ARTICLE

How #NiUnaMenos Used Discourse and Digital Media to Reach the Masses in Argentina

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Abstract

In March 2015, a group of feminist writers and academics in Argentina organized a marathon reading event to protest femicide, using the slogan "Ni Una Menos." Less than three months later, more than 250,000 Argentines participated in the first #NiUnaMenos demonstration in Buenos Aires. Since then, #NiUnaMenos has transformed into a transnational feminist movement and has shifted the conversation about gender violence in digital and physical spaces. Drawing from critical discourse analysis and feminist theory, this article examines the discursive strategies employed by #NiUnaMenos. It analyzes key texts from the months leading up to the first demonstration and argues that these texts were strategically constructed as "sites of struggle" in order to reach diverse groups. The analysis reveals four discursive dichotomies in which the movement's discourse oscillates between seemingly opposing ideas and channels. This discursive oscillation allowed #NiUnaMenos to reach the masses and, in turn, spark a cultural shift toward gender equality.

Keywords: feminism; critical discourse analysis; digital media; social movements; #NiUnaMenos

Resumen

En marzo de 2015, un grupo de escritoras e investigadoras feministas en Argentina organizó una maratón de lectura pública, con la consigna "Ni Una Menos", para protestar contra los femicidios. Menos de tres meses después, más de 250.000 argentinos participaron en la primera manifestación de #NiUnaMenos en Buenos Aires. Desde entonces, #NiUnaMenos se ha transformado en un movimiento feminista transnacional y ha cambiado la conversación acerca de la violencia de género, en espacios digitales y físicos. Partiendo del análisis crítico del discurso y la teoría feminista, este artículo examina las estrategias discursivas de #NiUnaMenos. Este proyecto analiza los textos claves del periodo antes de la primera manifestación y propone que estos textos fueron construidos estratégicamente como "sitios de lucha" para llegar a grupos diversos. Mi análisis revela cuatro "dicotomías discursivas" en las cuales el discurso del movimiento oscila entre ideas y canales que parecen ser opuestos. Esta oscilación discursiva ayudó a #NiUnaMenos a llegar a la gente y comenzó un cambio cultural hacia la igualdad de género.

Palabras clave: feminismo; análisis crítico del discurso; medios digitales; movimientos sociales; #NiUnaMenos

The Argentine feminist movement #NiUnaMenos originated in part from a marathon reading event (*maratón de lectura*) in March 2015 in which writers, journalists, activists, academics,

and artists spoke out against femicide through readings and performances (Torres, Díaz, and Murillo 2015). The event was soon followed by the gruesome murder of fourteen-year-old Chiara Páez, just a few weeks pregnant, who was killed by her boyfriend and buried in his family's yard (Pomeraniec 2015). Quickly, the lengthy prose of feminists simplified into three words shared on Twitter by the journalist Marcela Ojeda: "NOS ESTAN MATANDO" (They are killing us) (Ojeda 2015a). From the initial reading event to what became a viral social media conversation and historic demonstrations, #NiUnaMenos strategically employed discourse— in both digital and physical spaces—to resist patriarchal violence, help women reclaim their own bodies, and spark a cultural shift toward gender equality.

The movement's first demonstration was held June 3, 2015. More than 250,000 people participated in the event at the Plaza del Congreso in Buenos Aires, while additional demonstrations occurred in cities and towns across the country (Rodríguez 2015, 153). Since then, #NiUnaMenos has transformed into a transnational feminist movement, extending across and beyond Latin America (Ni Una Menos 2018). While the movement continues to fight for widespread political change, its success can be seen in the cultural shift that has occurred in Argentina and in Latin America and in the global visibility and influence it has garnered. #NiUnaMenos did not form out of isolation; decades of work by feminists helped build the foundation for the movement and its success (Ni Una Menos 2017a). However, as the film director Susana Nieri (2017, 166) explains, "what #NiUnaMenos produced is that we are no longer the same women."[1] The movement #NiUnaMenos was so successful because it communicated in a way that reached and resonated with the masses, not solely feminist activist groups.

