

Polarization of the feminist movement in Mexico based on
digital methods, the sentiment analysis and the hashtags
#UNAMFeminista and #UNAMSinTransfobia

*Polarización del movimiento feminista en México a partir
de los métodos digitales, el análisis de sentimientos y los
hashtags #UNAMFeminista y #UNAMSinTransfobia*

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Abstract

The main objective of this quantitative research is to explore, from a communication and digital culture perspective the dynamics derived from the polarization of the feminist movement in Mexico, based on the analysis of comments on YouTube and Facebook, as well as the hashtags #UNAMFeminista and #UNAMSinTransfobia on Twitter. Our object of study is the online participation of the audiences of the last forum held on March 24, 2022, entitled: "Necessary clarifications on the Sex and Gender categories", organized by the Center for Interdisciplinary Research in Sciences and Humanities of the UNAM. The use of a repertoire of digital methodologies for the investigation of content generated on Internet platforms is proposed, based on data mining, network analysis, as well as the analysis of sentiments from comments on digital social networks. The objective is to account for the main actors in the digital public sphere that influence affective polarization and the risks of communicative phenomena such as hate speech and discrimination. This research seeks to contribute to feminist movements from communication and digital culture in Mexico, given the scarce academic literature.

Keywords: digital
polarization; digital
methods; feminist
movement; Mexico;
transphobia.

Resumen

Esta investigación de corte cuantitativo tiene como objetivo conocer las dinámicas derivadas de la polarización del movimiento feminista en México desde una perspectiva de la comunicación y cultura digital. A partir del foro Aclaraciones necesarias sobre las categorías sexo y género, organizado por el Centro de Investigaciones Interdisciplinarias en Ciencias y Humanidades de la Universidad

Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), el 24 de marzo de 2022, se tomó como objeto de estudio la participación en línea de las, los y les audiencias, haciendo un análisis de los comentarios en YouTube y Facebook al respecto, así como de los hashtags #UNAMFeminista y #UNAMSinTransfobia, en Twitter. Para ello, se empleó un repertorio de metodologías digitales para la investigación de contenidos generados en las plataformas de internet, como la minería de datos, el análisis de redes y el análisis de sentimientos de comentarios en las redes sociales digitales. Como parte de los resultados se da cuenta de los principales actores en la esfera pública digital que influyen en la polarización afectiva y en los riesgos de fenómenos comunicativos como los discursos de odio y discriminación. De esta forma, la presente investigación busca contribuir a los movimientos feministas desde la comunicación y cultura digital en México.

Palabras clave:

polarización digital;
métodos digitales;
movimiento feminista;
México; transfobia.

Introduction

Last Thursday, March 24, 2022, at 11:00 am, the Centro de Investigaciones Interdisciplinarias en Ciencias y Humanidades (CEIICH) of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) held the forum Aclaraciones necesarias sobre las categorías sexo y género (Necessary clarifications on the categories sex and gender). The event was organized and moderated by Dr. Aimée Vega Montiel (feminist communicologist) and Angélica de la Peña (feminist politician), with the participation of feminist academic speakers: Marcela Lagarde y de los Ríos (feminist anthropologist), Amelia Valcárcel (feminist philosopher), Alda Facio (feminist lawyer) and Andrea Medina (feminist lawyer). The broadcast was carried out through the digital platforms of Facebook and YouTube (CEIICH UNAM, 2022) and lasted three hours 55 minutes. At the time of writing this research, the video has 67,135 views.

This forum was organized as part of the commemoration of International Women's Day. It brought together feminist experts to discuss the concepts of sex and gender, under the feminist critique of the patriarchal system, in order to identify the theoretical foundations of these concepts as a result of the fact that feminism has implemented political and legal mechanisms to transform the State. In this sense, this forum unleashed different reactions. For example, it was described as "a supposed feminist epistemology trying to justify its hatred and rejection of trans women, non-binary people and intersex people" (Aceves, 2022). The author of this opinion rescues:

The visibilization and subsequent and immediate delegitimization of a selective radical feminism, and therefore, exclusionary, which led individuals and different academic, governmental and non-governmental organizations to expose their unequivocal rejection of all transphobic speech, hate speech¹ issued in this forum, from the CEIICH of the UNAM.

After the event, at 4:39 pm on March 24, the Government of Mexico City, through the Council to Prevent and Eliminate Discrimination (COPRED, 2022), issued a statement on its official Twitter account where it reiterated that "in no case and for no reason, validates, shares, supports or encourages transphobic speeches". It also indicated that this type of speeches are: "unacceptable expressions that violate the dignity of people and put them at risk, as they legitimize, multiply and encourage violence". Calling on society to avoid violence and fight for the rights of individuals, in closing, COPRED emphasized that hate speeches are destructive and assured that "trans women are women. All women must fit within feminisms".

As a result of this event, civil society organizations and sexual diversity activists demanded that UNAM university authorities state a position on the views established in the forum by the speakers and moderators (Hernández, 2022). Through digital platforms, a position was shared², signed by 750 people, which rejects the speeches exposed in the forum (Hernández, 2022).

The following day, on the morning of March 25, a group of transinclusive feminist collectives³ issued a joint statement in which they point out that in the forum "stigmatizing, dehumanizing, racist and transodizing narratives openly promoting discrimination against people historically situated in vulnerability, such as trans women, non-binary people and intersex people" (Elementa DDHH, 2022). In the communiqué they express that the conversation was entered from "a biologist perspective, which stigmatizes the existence of transsexual women and intersex people", pointing them out as an anomaly and pathologizing them by declaring that people can only be male or female. Similarly, the Comando Trans Interseccional collective published on its page on the digital platform Facebook, a position statement regarding the forum, supported by 20 collectives from the city of Mérida, Yucatán⁴. In it they state their condition of periphery, underlining that Mexico is the second country in which more transfeminicides are committed in all of Latin America (Comando Trans Interseccional, 2022).

