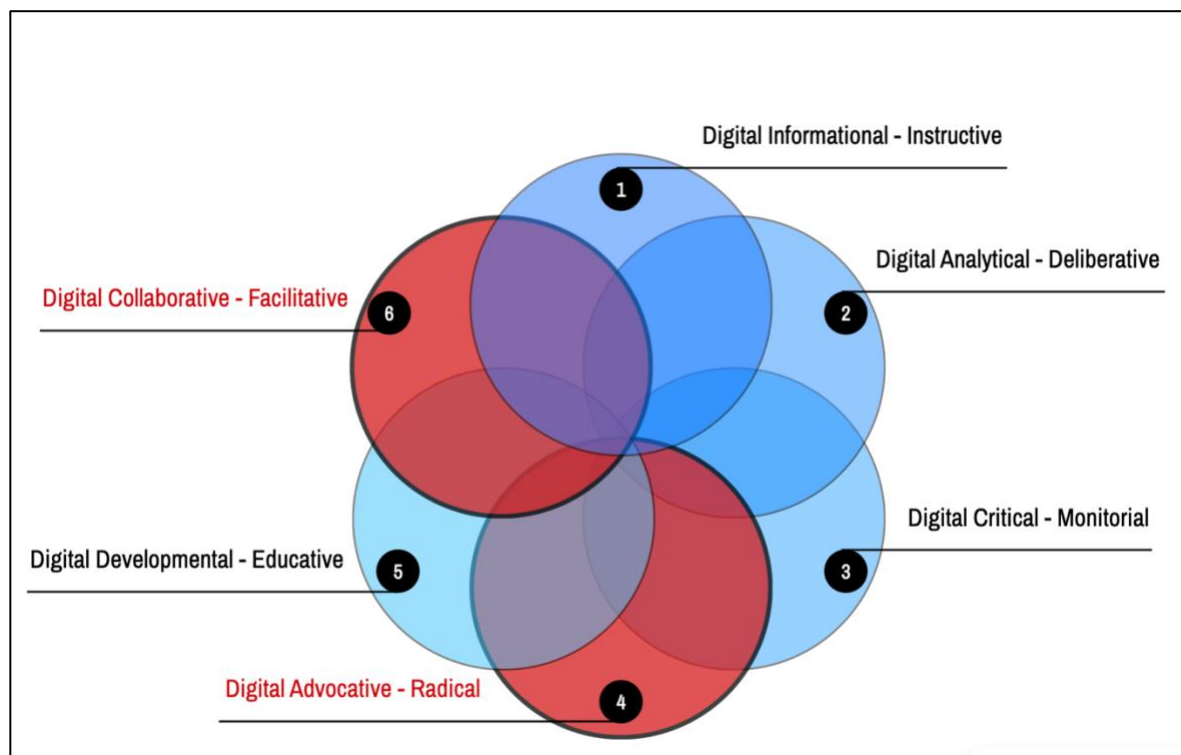


Hanitzsch and Vos' wheel is thus no longer a wheel. In Figure 128, my objective was to expand their original model to incorporate more dynamic and flexible alternatives, and to better represent the complexity of how journalists do their jobs. Evidently, by overlapping the roles, I do not mean to imply we can always study different journalism coverage through every role. However, we could be more open about understanding a particular coverage at particular times through multiple overlapping roles. For example, a consistent *digital informational – instructive* pattern may be evident, but may also show shades of some of the other categories. This proposal is just an extension of what Hanitzsch and Vos reflected in their theoretical model.

This visual interpretation makes it possible to find journalism coverage fitting one role, and other cases where it can fall under multiple roles.

To reflect on this proposal in more detail, I concentrated my efforts on four of the six reviewed elementary functions of digital journalism. What I found in the data I used for the thematic analysis of Chapter Three, the 264 tweets from the five Mexican news media outlets were not leaning toward any one of the roles under the *digital collaborative – facilitative* or the *digital advocative – radical* categories:

Figure 129. Excluded elementary functions of journalism

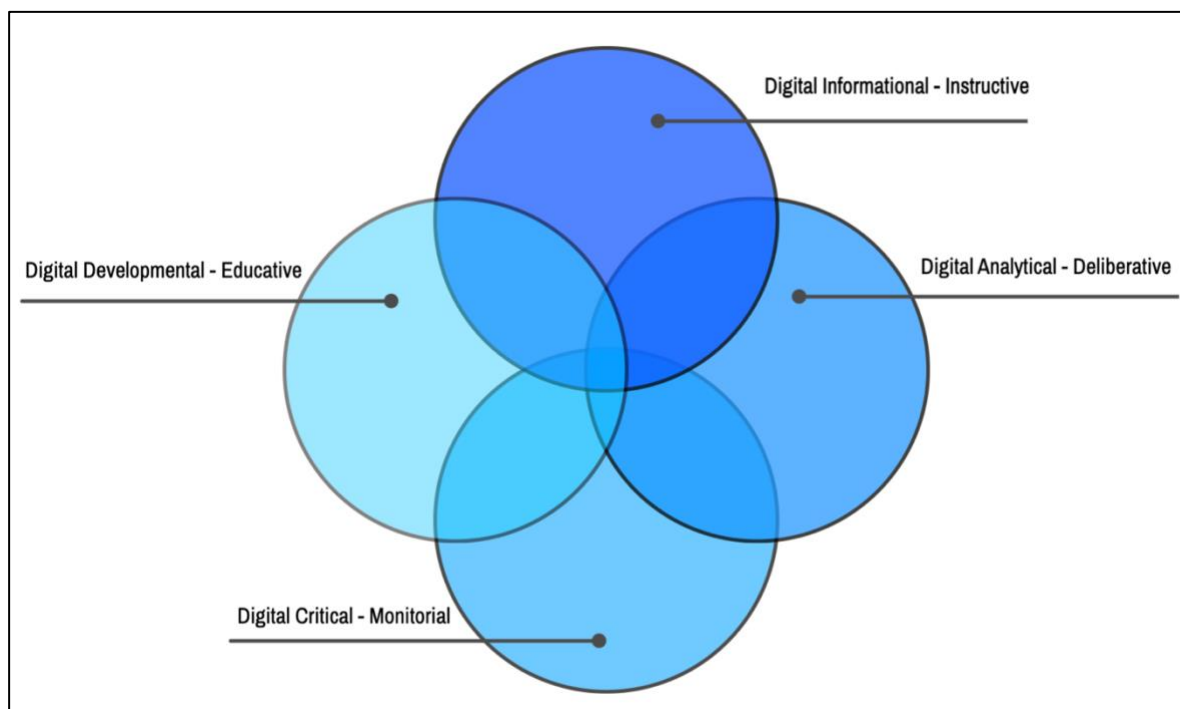


As I explain in Chapter One (p. 39), the roles brought together under the *Advocative – Radical* category aim to encourage society to take an active role to counterbalance the government and other powerful institutions. Journalists openly campaign against the government's agendas and try to function as leaders of

the people that follow their same ideologies and affiliations.²⁰⁴ As for the **Collaborative – facilitative** category, journalists serve the institutions of power, and they function as propaganda for the benefit of the government.²⁰⁵ After completing the thematic analysis and finding three main narratives, I did not come across tweets that demonstrated any of the characteristics of these categories or their roles, so I decided to exclude them from the rest of the analysis.²⁰⁶