Critical discourse analysis, which views language as "social practice" (Fairclough, Mulderrig, and Wodak 2011, 357), provides a framework for my analysis of the movement's discourse and discursive strategies. Critical discourse analysis emphasizes the relationship between language and power; not only does language "express power," but it can also be used "to challenge power and subvert it" (Wodak 2001, 2). Within texts, "discursive differences are negotiated," and "texts are often sites of struggle in that they show traces of differing discourse and ideologies contending and struggling for dominance" (Wodak 2001, 10). I propose that the movement's texts—essays, social media posts, and other communications produced by the founding collective and participants—strategically balanced a unique set of "discursive dichotomies," a term I use to describe opposing or conflicting language and messaging. By balancing these discursive dichotomies, the movement successfully reached and resonated with both feminist activist groups and the general public. This study argues that texts were strategically constructed as "sites of struggle" to reach diverse groups of people with competing ideologies.

Through analysis of some of the key texts from the first months of the movement, I identify four discursive dichotomies: complex vs. accessible, political vs. nonpartisan, collective vs. individual, and digital vs. physical, with this last dichotomy referring to opposing channels rather than opposing messages. Discursive oscillation, paired with the diffusion of messages across a variety of digital and physical channels, spurred the movement's success in reaching and resonating with the masses, which in turn enabled #NiUnaMenos's success as a national, and later transnational, feminist movement.

While others have focused on the June 3 demonstration and the evolution of the movement since then (Alamo et al. 2016; Belotti, Comunello, and Corradi 2020; Fuentes 2019; Laudano 2019; Palmeiro 2019), often with a focus on social media, this article examines the key texts and discursive strategies—in online and offline spaces—from the months leading up to June 3, 2015. My analysis focuses on the first maratón on March 26, 2015, as well as the social media activity leading up to June 3. The article is organized by discursive dichotomy and explores four different texts: María Pia López's opening remarks at the

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[1] All translations are by the author.

maratón, recognized as the very first #NiUnaMenos event; "Que la rabia nos valga" by Marta Dillon and Vir Cano, one of the texts read at the event; the May 11 tweet by Marcela Ojeda that helped kick-start the movement; and tweets using the hashtag #DeLaFotoALaFirma.

Theoretical framework and methods

To begin, it is important to elaborate on the objects of study. The texts chosen for this analysis represent the key moments of the movement leading up to June 3. Though just a sample of the communications during this time, these texts stand out because of their diffusion, reach, and overall impact. López's remarks were the first words spoken at a #NiUnaMenos event, and they helped set the stage for the movement's discourse in the following months. Unlike other texts read at the maratón, "Que la rabia nos valga" was written specifically for the event, and I am most interested in texts that were created as part of the movement. Additionally, this text was included in a variety of post-event media coverage and was later repackaged and shared to reach a broader audience. I analyze Ojeda's tweet because it is recognized by many as the text that sparked the June 3 demonstration. I also study tweets with the hashtag #DeLaFotoALaFirma because it was the movement's first organized social media effort.

This study views discourse as any type of "communicative event," such as speeches, essays, and "any other 'semiotic' or multimedia dimension of signification" (van Dijk 2001, 97). My analysis draws from the work of several scholars (van Dijk 2001; Wodak 2001; Fairclough, Mulderrig, and Wodak 2011). Although critical discourse analysis is often used to analyze and deconstruct hegemonic discourses, Etsuko Kinefuchi (2018, 213) argues, alongside others, that it can be employed to analyze discourses of resistance, such as that of #NiUnaMenos.

The following four questions, based on the work of van Dijk (2001), guide my analysis of each text: What are the key messages? What words are used, and what do they connote? What words and messages are absent? How are social actors represented? To conduct my analysis, I gathered and transcribed texts, created lists of key messages, identified frequently used terms, considered messages and words that were absent, and identified key individuals or groups that appeared throughout texts.