In the afternoon of that same day, the CEIICH-UNAM published a statement on its digital platforms Facebook and Twitter where it argued that the institution is characterized as an interdisciplinary space, "marked by freedom of expression and respect for human rights", since they develop their activities in a climate of respect for plurality and diversity of positions (CEIICH, 2022).

Given these reactions and considering the polarization of the feminist movement in Mexico, the present study seeks to deepen in the dynamics and analysis of feelings regarding this division of opinions.

Between trans and trans exclusionary: the discursive dispute of feminisms in digital platforms.

Currently, in the feminist movement, the debate on identities and their political subject has increased significantly, extending to the terrain of digital platforms (Willem and Tortajada, 2021). Over the years, constituting the subject "woman" is the most problematic discussion in feminist movements (Alcoff, 2002). Peña, Larrondo and Morales (2023) argue that the debate on identities in feminism is complex, especially that related to trans and language, which is characterized by the use of words, pronouns, gender and names with which people identify themselves; in the same way that denounces any form of stigmatization, discrimination or violence against trans people, this leads to controversies over terminological issues surrounding how sex and gender should be defined.

Trans/feminist conflicts, also known as "TERF wars" (Pearce, Erikainen and Vincent, 2020), are defined as conflicts in the feminist debate about how concepts around sex and gender should be defined. Generally, at one extreme there is a group of women who identify with a binary and biological position of sexuality while, on the other, there is a dissidence that has a cultural conception of gender as a social construction and demands the group inclusion of non-binary identities within the demands of feminist struggles. This problematic reflects the current conditions of our time, in which "public discourse is dominated by polarization and the proliferation of misinformation" (2020, p. 2). Transgender discourses, for their part, are identified by promoting the rejection of trans people "from places, spaces, groups and events based on denying gender identity and considering only the sex assigned at birth as valid or natural" (López-Sánchez and Garza-López 2021).

As can be observed, this situation leads to the use of war metaphors, pointing to this conflict as a war and the participants as enemies (de la Villa, 2021). These "opinative battles", between the

transinclusive and the transsexclusive, rebound on the Internet, which extends this type of confrontation to digital spaces.

The term Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminist (TERF), abbreviated TERF, originated in 2008; some media and specialized articles attribute its creation to Viv Smythe, a heterosexual cisgender woman activist (Sulbarán, 2020). Cognitive dimension: it encompasses the individual and collective frameworks of knowledge, as well as the strategies to generate them. TERF is one of the most widespread denominations in the discussion of feminism in the digital; for example, its use on the Twitter platform is very common.

The word TERF is associated with a negative use and concept, as it has been linked to the referred transphobia that points to those feminists who exclude people who were born with male genitalia and who identify themselves as women based on their biological gender (Peña et al., 2023). According to Malatino (2021), the same feminists referred to as TERF consider this term to have a pejorative sense or to be an insult.

Lu (2020) notes that TERF groups are a subset of transphobes, comprising those who hold all transgendered views; "the specific rhetoric of TERFs often focuses too much on the demarcation between cis women and transgender women, although they also parrot classic transphobic views" (p. 6).

From Bachiller's (2022) perspective, trans-exclusionary positions, those who proclaim themselves as "authentic feminists", have critical positions regarding gender and transgender, rejecting all those who do not think like them. Thus, this is a deliberate action to exclude trans women from feminism and expose them as antagonistic to women with the contradictory idea that they will 'erase' women. This trans-exclusionary vision, according to the author, reinforces racist and classist positions by the dispute to determine which voices and positions represent women.

Ferré-Pavia and Zaldívar (2022), in their article, argue that TERFs are given characteristics of exclusionary, oppressive, transphobic or promulgators of hate speech. Thus, the acronym "has already lost its original meaning that referred to feminist women who disagreed with trans women being considered as such, a debate of great social, cultural, biological and anthropological significance" (p. 5). This study reports on how the conversation through the use of the hashtag #ContraElBorradoDeLasMujeres is highly biased and with transphobic overtones. Among their findings, they mention that Twitter does not stand as a space where debate is encouraged when considering this hashtag, since it does not encourage interaction where various positions are confronted and, on the contrary, constant displays of support were detected among TERF users.

The authors Arce and Menéndez (2022), in their analysis of the digital platform Twitter in relation to the conversation between feminist and trans collectives, found a broad debate with a high component of hate, where a strong polarization prevailed between trans and feminist groups. This led to attacks where the use of bot accounts, suspended or deleted accounts and relationships with outside groups (i.e. those groups with political purposes, influencers, ultra- right, with false flags, and/or opposing), a situation that contributes to the construction of narratives that produce disinformation and encourage particularly regressive ideological rethorics.

Vázquez-González and Cárdenes-Hernández (2021) study trans and transgendered discourses on Instagram; they point to a dialectical struggle between different conceptions of the political subject of feminism and the place of identities within it. Their analysis focuses on the activism and polarization that occur in the debate on digital platforms at the intersection between the defense of

feminism and transsexuality by young audiences, symbolizing it with the use of qualifiers such as TERF that often circulate in the digital space.