In the following pages, I return to some of the tweet examples from **Chapter Three** to explain how digital roles can overlap in the remaining categories from Hanitzsch and Vos’ model:²⁰⁷

Figure 130. Elementary functions of journalism in tweet analysis



²⁰⁴ Hanitzsch and Vos, “Journalism beyond democracy,” p. 155.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 156.

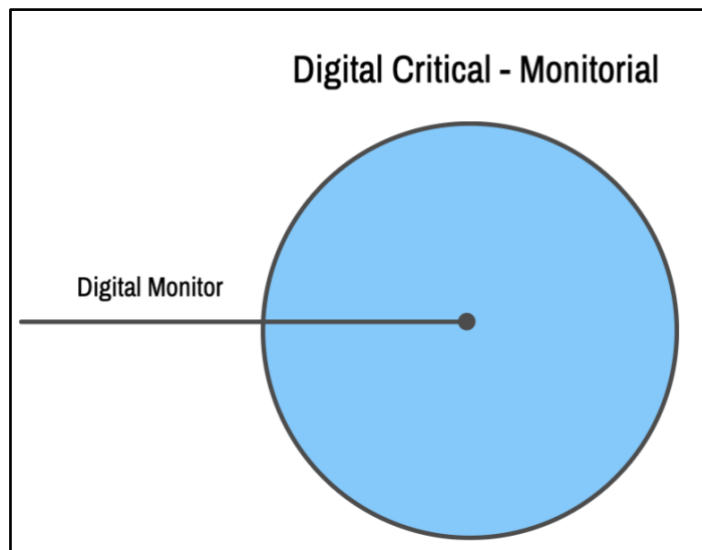
²⁰⁶ However, as mentioned in Chapter Three, for transparency purposes, I listed in Appendix 3 all the tweets I included in this research, so if anyone is interested, it is possible to run another thematic analysis with the same data I used and agree or differ with my interpretations. I wanted to be coherent with my own proposals, so I considered it essential to be open to what others may find in a similar analysis.

²⁰⁷ To see the English translation of each tweet, it is necessary to go to chapter three. For this section, I only included the page number of chapter three to reference the example.

a) *One role of digital journalism in political life*

Following Hanitzsch and Vos' model, the *monitor role* refers to journalists who critically reflect on specific misconducts from political actors.²⁰⁸ The **digital monitor** journalists or news media source continues this function, but they consider the digital variables in their coverage as well (tweet half-life, algorithms, and format of the social media platform). In this example, I included a tweet that fits almost perfectly the characteristics of this role:

Figure 131. Option one: one role overpowers others



Televisa news²⁰⁹

Figure 132. Tweet route in thematic analysis. Option one



²⁰⁸ Hanitzsch and Vos, "Journalism beyond democracy," p. 154.

²⁰⁹ Example 35 from chapter three cited on page 122.

Figure 134. QR code. Option one example



Figure 133. Option one tweet example



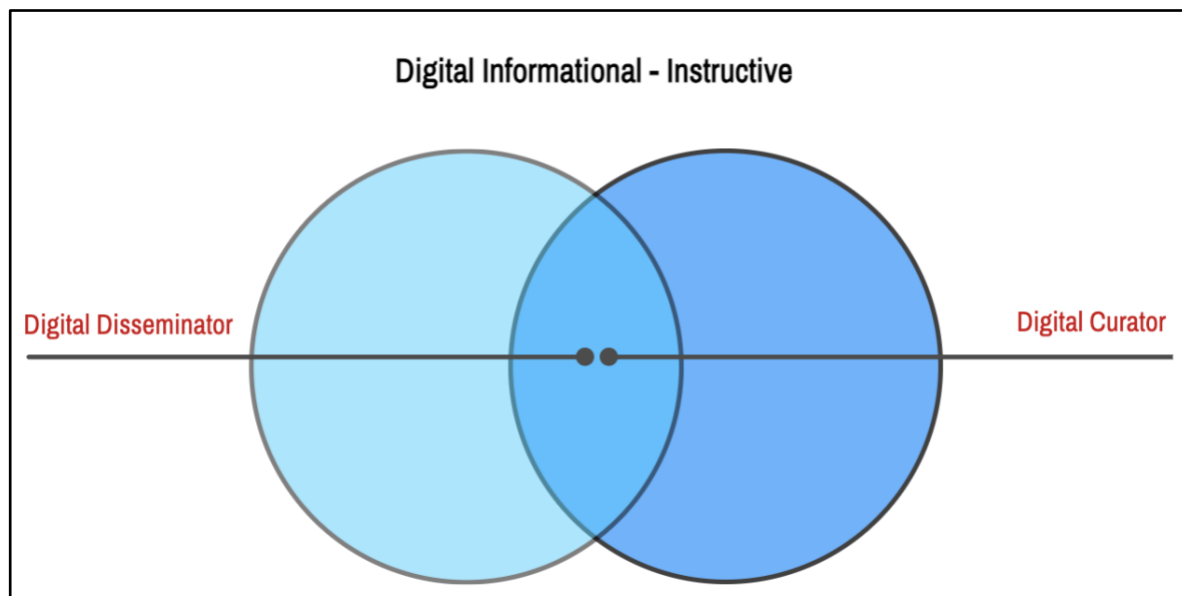
Tercer Grado is a weekly Televisa news forum where professional journalists debate current Mexican events. As previously mentioned on p. 123, the main subject addressed in this tweet was the public statements by a high-level public servant of Mexico City's Government, Marti Batres, who, in anticipation of a violent march for International Women's Day, decided to deploy armed forces throughout the city and reinforce protection in several public places by installing metal fences around them. For the journalists, his actions inspired fear and aimed to discourage people from attending the march, so they criticized and condemned his behavior. Finally, they counterbalanced the statements by explaining their takes on what they saw that day. While I consider that the digital monitor is the best fit for this example from the coverage, it is possible to argue that hints of an **analyst role** are present, too, as they included their own interpretations and opinions on the matter.²¹⁰

²¹⁰ Hanitzsch and Vos, "Journalism beyond democracy," p. 154.

b) Two roles overlapping within the same elementary function of digital journalism

I did find some other tweets that exemplify better how the roles can overlap. In this case, in sync with Hanitzsch and Vos' statement that journalists can cover multiple roles simultaneously, I realized that most of the content from Theme Two, *Live coverage of a [civil/organized/violent] march*, could be seen from the **digital disseminator** and **digital curator** points of view.