Pearce, Erikainen, and Vincent (2020) mention that transfeminist conflicts ("TERF wars") are exacerbated by the proliferation of misinformation on digital platforms. The transgender community has been marginalized within hegemonic sociocultural norms, making it vulnerable to suffer harassment and hatred from radical transgender-clueless feminists, who argue that they claim to be "gender- critical" feminists, although their discourses are laden with transphobia masked in the language of feminism (Lu, 2020). "Their hatred is directed at transgender women, ranging from denying their right to exist to perpetuating biological essentialism" (p. 5).

It is a fact that the presence of transgender radical feminisms (TERFS) in digital platform communities poses a significant risk to transgender people, as they perpetuate targeted harassment and xenophobia. For these individuals, online spaces are especially important, as they facilitate the experience of transitioning and seeking social support; thus, the potential interactions they come to have with TERFS contribute to their exclusion and reduce perceived support (Lu and Jurgens 2022).

Participation and polarization in the communication processes on digital platforms

Participation in digital media has become a key concept; this means that people have become active participants and agents of cultural production on the Internet (Tobias, 2011). Participation implies a variety of formations and intersections of the relationships between three domains: 1) of discourses (popular, academic, bureaucratic, legal, etc.); 2) of technology (basic characteristics and design); and 3) of people and social use: what users actually do with these devices (Tobias, 2011), that is, their capacity for agency within the digital space.

The concept of participation has generated an imaginary of promise that offers new possibilities both for those who issue messages and for the companies that design digital platforms. Thus, this term is vital within the culture of developers and in decision-making when creating technologies (Tobias, 2011).

For Castells (2012), the increase in participation is related to the potential of interactivity and the self-configurability of communication, which allows a less hierarchical and more horizontal organization. Technological transformations should contribute to a more robust and pluralistic form of public debate (Mutz, 2006); however, Bimber (1998) states that the ease in the communicative flows that the Internet allows does not change the fact that most people are very selective in the attention they give to political issues and in how they assimilate information. Users' interests tend to be focused on few issues, so they usually remain uninformed on the numerous issues; this situation means that the so-called pluralism accelerated by the advent of communicative technologies, such as the internet, does not exist.

Calvo and Aruguete (2020) explain that the interest of the study of affective polarization has increased (Rogowski & Sutherland, 2016; Mason, 2013, 2015, 2016), this is understood by the increase "in the distance in liking, hatred, disgust or joy declared by voters of different parties when observing a political message" (Calvo & Aruguete, 2020 p. 47). A significant point for the authors is that affective distance has been increasing dramatically; at the same time, they argue that the same mechanisms that foster the propagation of conflict and polarization can generate dynamics of social activism and political communication, i.e., that the phenomenon of polarization can be pre-activated in the subjects. In other words, individuals are exposed to certain lines of argument that make them more sensitive from frames with determinates communicational strategies (p. 12).

According to Lelkes (2016) the increase in affective polarization could be explained as a unique form of prejudice, where social norms impose individuals to extreme their feelings of antipathy, emphasizing that affective polarization has the potential to increase incivility among citizens and decrease their support for compromise.

In this regard, within political communication studies, Robles et al. (2019, p. 197) point out that the phenomenon of polarization can be observed from the concept of "political incivility" defined by inappropriate or offensive language in the field of online political debate. For his part, Herbst (2010) recognizes that incivism produces discomfort and anxiety; moreover, there is a powerful idea that assumes that uncivil discourse is part of democratic life. Faced with this problem, the author offers as a possible solution the development of a "culture of discussion" through the cultivation of other assets, such as better listening skills.

Thus, uncivic contemplates the use of vulgar or ironic expressions, where some of the interlocutors show themselves in an uneducated or rude manner. From another perspective, Papacharissi (2004) argues that uncivil messages are extremely alarming, since they have serious consequences because they are rarely withdrawn and openly appeal to individual rights. These messages pose a threat to democracy, their very nature hinders the development of the public sphere.

This results in a "new incivility" (Banks, 2014; Mason, 2013, 2015), as there is a confrontational response to respond negatively to the contents that we perceive as a grievance towards our group or to share those that we consider as a validation of our collective beliefs (Calvo & Aruguete, 2020, p. 48). Together with the concept of polarization, we find a rift, defined as "a way of graphing that distancing that indicates that the symbolic distance between these positions is immeasurable, so much so that it is impossible to measure it" (Calvo & Aruguete, 2020, p. 75).

In this sense, it is important to start from a typology of characterization of political networks in order to understand their structure. According to Nir (2011), there are three types: 1) support networks where individuals externalize their points of view with which they agree; 2) opposition networks where they confront points of view with which they disagree; and 3) mixed networks that present related and discordant points of view.

Another concept that contributes to the understanding of the types of political networks is homophily (Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1954), which is defined as the similarity in behaviors and attitudes between an individual and his peers, indicating their willingness to relate to others who are similar in various attributes. Lazarsfeld and Merton (1954) distinguish two types of homophily: 1) status homophily, which are the observed tendencies of similarity between friends' group affiliation or between their positions within a group; and 2) value homophily, which are the observed tendencies towards correspondence in friends' values.

Barberá et al. (2015), when studying political polarization on Twitter, claim that popularization on digital platforms as a means of communication within interpersonal networks is not determined by the limitations that circumscribe ideological contours; specifically, when it comes to non-political topics and events. The authors observed that the degree of homophily in the exchange of information on Twitter varied, along with the type of ideology, context, and type of topic.

Sunstein (2001), Garrett (2009), and Iyengar and Kyu (2009) explain that, when it comes to political issues, individuals are more visibly exposed and predisposed to share information they have received from ideologically similar sources that reinforce their views, to relay information received from opposing sources, thus avoiding challenging opinions. All this generates the so-called echo chambers, which contribute to the phenomenon of social extremism and political polarization

(Barberá et al., 2015). This scenario has been studied in the classical theories of mass media (Garrett, 2009; Lazarsfeld et al., 1944), where it has been explained that, if individuals are given the opportunity, they tend to choose those media with which their political preferences coincide.

García González (2022), in an analysis study on the digital protest #NosotrasTenemosOtrosDatos, argues that within the digital space on Twitter there co-exist diverse political actors with partisan purposes that have favored digital polarization. The author refers that there is scarce academic literature that answers the question of how polarization affects the various actors in the context of platformization of feminist protest in Mexico. On the other hand, Iturralde-Chaparro (2019) found that, in a Facebook group dedicated to the discussion of historical and public issues, there was a polarized confrontation between users based on diametrically opposed positions in the political and ideological spectrum.

Landing on the object of study of this work, there is currently a diversity of governmental actors, digital media, academics and individuals who have taken part in the debate expressed on digital platforms, who have had opposing positions with the forum Necessary clarifications on the categories sex and gender. This brings as a consequence an increase in the polarization of digital platforms, which is presented as a communicative phenomenon in democratic societies; this is generated when the participants of a group are reflecting and moving towards a more extreme point in the direction deliberately indicated by a tendency of its members (Sunstein, 2002). This means a form of expediency on the part of political actors concerning a phenomenon that goes beyond polarization.

Interactions of these politicized groups on digital platforms can be negative, moreover rude, characteristically harsh and uncivil behaviors can be expressed, exposing a lack of consideration for the rest of the people. This contributes to the increase of affective polarization. In this way, elite polarization can increase mass political polarization (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2008; Hetherington, 2001).

For example, authors such as Bakshy et al. (2015) and Theocharis et al. (2020) argue that Facebook and Twitter users are exposed to a surprisingly high level of diversity of opinions, as is the case of the polarization of the feminist movement in Mexico.

Methodology

In this study we approached, from a perspective of digital communication and culture in addition to the analysis of social networks, the proposal of digital methods from the perspective of Rogers (2012): it is through digital methods that the techniques for obtaining and analyzing data come from the Internet environment itself. This resulted in the review of digital objects (posts, comments, likes, images, videos, etc.) produced by users when using various channels and platforms, leaving a series of clues about their communication and information consumption habits.

Also, an automatic sentiment analysis was performed, "an area of computational study that deals with identifying the opinions, emotions or moods expressed by people in a text" (Koylu et al., 2019, p. 3) and that provides information about events, topics or problems, from a large amount of data. Since this technique is not without limitations, especially in cases of sarcasm where the sentiment is not explicitly stated or in the face of factors such as semantic variations inherent to a specific sociocultural context (Toudert, 2021), we rely on the specific method of "supervised learning" in which researchers examine and correct the data automatically classified by algorithms (Koylu et al., 2019; Toudert, 2021; García-González and Iturralde-Chaparro, 2023).

The corpus of analysis considered in this study comprises 22 498 messages posted on different digital platforms from the Forum Aclaraciones necesarias sobre las categorías sexo y género of UNAM's CEIICH, broadcast live on March 24, 2022 on YouTube and Facebook platforms, and

shared on Twitter (see Table 1). The data sample was made up of user-generated content and included tweets from the hashtags #UNAMSinTransfobia and #UNAMFeminista, broadcast from Twitter from the day of the forum until March 29, 2022. These hashtags were chosen because they condense the messages of the two parties in controversy. In addition, 17,039 comments posted during the live broadcast on YouTube and Facebook platforms were included, which is where the dispute between the participants in the chats mainly took place.

Table 1. Universe of analysis of this study

Type of publication and date	Platform	Number of publications
#UNAMSinTransfobia. 24 March - 29 March 2022	Twitter	5,095 Tweets
#UNAMFeminista. 24 March - 29 March 2022	Twitter	364 Tweets
Forum Clarifications needed on the Sex and Gender categories (Live Webcast). March 24, 2022	YouTube	10,586 comments
Forum Clarifications needed on the Sex and Gender categories (Live Webcast). March 24, 2022	Facebook	6,453 comments
Summary		22,498 publications

Source: by the author

The sentiment analysis considered 17,039 comments (on YouTube and Facebook). It was performed with the integrated development environment tool for R programming language, commonly known as RStudio; which is an open source programming language focused on statistics, but with which text and sentiment analysis can be performed.

The Syuzhet package and the NRC dictionary, programs developed to extract the negative or positive connotation of the language contained in a document, as well as its emotions⁵, were used to process the analyzed texts. This was complemented with an analysis of the two hashtags referred to in Twitter, with the social network analysis program Gephi. With this tool, a hashtag co-occurrence graph was created to visualize the correlation between the two main tags and the different groups that joined the narrative dispute.

Results

The 17,039 comments collected from YouTube and Facebook during the transmission of the event underwent an automatic text cleaning process that resulted in 112,334 keywords. A first discovery was made when doing a manual review of the extracted words, as we perceived that there were terms with a significant emotional charge within the context of gender disputes that were being invisibilized by the algorithm by assigning them an emotional value of zero or positive feelings. This was the case for words such as macho, privilege, white, and patriarchal. This happens when using natural language analysis tools and packages developed in central countries, where word valuations are made by surveying the inhabitants of those societies (Isasi, 2021).