Figure 135. Option two: two roles overlapping (same elementary function)



Both roles accompany each other in the **Digital Informational – Instructive** element, and as mentioned before, the limits between roles are blurred, especially when they are part of the same category. The **disseminator** coverage refers to the traditional idea of reporting events "the way they are," meaning that journalists see themselves as spectators.²¹¹ For its part, the **curator role** leans to select, organize, and share packages of information (social media content) about current events that would be the most relevant for the audience.²¹²

²¹¹ Ibid, p. 153.

²¹² Idem.

In that sense, Theme Two presented, in most tweets, a comparison of how people behaved during the marches, highlighting when the events were civil or violent—a dichotomy captured by short videos or images. In many cases, it seemed as if the news media outlets decided to go live or share a precise moment that could be emblematic for the audience. While their journalists and teams were in the field, recording without getting involved, they also decided what specific content to share on social media, chosen from all the material they captured or recorded.

Uno TV²¹³

Figure 136. Tweet route in thematic analysis. Option two (1)



²¹³ Example 29 from chapter three cited on page 115.

Figure 138. QR code. Option two example (1)



They gave a flower.
"We are one"

Figure 137. Option two tweet example (1)



El Universal²¹⁴

Figure 139. Tweet route in thematic analysis. Option two (2)



²¹⁴ Example 30 from chapter three cited on page 116.

Figure 141. QR code. Option two example (2)



They were hurt after breaking the glass...

Figure 140. Option two tweet example (2)

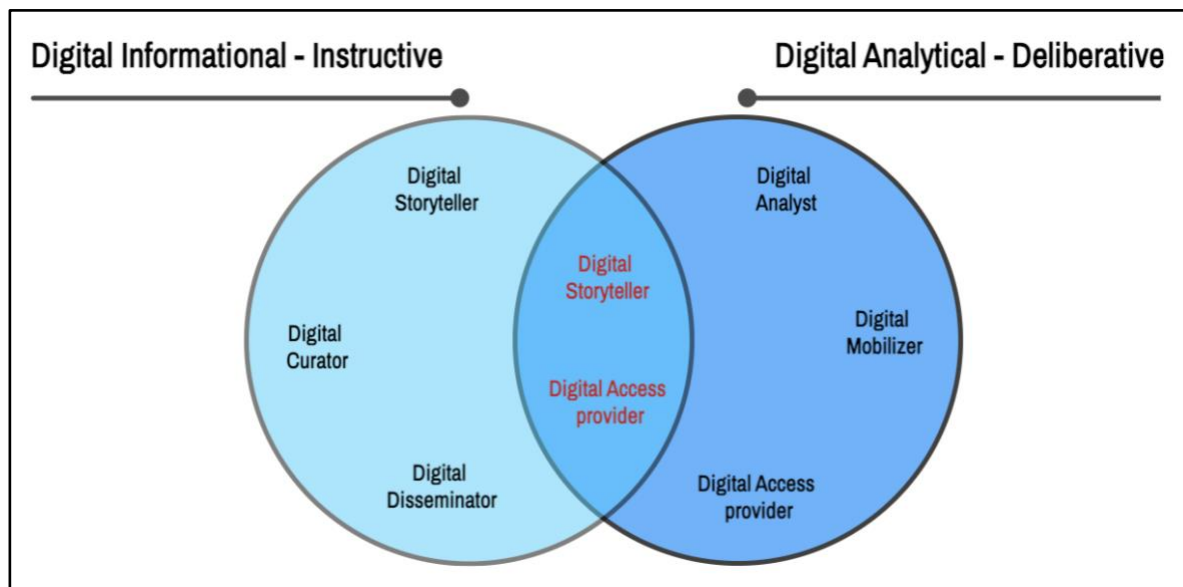


As can be seen in both examples, while the tweet captions do not give much context or explanation of what happened, they included keywords that, associated with the clips' contents, make it possible to infer that the coverage focused on how protesters behaved during the marches, specifically whether they were civil or violent. In that sense, while the clips are frozen moments of the events on which journalists did not intervene or comment, in the end, the tweet passed through a process in which the information was "curated" before being published. However, it is impossible to know what was considered during that process, or the what the specific objective of sharing that content might have been. Additionally, the tweets from this theme, especially under the digital disseminator and curator roles, are the ones with the most engagement (as seen in the metrics of each example), which can give news media outlets a general idea of the audience's interests.

c) Two roles overlapping from different elementary functions of digital journalism

In Hanitzsch and Vos' model, the **Informational – Instructive** category and the **Analytical – Deliberative** one are side by side and close to each other, meaning they share some characteristics. From the thematic analysis, I found some tweets that overlap in two different roles from each of these two categories.

Figure 142. Option three: two roles overlapping (different elementary functions)



Usually, the **Storyteller** looks for ways to explain the news in detail, providing context and explanations of the past circumstances leading to the current event.²¹⁵ Meanwhile, the **Access Provider** opens up new opportunities for audience members to tell their stories; journalists give them a platform so their interest can resonate louder.²¹⁶

²¹⁵ Hanitzsch and Vos, "Journalism beyond democracy," p. 153.

²¹⁶ Ibid, p. 154.

Figure 143. Tweet route thematic analysis. Option three (1)

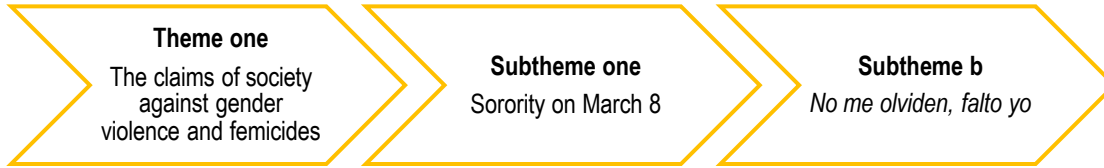


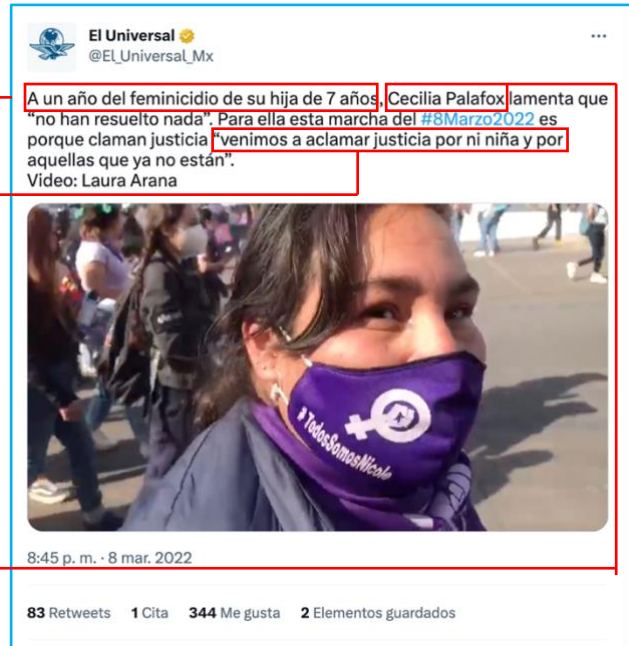
Figure 145. QR code. Option three example (1)



Context and motives

Citizen with the opportunity to tell her story

Figure 144. Option three tweet example (1)



²¹⁷ Example 22 from chapter three cited on page 107.

Televisa News²¹⁸

Figure 146. Tweet route thematic analysis. Option three (2)

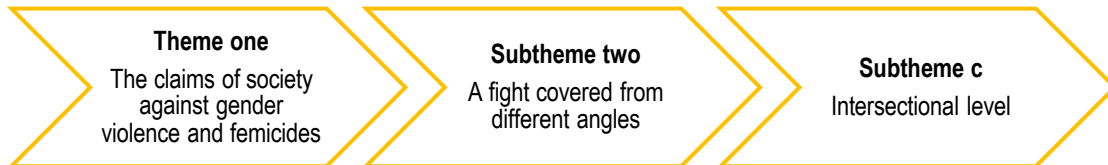


Figure 147. QR code. Option three example (2)



As described in chapter three, the article recounts the experiences of gender violence that women have had in the region and why did they protest on International Women's Day through the words of indigenous activists.

Figure 148. Option three tweet example (2)



The coverage by El Universal was short. The storytelling elements were very concise, but the result was still a compelling, complex story about a mother demanding justice for the femicide of her daughter. While marching, Cecilia Palafox could also share her experience with a social media audience, so she reached other public than the people around her. Then, the characteristics of both roles were present. As previously mentioned, social media content has its rules and conditions, so storytelling and access provider coverage would not necessarily be a full-length documentary or longform written piece. In fact, in this short clip, we can find all the basic elements for journalistic coverage, as the who, what, when, why, where, and how questions are answered.

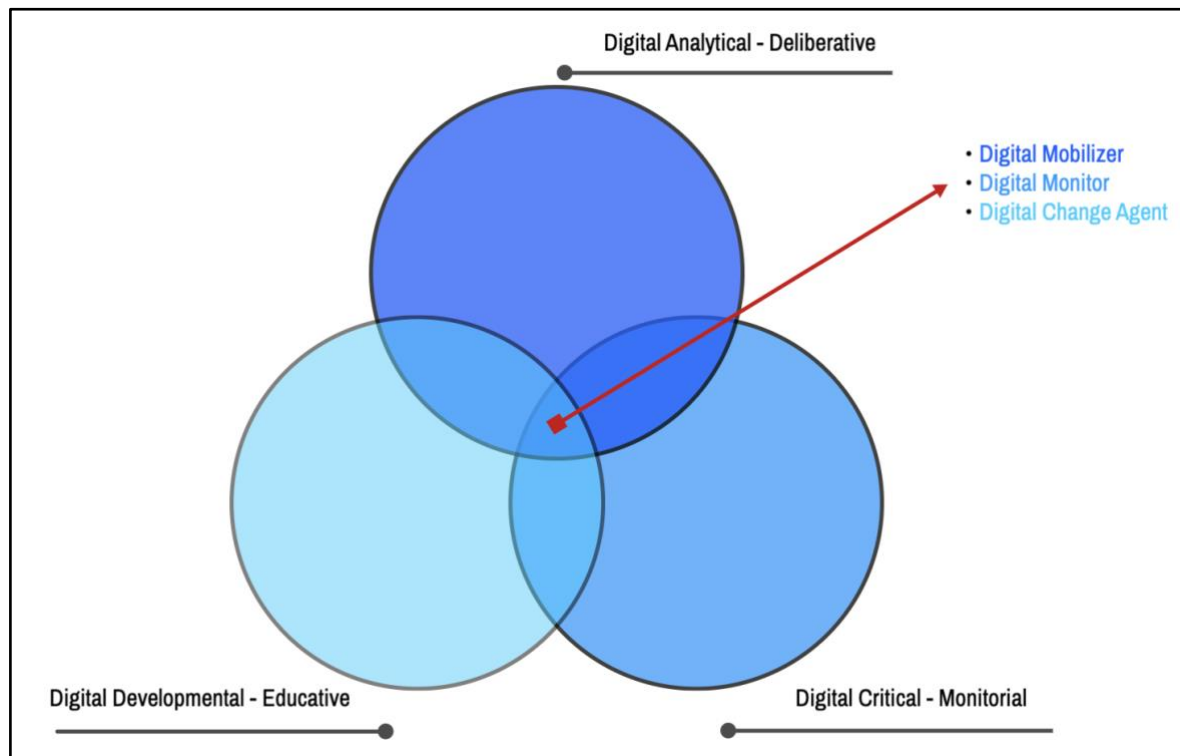
²¹⁸ Example 27 from chapter three cited on page 113.

As for the coverage of Indigenous women, in pages 113-114, I described and translated some of the main elements of the piece in question. By providing historical facts and the current context of Indigenous women's experiences in Chiapas and including testimonies from community members, the news media outlet could tell a story focused on gender violence through the voices of socially oppressed groups.

d) Three roles overlapping from different elementary functions of digital journalism

Finally, there were some tweets that can be understood from several of Hanitzsch and Vos' elementary functions of journalism in political life. In some instances, the news media analysis started, clearly, in one particular role. But then, while the coverage kept unfolding, the discussion changed, and it was possible to distinguish other roles also present in that same coverage.