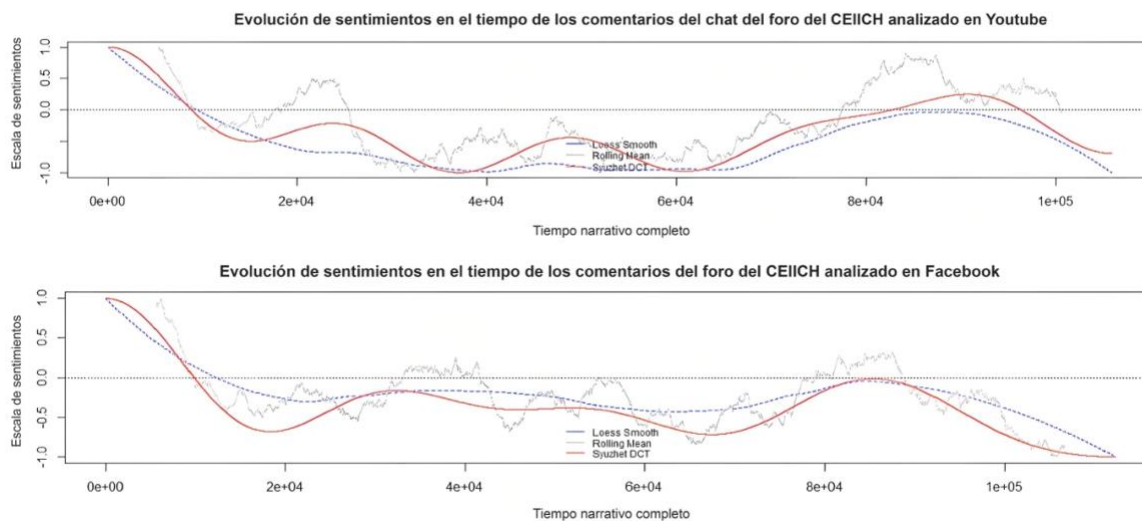
In other words, these are tools developed from a situation of privilege and knowledge production that do not usually have perspectives on gender or inequality, so that algorithms often reproduce sexist, patriarchal, racist and classist biases (Benjamin, 2019; Siles et al., 2022).

Given this, we manually modified the data frame by assigning to some words the valuations that were considered negative in the scope of the discussion derived from the forum. For example, we assigned negative polarity to terms such as trans, feminism, transphobia or patriarchy, based on

the context of the collected comments themselves. The same criteria were used when relating them to emotions such as disgust, anger, fear or sadness.

The first visualization derived from the data analysis was a comparative graph of the evolution of feelings over time, which takes into account the order and the times in which the analyzed keywords appeared throughout both documents (see Figure 1). Subsequently, these dynamics were correlated with the development of the facts.

Figure 1. Comparative graph of the evolution of sentiment over time on YouTube and Facebook platforms, during the live transmission of the forum.



Source: by the author.

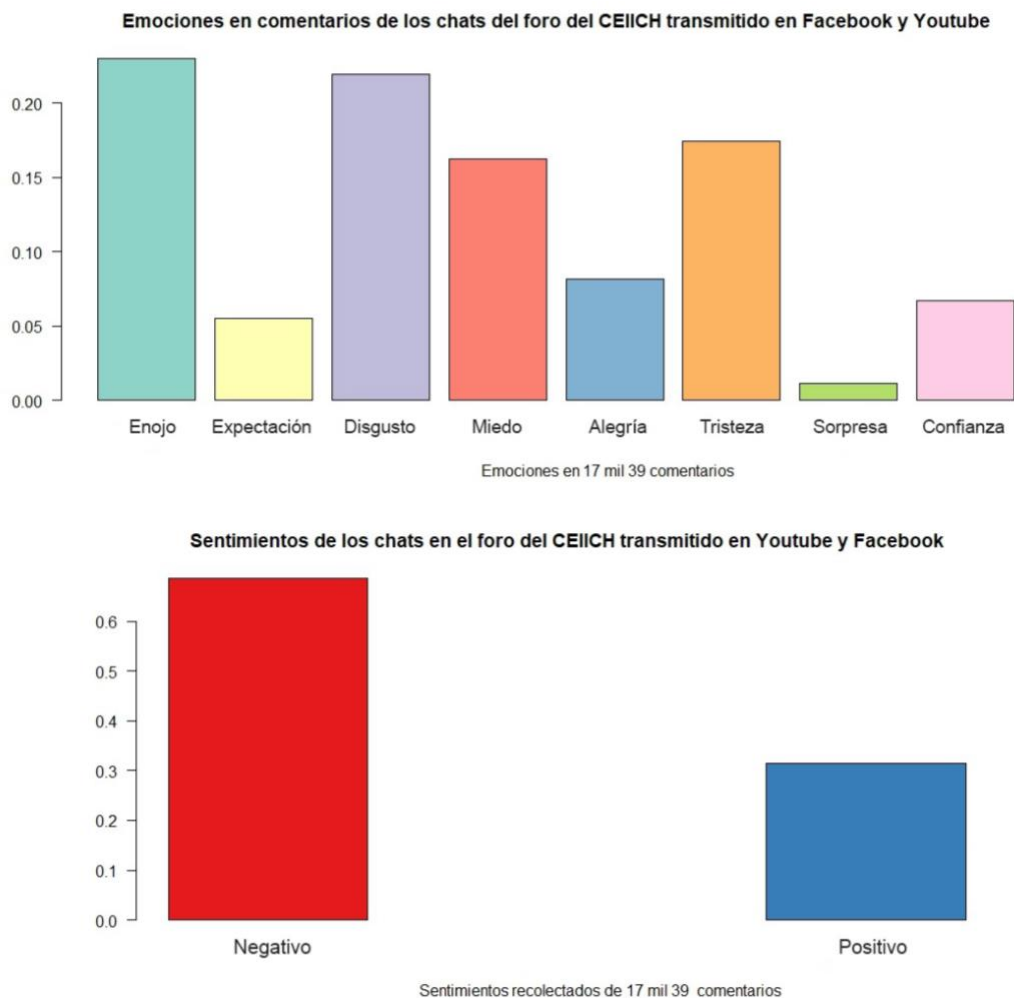
Note: the horizontal axis (x) divides the entire data into five blocks; the vertical axis (y) shows the fluctuation of sentiment valence over time, ranging from 0 to 1 for positive sentiment and 0 to -1 for negative sentiment, according to three covariates: loess smooth⁶, rolling mean⁷ and a discrete cosine transform⁸, which is the red line and represents the variation in sentiment frequency, along with the average sentiment fluctuations (blue line) and the trend followed by the analyzed data cycles (gray peaks).