Figure 149. Option four. More than two elementary functions



The **Mobilizer** journalist seeks to encourage society to participate in public life, either through concrete actions in person or through dialogue and debate.²¹⁹ Again, the **Monitor role** condemns misconduct from the institutions of power, and the **Change Agent** goes with the idea of getting involve producing social change, so journalists under this role advocate for concrete causes, and they consider themselves an active participant with a responsibility to achieve this change.²²⁰

El universal²²¹

Figure 150. Tweet route thematic analysis. Option four example



Figure 152. QR code. Option four example



Figure 151. Option four tweet example



²¹⁹ Hanitzsch and Vos, "Journalism beyond democracy," p. 154.

²²⁰ Ibid, p. 155.

²²¹ Example 19 from chapter three cited on page 95.

The tweet above is a perfect example of how the roles interact and coexist simultaneously, especially when there was a discussion with several actors exchanging their reflections on specific events, as they all brought up and highlighted different elements. As I described in Chapter Three on pages 96-97, the panel in this tweet went back and forth about, yet again, the statements by Marti Batres, Secretary of Government of Mexico City, about how violent the march would be and all the security measures he approved.

In the beginning, the panel focused on criticizing the tone and expectations of the public servant regarding the march on International Women's Day. However, soon they changed to declare how those statements motivated them to attend the march, participating as protesters as well. They shared a point of view in which they agreed that people needed to go out and protest; they endorsed the march as a legitimate way to protest in the face of a context in which gender violence and femicides are on the rise. So, the diversity of participants in one tweet opened the room for several roles to overlap and interact with each other at the same time.

3. Overlapping journalistic roles and Twitter coverage of gender violence and femicides on International Women's Day

In their article *"From clicktivism to hacktivism,"* George and Leider remark that *"digital [journalism sic] is still in its infancy, or perhaps it is now a raucous teenager. In its short existence, it has enjoyed an unprecedented trajectory compared to social activism of the past, bringing in more participants, employing more tools, and creating impacts (...)"*²²² that produce change. Throughout this research, I analyzed how news media outlets are adapting to the new ways and platforms to produce and share their content with a digital audience; they are experimenting with their content on social media or Twitter, as I explored in this study.

²²² George and Leider, "From clicktivism to hacktivism," p. 16.

By testing Hanitzsch and Vos' theory of the different roles of journalism in political life, I found patterns in how news media outlets cover political issues on social media. Even though their model was not conceived for digital journalism studies at its core, I was able to adapt it and propose an updated version with an additional layer of variables that allowed me to understand better the logics and patterns of these actors when they use social media to produce news.

I found that the news media outlets included in this research were flexible and covered political issues from different roles, often simultaneously. In this case, I did not spin Hanitzsch and Vos' wheel to find the narratives from the perspective of one single role. In fact, this research indicates there is no wheel, but an overlapping range of possibilities in which roles coexist among the others simultaneously. In this case, the main objective was to find out how five Mexican news media outlets covered gender violence, and femicide issues during International Women's Day 2022 on Twitter. Moreover, they did it through four of the “reviewed” elementary functions of digital journalism from Hanitzsch and Vos.

In some of the tweets, mainly for those in Theme One, *The claims of society against gender violence and femicides*, they moved from **Digital Informational – Instructive** roles to **Digital Analytical – Deliberative** ones, as they promoted stories and testimonies of citizens who wanted to raise their voices and demand justice for femicides victims. So, at the same time the outlets functioned as a platform for these people, who keep seeing the government and structures of powers as the ones to blame for their losses. From this coverage, I understood better the devastating Mexican context already studied by Lisa Sánchez in “*Violencia de género y feminicidios en México*” (p. 31); on the other hand, it is also in sync with Li *et al.*'s reflections that “*social media has been used as a platform that helped victims to voice out their stories and the general public to discuss sexual assault issues.*”²²³

²²³ Li *et al.*, “Twitter as a tool for social movement,” p.863.

As for Theme Two, *Live coverage of a [civil/organized/violent] march*, I found that most of the content moved within the **Digital Informational – Instructive** roles, in which the outlets focused on sharing glimpses of how the protesters behaved during the marches. It is common to find polarizing content on social media, a phenomenon explained by Carrie Rentschler in her article about rape culture (described in Chapter One) in which she reflects on the opposing reactions of online users when women decide to “out” their assaulters on social media. Intentionally or not, news media outlets promoted controversial content, so they must be more careful about it, and maybe their curation processes need to be rearranged. Sharing the content of people burning and destroying public spaces without any additional information about what was going on can lead to misinterpretations or disinformation about the protestors’ general objectives during the International Women's Day marches. While analyzing this coverage, I kept in mind Li *et al.*'s reflections on how easy it can be to manipulate public perception of gender violence issues by misusing Twitter information and deviating the attention from the main legitimate objectives of a social movement into negative narratives aimed to diminish it.²²⁴ For example, in this case, why focus on a particular group of people that burned random objects in public, instead of paying more attention to covering the stories and testimonies of the women demanding justice for their families and friends, victims of gender violence and femicides?

Finally, the content of Theme Three, *The Government's position on social demands about International Women's Day*, had the most extensive range of digital journalism roles, as the news media outlets concentrated on criticizing and condemning public servants when they publicly dismissed women's demands and called them violent for protesting for their rights during International Women's Day. This behavior was not surprising, as government institutions in Mexico tend to protect themselves by blaming others, as already mentioned in the study by Daniela Cerva about institutional discourses in feminist protests in the country (p. 33). For Theme Three, I found many of the digital journalism roles overlapping, as journalists

²²⁴ Ibid, p.864.

themselves participated in the marches, expressing their opinions and demands as citizens, so they were, in some cases, part of the story they were covering.

This is a very interesting outcome, as it shows the complexity and heterogeneity of journalism work on social media. While I only studied five digital news media outlets in Mexico, it was clear that the tweets' contents were the product of many actors, which could have influenced the many roles I came across and, in the end, the many responses to how these outlets covered gender violence and femicides.

Final considerations

As we have become used to unlocking our phones, clicking on the Twitter app, and scrolling down our timelines to see "what's new" or what is the *#TrendingTopic* that day, we more frequently may come across content related to feminist movements. In a country where 11 women are murdered every day,²²⁵ we can see, in person or online, how certain sectors of Mexican society march and protest, demanding that the Mexican government put a stop this violence. Women have taken March 8 – International Women’s Day – as a symbolic date to fight this problem, and so they voice their stories in all the spaces they can access. On social media, we can get to know those stories from many sources, including through the work of journalists.

This research aimed to explore how Mexican news media outlets covered issues related to gender violence and femicides during International Women’s Day 2022 on Twitter by analyzing content associated with specific hashtags.