When making a semantic interpretation of the correlation of the data visualization with the narrative course around the transmission on YouTube and Facebook, the first thing we observed is a very similar pattern during the development of the event in both graphs. The comments in the chats started in a positive tone, but after the first block, a decline is seen, approximately towards the end of the first hour of transmission.

During the second hour of the event, a greater negative polarity of feelings was reached, mainly on YouTube, at the moment when topics such as the distinction between sex and gender were established, and the difference between the feminist and queer agendas was emphasized, where the forum members underlined why they should not go together.

In the third hour segment, sentiments fluctuated from negative to positive, near the time when a call was made to value the cultural and historical heritage of feminism in order to seek a more just society. However, in the final minutes of the forum, sentimental valence again declined to very negative indicators. As a general interpretation of this oscillation, it is considered that the development of the live event on the YouTube and Facebook platforms ran between a notable polarization of sentiments, with the negative ones predominating (see Figure 2).

Figura 2. Bar graphs of emotions and feelings in relation to the CEIICH forum.



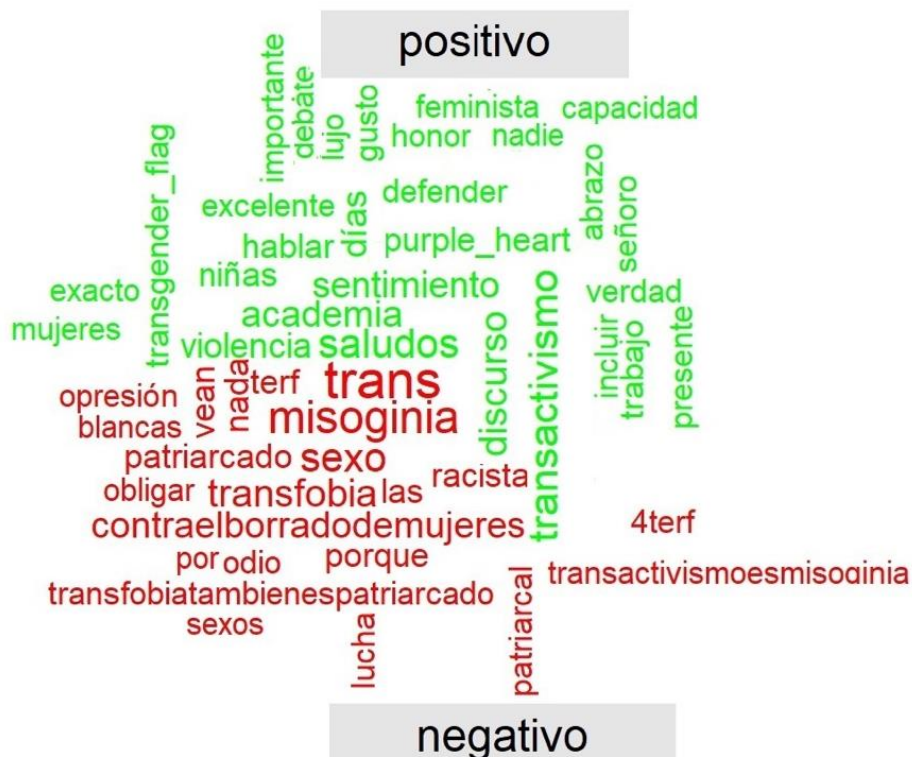
Source: by the author.

Note: the figure above shows the eight emotions classified by the NRC dictionary. Here we observe that the predominant ones are anger, disgust and sadness. In the feelings bar, a negative polarity stands out.

With the same set of keywords (112,334 terms), a cloud adjusted to four main emotions: joy, confidence, anger and fear (see Figure 3). At this point, we reiterate that the contents underwent a manual review where words that were hidden by the algorithm of the tools used were made visible and the evaluations were made according to the context of the comments.

With this cloud of emotions we glimpse the meaning of the discussion analyzed in both platforms. The words trans, misogyny, hate, patriarchy and violence stand out more centrally in the discussion, in relation to fear. Transphobia and oppression, together with very polarizing adjectives such as TERF or TERFS, allude to anger and the perception of a feminism related to other visible nouns, such as patriarchy and white. Corresponding to joy are the words embrace, greetings and agree, as a call for the unity of feminisms. The words transinclusive and transactivism were related to joy and trust, as part of calls for honor and truth.

Figura 4. Cloud of emotions



Source: By the author.