In order to do so, in Chapter One I describe the pertinent literature that provided background on the practical and theoretical subjects related to this question. This chapter covered the rise of digital journalism, particularly on social media, about feminist topics. In that sense, I linked the studies and coverage of international phenomena, such as the *#MeToo* movement, with the current context in Mexico regarding gender violence and femicides.

In Chapter Two, I explained each step of the method I pursued in this research: a thematic analysis – guided by the model developed by scholars Braun and Clarke – to find narratives and trends from the tweets of five Mexican news media outlets (*El Universal*, *TV Azteca News*, *Televisa News*, *Uno TV*, and *Aristegui Online*) that included the hashtags *#8M*, *#8Marzo2022*, and *#DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer*. Additionally, I

²²⁵ Almudena Barragán et al., "Por Debanhi, por Susana, por Adriana...: los miles de feminicidios que indignan América Latina," *El País*, <https://elpais.com/mexico/2022-11-25/por-debanhi-por-susana-por-adriana-los-miles-de-feminicidios-que-indignan-a-america-latina.html>, consulted on June 14, 2023.

learned how to connect with Twitter's API and use the Python programming language to scrape data from that social media platform, ensuring that I obtained as much public data on that matter as possible.

Chapter Three was dedicated to describing the results of the thematic analysis of the 264 tweets I retained for this research. The results were organized into three main narratives or themes: **1) the claims of society against gender violence and femicides; 2) live coverage of a [civil/organized/violent] march; and 3) the Government's position on social demands about International Women's Day.** The first theme focused on content related to the motives, reasons, and actions behind protesters during International Women's Day. The tweets highlighted the stories of parents, other family members, and friends of femicide victims and the messages from all the women who will not tolerate any more of these cases. On the other hand, the second theme showcased a more general live coverage of the marches, contrasting civil and violent protests. Finally, the third theme revolved around journalists' analyses and critiques of government officials and other authorities' statements and actions related to protests on International Women's Day. As I explain in the chapter, these three themes helped me to comprehend in detail what the news media outlets covered on Twitter about gender violence and femicides in Mexico; but, I needed to continue a step further to know how they did it.

On that note, in Chapter 4, I test the compatibility of theory and practice to answer my main research question: How did Mexican news media outlets cover issues related to gender violence and femicides during International Women's Day 2022 on Twitter associated with specific hashtags? So, I explored how Hanitzsch and Vos' model of the roles of journalism in political life could apply to the Twitter coverage I found in the three themes. However, before digging into the model itself, I updated it with two proposals that I consider more suitable for digital journalism coverage, but still compatible with the scholars' original theory: 1) the digital variables (the half-life of posts, the social media algorithms, and the format of the platform or the tweet's anatomy) and 2) the overlapping roles functionality (the understanding that more than one role can be present simultaneously in the same coverage).

To be sure, the analysis in this chapter was built on my observations alone. Nevertheless, I stand by my proposals based on the strictness and rigor involved in every phase of this research. I have reviewed how other scholars and journalists have covered topics related to my object of study; I was transparent and meticulous through every step I took to scrape data from Twitter and to carry out the thematic analysis; and I demonstrated a coherent understanding of the theory at hand. The results are new interpretations of how journalists and news media institutions do their jobs when covering socio-political issues on social media.

In this sense, *El Universal*, *TV Azteca News*, *Televisa News*, *Uno TV*, and *Aristegui Online* covered issues related to gender violence and femicides on Twitter from different angles, depending on each theme. In general, I found coverage that fit the categories of Digital Informational- Instructive, Digital Analytical – Deliberative, Digital Critical – Monitorial, and Digital Developmental – Educative. In particular, for Theme One, *The claims of society against gender violence and femicides*, the tweets presented characteristics of the Digital Storyteller and Digital Access Provider roles, in which the media outlets opened the doors to citizens to tell their stories online. I consider that the mobilization of these roles effectively dealt with such a sensitive topic, at least from the citizen's perspectives, as they were comfortable explaining their circumstances and motives behind their participation in the marches. While one can only imagine how difficult it could be to expose your story and talk about the loss by femicide of a friend or family member, these journalism roles can also empower the citizens and make them feel that their testimonies matter, decreasing the possibilities of making them feel attacked or judged by an unknown digital audience.

For their part, the tweets from Theme Two, *Live coverage of a [civil/organized/violent] march*, covered my main topic from the Digital Disseminator and Digital Curator roles simultaneously, in which the clips and images contrasted protesters' behavior during the marches. In general, I believe journalists could do better when they enact these roles. In the end, sharing to thousands of users' short clips without much context was a decision; someone gave a "green light" to tweet that content, which could very quickly start polarizing discussions on social media and deviate into negative and uninspired narratives.

Given the nature of Theme Three, *The Government's position on social demands about International Women's Day*, journalists moved within a wide range of Hanitzsch and Vos' roles as they analyzed and criticized political discourses. They actively promoted public participation to encourage social change. In this sense, it was possible to detect the digital analyst, monitor, mobilizer, and change agent roles throughout this coverage. Given the number of tweets I found showcasing riots and violent events (mainly in theme two), I believe that the different roles journalists took on in the content under this final theme worked to counterbalance those negative images and videos, which can only mean there are still journalists committed to providing audiences insightful analysis of the complexity of this movement, highlighting the importance of protest when there is a legitimate cause for it.

A goal of this project was also to provide ideas for future research in best practices for how journalists can do their job, or jobs, on social media when covering complex socio-political issues, such as gender violence and femicides. By exploring new interpretations of Hanitzsch and Vos' roles of journalism in political life, it is possible to understand how we can cover these kinds of issues, reflecting on our intention and what we want to say while paying attention to the platform we are using and why we are using it.

Additionally, I consider that this research contributes to digital journalism studies and our understandings of journalism on social media. As this field constantly evolves, I hope my outcomes encourage journalists and researchers to continue testing and adapting existing models to better understand and nourish our own discipline. Additionally, I expect that my methodology can be useful for other studies about social movement coverage on social media platforms, especially on how to use and interpret the available public data with the aid of different programming languages and other digital tools.

Finally, there is a great opportunity for future studies in this area. First, while this research focused more on how professional journalism institutions covered a particular sociopolitical issue on social media, there is plenty of space to analyze the consequences of that coverage, that is, to center the attention on the audience and engagement variables. It could be interesting to find innovative ways to give sense and meaning to *likes*,

shares, retweets, and other social media impacts relevant to understanding how users process and use news about social movements on those platforms. In addition, while outside the scope of this project, there could be more thematic analyses of other sorts of social media engagement, for example, on users' replies to tweets and threads about gender violence, femicides, and other issues; what narratives can we find within the comments that may align with or challenge the original tweets?