Regarding the impact of the discussion about the event on Twitter, a cooccurrence graph of the hashtags #UNAMSinTransfobia and #UNAMFeminista was made, composed of 5,469 tweets published from March 24 to 29, 2022 (see Figure 5).

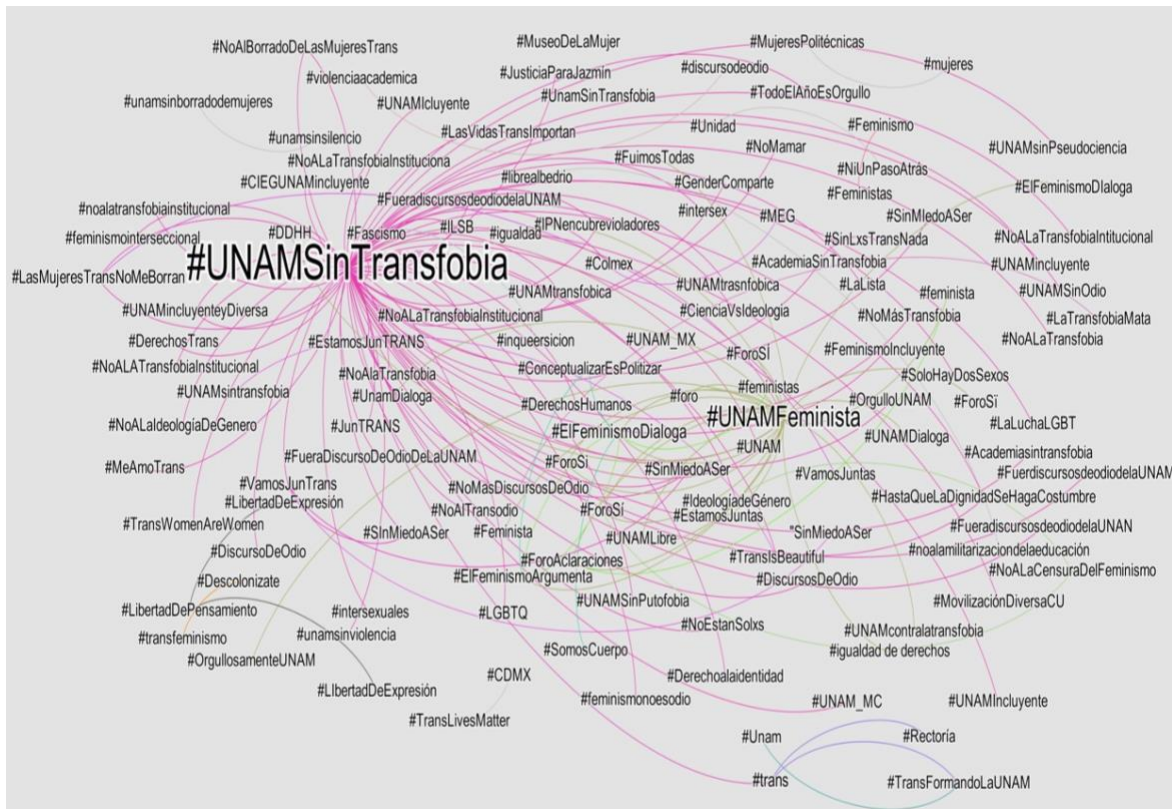
In this graph the dominant tag is #UNAMSinTransphobia (in purple). It encompasses the main cluster participating in the discussion, with 56.5% of the nodes and 60.6% of the interactions. The tag with the highest interaction weight with #UNAMSinTransfobia is #CIEGUNAMIncluyente (weight [W] edge 134.0) and refers to a statement issued by the Center for Research and Gender Studies of the UNAM in favor of the rights of bodily, sexual and sex-gender diversity, where they point out that gender identity is not reduced to genitality.

It is followed by: #NoAlaTransfobiaInstitucional (W 111.0), #ILSB, with another communiqué from the Simone Beauvoir Leadership Institute in defense of the dignity of Trans people (W 64.0), #EstamosJunTRANS (W 45.0) and #UNAMFeminista (W 36.0, hashtag with which this first block of narratives is confronted.

The #UNAMFeminista node, in turn, leads the second community (in green), with more presence in the dispute: 16.4% of the nodes and 23% of the edges. Its main link is with #ForoSí (W 51.0), in defense of the CEIICH forum, #UNAMSinTransfobia (W 36.0), #FuimosTodas (W 11.0), #ElFeminismoArgumenta (W 11.0) and #Feminista (W 10) in defense of the organizers of the forum.

The other communities of nodes, such as the one headed by the hashtag #Trans, which leads the small cluster in blue color seen at the bottom of the image, present little connectivity and is also in defense of trans rights. In summary, in the hashtag cooccurrence graph we could observe the confrontation of two dominant poles: those who defend the rights of the trans community and those who are in favor of what was said in the CEIICH forum.

Figure 5. Cooccurrence graph of the hashtags #UNAMSinTransfobia and #UNAMFeminista on Twitter.



Source: By the author

Note: directed graph of 137 nodes and 148 edges elaborated from a table of 5,469 messages on Twitter and configured with the Force Atlas 2 algorithm, showing two main blocks (in purple and green), whose nodes with the highest degree of entry are #UNAMSinTransfobia and #UNAMFeminista. The network has a modularity of 0.256 that is distributed in 26 communities. It has a medium degree of 1.087. The latter means that each node has a low level of connectivity (of one) with another nodes.

Conclusions

In this research we analyze, through an approach of communication processes and digital culture, some polarized and polarizing dynamics existing in the debate on the digital platforms Facebook, YouTube and Twitter on how the subject "woman" should be constituted as the central identity of feminisms.

In the case of the digital objects analyzed and obtained from the forum Aclaraciones necesarias sobre las categorías sexo y género (Necessary clarifications on the categories sex and gender) of the CEIICH of the UNAM, we found that during the development and transmission of the event some topics were exposed that detonated a phenomenon of affective polarization. This was reflected in the

confluence of comments that extend the conflict inherent to a social problem to the digital environment and where uncivil discourses based on prejudice and misinformation predominated.

Our field study confirms then the presence in the digital environment of what is called "TERF wars", conflicts that manifest themselves in feminist discussions about the conceptual dispute in relation to sex and gender; where the various antagonistic expressions are polarized between transinclusive and trans-exclusionary visions, led by a pole with a binary and biologicist vision of sexuality, and another block with a conception of gender as a social construct.

Regarding the analysis of feelings carried out, the main findings on the forum indicate that it passed between a notable oscillation, with negative impressions and emotions such as anger prevailing in the transmissions on YouTube and Facebook. This narrative confrontation was also present on Twitter, led by the hashtags #UNAMSinTransfobia and #UNAMFeminista, where the call for unity was suffocated by the flame of incendiary slogans from users who consider their differences irreconcilable.

The research also constituted an exercise in digital methods development in which we experimented with the possibilities of the Gephi and RStudio tools, both of open source. The process leads us to emphasize the need to understand not only the functioning of digital platforms, but also the measurement instruments for their analysis and the biases they produce, as black boxes (Sued, 2020) whose results are often taken as valid without being questioned, but which reproduce the discourses of domination and invisibilize inequality.

For future lines of research, we suggest understanding the phenomenon of the analysis of feelings and emotions from a digital ethnography that helps to understand ontologically the complexity of a positive or negative comment, which goes beyond technological or cognitive biases of the researchers. Likewise, we consider it relevant to ask ourselves about the mechanism and dynamics of hate speeches that affect those involved and what effects these digital political communication phenomena produce in open debates in public and digital spaces from university institutions, for example. In closing, it remains to ask ourselves from the perspective of transfeminist and sexual diversity studies, what debates can promote a dialogue that can potentiate the reduction of digital polarization for the benefit of the eradication of violence against women, from the diverse philosophies and positions coming from feminist theories? Similarly, from the study conducted, it remains to be asked whether digital polarization represents a setback for the feminist movement in Mexico and what are its risks.

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¹ A hate speech, according to Kauffman (2015) is “a dogmatic, unjustified and destructive opinion regarding certain historically discriminated groups or certain persons as members of such groups, issued for the purpose of humiliating and/or conveying such destructive dogma to the speaker or reader and to make him or her a participant in the task of marginalizing or excluding the hated persons” (p. 47).

²<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScHakZ17A0CfmHoowd3xUzlcEyZD3XLsl6LLbMU76eqXJS0Yg/viewform?fbclid=IwARIeVhmFoptH6oOrqnLCLF3MRqDdkox58AS1CfQlRxJnq53WjMkf8o0nY>

³ @YaajMexico; AFROntera Cimarrona (@AFRO_ntera); Casa de las Muñecas Tiresias A. C. (@CTiresias); Centro por la Justicia, Democracia e Igualdad (@cejudimx); Justicia Transicional en México (@JTenMexico); @poderprieto_mx; @Racismo_MX; @RedApoyoTransMx; Red De Apoyo Trans (@apoyo_trans); @JuventudesTrans

⁴ Igualdad Sustantiva, La Casa de las Dragonas, Frente Nacional por la Sororidad, Kanan Derechos Humanos, UADY Sin Acoso, Casa Colibríes, Colectivo Protección para todas las Familias, UNAMIS diversidad sexual, Marea Verde Yucatán,

Pies de Mezcal, Spectrum UADY, Colectivas Hijas de Yaxhe, Juventud Activa en comunidad, CESSEX, El Ateneo Yucatán A. C., Juventudes Yucatecas Disidentes e Incidentes, Colectivo Ciudad Libre, Ataca con Ideas, Colectivo Azul Transparente, Colectivas Hijas de Ixchel.

⁵ According to Damasio (1996), emotions are instinctive bodily reactions determined by environmental stimuli (which, in origin, implies a challenge when it comes to translating them into spoken language) and it is generally considered that there are six basic or primary emotions: anger, joy, disgust, fear, sadness and surprise. Feelings, on the other hand, are defined as the act of feeling an emotion provoked by some situation, person or thought, which can be positive or negative (Pereira-Zazo, 2014).

⁶ In statistics, local regression is a type of curve fitting to data by smoothing in which the fit on the x -axis is performed using only observations in the x -axis. It is then a matter of fitting a smoothing curve passing through the points using a weighted local regression technique. Primarily, local regression smooths and removes noise to reveal features and components of great importance within a curve. It allows observing trends and cycles in the data that can be difficult to model using parametric curves (Ferrero, 2017).

⁷ In statistics, a moving average is a calculation used to analyze a set of data in point mode to create a series of averages. Thus, moving measures are a list of numbers in which each is the average of a subset of the original data (“Moving Average,” October 29, 2017).

⁸ The Discrete Cosine Transform $F(k)$ expresses a finite sequence of several points as a result of the sum of different signals and sinusoids (with different frequencies and amplitudes). Like the direct Fourier transform (DFT), the DCT works with a finite number series (“Direct cosine transform”, February 19, 2022).