Secondly, as I mentioned early on, when I conceptualized this research, I wanted to analyze journalism coverage of *#NiUnaMás*, *#NiUnaMenos*, and *#VivasNosQueremos*, among other more militant hashtags, very much related to gender violence and femicides; but when I did a tweet sample with Python, I did not find enough data (tweets) from the five mainstream news media outlets to work with. They did not use those hashtags in their coverage. However, other news media sources outside of these five mainstream outlets may have mobilized these hashtags in ways outside the scope of this project. In that sense, even though I ended up using my three leading hashtags as data compilers in this research, it could be enriching to explore the other more “militant” ones, not only in Mexico but across Latin America.

It could be interesting to find patterns and differences between countries or regions and to analyze diverse uses of hashtags in social movements and what people can achieve through them. As Li *et al.* have studied, hashtags have helped women to “*understand the issues of rape culture, learn how to advocate for the issue, and motivate them to take actions in the real world (...) people across the country did not only use the hashtag to talk about their sexual assault experiences, but they also used [it] to argue against traditional sexism, such as women’s responsibilities in a rape.*”²²⁶ Then, for other studies, what have women in Latin America gained through mobilizing *#NiUnaMás*, *#NiUnaMenos*, and *#VivasNosQueremos*?

A third direction for future research I would like to point out is focusing on additional theory–practice analysis. For example, Murthy Dhiraj reflects on how Twitter can be seen as a space in which users can

²²⁶ Li et al, “Twitter as a tool for social movement,” p.856.

develop a sense of individuality and of being part of a community.²²⁷ Users can have a particular point of view that can be inserted in a more extensive conversation or conversations. I mean that interactions and dynamics among social media users have led them to create digital communities with whom they follow their causes and address sociopolitical issues. Nancy Fraser explores this phenomenon in her subaltern counter-publics theory, in which she explains that the diversity of people tends to constitute many distinct publics that make up the public sphere, mainly when dominant groups constantly impose their ideas and solutions on others, creating a dynamic of dominance and subordination. For this, Fraser explains that commonly subordinated groups – women, workers, people of color, gays, and lesbians, among others – come together in alternative discursive spaces to formulate their own interpretations of their interests and needs.²²⁸ She calls these groups the subaltern counter-publics. In a few words, Fraser argues these groups emerge as a counter-response to being excluded and/or marginalized by the dominant groups in what they consider public affairs.²²⁹ I think that, when analyzing the feminist movement, we could also open the door to discuss the heterogeneity and diversity of groups trying to engage with others on Twitter. Who are the ones talking about femicides apart from professional journalists? Who else, outside of professional journalists, is being seen and accepted as news sources when they share their points of view and the information they have collected online?

If we continue with Waisbord's reflections, "*News is not only what 'journalists' decide. Ordinary citizens once thought simply as 'passive audiences,' are busier than ever. They produce, share, snack, click, scan, modify, and comment on news for public consumption. (...) although not everyone fits conventional definitions of 'journalist,' anyone can potential play one on the Internet.*"²³⁰ So, in a counter-public analysis, it

²²⁷ Dhiraj, Murthy, "Twitter," p. 62.

²²⁸ Fraser, Nancy, "Rethinking the public sphere: a contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy", *Social Text*, No. 25/26, 1990, p.67.

²²⁹ Idem.

²³⁰ Silvio Waisbord, "The 5Ws and 1H," pp.352-353.

could be possible to include, for example, how citizen journalists engage with their social media audiences and their roles and presence as counter-publics.

At the moment this research was concluded, another International Women’s Day has already taken place, so there is a new opportunity to study this event with fresher lenses and expanded objectives: what hashtags were mobilized and by whom; which actors engaged with that content the most; were the narratives similar or not to those in 2022 identified in this current research? How did citizen journalists cover gender violence and femicide on Twitter? It could be possible and valid to approach newer studies using similar questions to those I address in this research, as the objectives and actors involved may be different:

Figure 154. QR code.
Example for future studies



Influencer or digital citizen journalist?

From the Alhóndiga square, thousands of women loudly sing "Canción sin miedo" #Marcha8M

Figure 153. Example for future studies



Source: [Twitter](https://twitter.com/alexramblasr/status/1633632225655652353), 2023.²³¹

Metrics to evaluate engagement

²³¹ Alex Ramblas (@alexramblasr), Desde la explanada de la Alhóndiga, miles de mujeres entonaron con fuerza "Canción sin miedo", *Twitter*, March 2023, 1 <https://twitter.com/alexramblasr/status/1633632225655652353>, consulted on April 30, 2023.

All in all, no matter what kind of digital journalism research one might pursue, it is necessary to be conscious that any finding still represents a micro-sample of reality. As of this moment, what happens on Twitter, or on any other social media, only reflects and represents an abstract version of a bigger phenomenon. Nevertheless, a sample of that reality can sometimes unlock new opportunities for deeper understandings of that phenomenon. In this study, I used this snapshot of International Women's Day 2022 on Twitter to start a discussion about mainstream news media's current practices on digital platforms when they cover one of the most severe problems for feminist movements. I hope this research will inspire others to continue the conversation.

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Appendices

1. Coding with Python

This appendix describes only the basic coding I used to scrape data from Twitter. I will not share the complete coding script, as it includes several trial-and-error processes that would be more difficult to explain and potentially confuse people. This appendix is aimed at those curious to know how I obtained the data I needed for this research experiment.

1. Defining the variables needed from each Tweet

Image A

```
16 class Tweet:
17     def __init__(self, t_id, text, author_id, retweet_count, reply_count, like_count, quote_count):
18         self.t_id = t_id
19         self.text = text
20         self.author_id = author_id
21         self.retweet_count = retweet_count
22         self.reply_count = reply_count
23         self.like_count = like_count
24         self.quote_count = quote_count
```

- t.id = the tweet's URL
- text = the tweet's text
- author_id = news media outlet Twitter account
- retweet_count = number of retweets for each tweet
- reply_count = number of comments for each tweet
- like_count = number of likes for each tweet
- quote_count = number of shares for each tweet

2. How to get the tweets

Image B

```
70 def get_tweets(query, token=None):
71     client = get_tweepy_client()
72     response = client.search_all_tweets(
73         query=query,
74         max_results=500,
75         start_time="2022-03-06T00:00:00Z",
76         end_time="2022-03-13T23:59:59Z",
77         expansions=["attachments.media_keys", "author_id"],
78         tweet_fields="public_metrics,referenced_tweets,conversation_id,author_id",
79         next_token=token
80     )
81     tweets_list = []
82     for t in response.data:
83         tweet = Tweet(
84             t.id,
85             t.text,
86             t.author_id,
87             t.public_metrics["retweet_count"],
88             t.public_metrics["reply_count"],
89             t.public_metrics["like_count"],
90             t.public_metrics["quote_count"],
91         )
92         tweets_list.append(tweet)
93     if "next_token" in response.meta:
94         return [tweets_list, response.meta["next_token"]]
95     return [tweets_list, None]
```

Timeframe

March 6 (00:00) to March 13
(23:59:59), 2022.

500 tweets per request

This command allowed Python to have uninterrupted communication with Twitter's API. Without a batch limit, the process crashed before getting any data. Also, the limit was set after a trial-and-error experiment.

Image C

```
98 def get_tweets_batch(query):
99     tweets = []
100     next_token = None
101     for i in range(0, 1000):
102         temp = get_tweets(query, next_token)
103         next_token = temp[1]
104         tweets.extend(temp[0])
105         if next_token is None:
106             break
107         time.sleep(0.3)
108     return tweets
```

How to specify account, hashtag, and country
query = "from:account #hashtag #place_country:country code"
Example: query = "from:nmas #8Marzo2022 place_country:MX"

Tweet requests

I established a limit of 1,000 batch requests. So, as I mentioned before, every request was set to 500 tweets. That is, the max of tweets to get was 500,000. Again, this limit allowed Python to communicate with Twitter without interruption. The number of requests was not entirely random, as I set it at 1,000, considering a number high enough to scrape enough data but still manageable for Python to stop at any time.

Break

In fact, I added an extra command in which I ordered Python to stop the query if there was no more data to obtain.

Time sleep

Python took 0.3 seconds between every request. Yet again, the logic of this command was to let Python and Twitter work together without any sort of crash.

3. Tweet count by hashtag

Image D

```
179 query = "#DiaInternacionalDeLaMujer"
180 tweets = get_tweets_batch(query)
181 len(tweets)
```

The same variables described in image C.

Tweet count with Len
Short from "length." This function served to obtain the number of tweets per hashtag.

4. How to save a list of Tweets by hashtag in Excel

Image E

```
150 def save_tweets(hashtag):
151     BASE_DIR = os.path.dirname(os.path.abspath(__file__))
152     PATH = os.path.join(BASE_DIR, "TWEETS", hashtag + ".xlsx")
153     frame = []
154     handles = ["EL_Universal_Mx", "AztecaNoticias", "UnoNoticias", "nmas", "AristeguiOnline"]
155     for account in handles:
156         query = "from:" + account + " #" + hashtag
157         tweets = get_tweets_batch(query)
158         for t in tweets:
159             f = t.to_data_frame()
160             f.insert(0, account)
161             frame.append(f)
162     df = pd.DataFrame(frame, columns=["handle", "text", "id", "author_id", "retweet_count", "reply_count", "like_count",
163                                   "quote_count"])
164     df.to_excel(PATH, sheet_name="tweets")
```

Function to save the list of Tweets.

Twitter accounts and hashtags

Tab name in spreadsheet

Columns and order in spreadsheet. The data of each column was defined since the beginning, as it can be seen in Image A.

2. Thematic analysis in an Excel spreadsheet

Column	Name	Description
A	Count	Number of tweets
B	Count analysys (phase 3)	Number of tweets analyzed in phase 3
C	Count analysys (phase 4)	Number of tweets to be analyzed in phase 4
D	Count analysys (phase 5)	Number of tweets to be analyzed in phase 5
E	#	Hashtag in text
F	Handle	The tweet account to be analyzed
G	Text	The text of the tweet
H	Id	Twitter's id for each tweet
I	author_Id	Twitter's id for each account
J	retweet_count	Number of retweets
K	reply_count	Number of replies
L	like_count	Number of likes
M	quote_count	Number of shares
N	Video	If the tweet included a video (Y/N answer)
O	Image	If the tweet included an image (Y/N answer)
P	Article	If the tweet included an article (Y/N answer)
Q	Observations	preliminary codes after reading/scanning the tweets
R	RT	If the tweet is also a retweet (Y/N answer)
S	Analysis	If the tweet will be analyzed after being scanned (Y/N answer)
T	Duplicate tweet	If the tweet included two or the three hashtags to be analyzed (Y/N answer)
U	Theme (Phase 3)	The name of the theme and its color (phase 3)
V	Subtheme one	the name of subtheme
W	Subtheme two	the name of a second level of subthemes
X	Analysis (Phase 4)	If the tweet will continue to be analyzed after phase 3 (Y/N answer)
Y	Theme (Phase 4)	The name of the theme and its color (phase 4)
Z	Subtheme one	the name of subtheme
AA	Subtheme two	the name of a second level of subthemes
AB	Analysis (Phase 5)	If the tweet will continue to be analyzed after phase 4 (Y/N answer)
AC	Theme (Phase 5)	The name of the theme and its color (phase 5)
AD	Subtheme one	the name of subtheme
AE	Subtheme two	the name of a second level of subthemes

Column	Name	Description
AF	Wheel role	the pairing of the tweet with a journalistic role according to H&V's wheel (if applicable)
AG	URL tweet	The tweet's URL to access it online quickly
AH	Observations for phase 4	Some observations to consider for the searching/changing of themes on phase 4
AI	Observations for phase 5	Some observations to consider for the searching/changing of themes on phase 5

3. List of 264 tweets (URL)

Count	#	Handle	URL Tweet
1	#8Marzo2022	EI_Universal_Mx	https://twitter.com/EI_Universal_Mx/status/1501779881922859009
2	#8Marzo2022	EI_Universal_Mx	https://twitter.com/EI_Universal_Mx/status/1501772332125364228
3	#8Marzo2022	EI_Universal_Mx	https://twitter.com/EI_Universal_Mx/status/1501767710962823175
4	#8Marzo2022	EI_Universal_Mx	https://twitter.com/EI_Universal_Mx/status/1501690543360778242
5	#8Marzo2022	EI_Universal_Mx	https://twitter.com/EI_Universal_Mx/status/1501605076758061058
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209	8Marzo2022/8M	AztecaNoticias	https://twitter.com/AztecaNoticias/status/1501372016472903689
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211	8Marzo2022/8M	UnoNoticias	https://twitter.com/UnoNoticias/status/1501278413419548672
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217	8M/DíainternacionalDeLaMujer	UnoNoticias	https://twitter.com/UnoNoticias/status/1501276678592417796
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263	8Marzo2022/ DíaInternacionalDeLaMujer/8M	nmas	https://twitter.com/nmas/status/1501294785939718145
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