This study also takes an interest in how texts are shared, particularly via social media, and how texts are reworked and repackaged to reach new audiences. I used Google News and the Twitter search function to find media coverage and social media sharing of texts. For my discussion of #DeLaFotoALaFirma, I analyzed some of the individual tweets by key women in the movement and employed distant reading to identify patterns among a corpus of 311 tweets. I used digital media tools to collect these tweets and identify the most frequently used words and phrases in the dataset.

To better understand the movement and its origins, I interviewed members of the #NiUnaMenos collective. I reached out to collective members for whom I could find contact information and spoke with seven women from the founding #NiUnaMenos collective, as well as later collectives.[2] These informal interviews occurred in person in Buenos Aires and via email, WhatsApp, and Skype between December 2018 and October 2019 and helped provide additional context that informed my textual analysis. While the 2015

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[2] There are differing opinions among scholars and activists as to whether the organizers of the very first #NiUnaMenos demonstration formed a "collective." While many have referred to this first group as a *colectivo*, including Paula Rodríguez in her book *#NiUnaMenos* (2015), María Pia López (2020, 75) writes, "Before this first march there was no collective, just a gathering of individuals who came together to answer a call to action. By the following year's march, a collective had formed, but one whose composition is continuously changing." In this article, I refer to the original group of organizers as the "collective." I also use the term "founding collective" when discussing the original group of organizers in reference to later collectives.

movement spread across the country, this article focuses on Buenos Aires, which served as the epicenter of the movement during this time (Rodríguez 2015, 153).

In keeping with critical discourse analysis, which "openly and explicitly positions itself on the side of dominated and oppressed groups" (Fairclough, Mulderrig, and Wodak 2011, 357), I have conducted this study from an openly feminist perspective, positioning my work on the side of #NiUnaMenos. The work of bell hooks, Rita Segato, Verónica Gago, Silvia Federici, and others are central to my understanding of gender, patriarchy, and gender violence. As hooks (2010, 1) explains, patriarchy grants men the "right" to dominate women through violence. Segato (2017) writes that the patriarchy's "mandate of masculinity" tells men they must be strong and powerful to maintain the patriarchal power structure. Because of economic and social precarity, men turn to violence, often violence toward women, to fulfill this mandate. hooks (2015, 121) writes, "Working men are fed daily a fantasy diet of male supremacy and power." However, in Western capitalist societies, most working men have little to no power at work and in other public spaces. Therefore, "they are taught to expect that the private world, the world of home and intimate relationships, will restore to them their sense of power, which they equate with masculinity" (hooks 2015, 121).

According to Federici (2017), this violence has increased in recent decades. She argues that "we are witnessing an escalation of violence against women, especially women of color, because 'globalization' is a process of political recolonization, intended to give capital uncontested control." Federici (2017) draws a connection between domestic violence and public violence, writing that "institutional tolerance of domestic violence creates a culture of impunity that contributes to normalizing the public violence inflicted on women." Therefore, while the 2015 movement emerged as a reaction primarily to what is known as domestic violence or intimate partner violence, it is important to understand how violence in private spaces relates to violence in public spaces.

Gago, a current #NiUnaMenos collective member, elaborates on how different forms of violence intersect. She writes that the women's strike has produced "a new understanding of violence" that connects "domestic violence" with "economic violence, workplace violence, institutional violence, police violence, racist violence, and colonial violence". She describes the women's strike not as an individual, isolated event but as a continuing process (Gago 2019, 17). While #NiUnaMenos in 2015 focused specifically on femicide, with discussions of economic violence largely absent, the discourse has evolved in recent years, with the intersections of gender, race, and class becoming more central. However, for some, notions of intersectionality are not adequate. Verónica Norando (2019, 319–320) argues that "we need to go beyond intersectionality, and consider instead the notion of union—the union of class and gender relations." According to Norando, it is patriarchal capitalism, not just patriarchy, that produces violence.

As discussions around gender, class, race, and violence evolve, within the movement and outside of it, the work of the aforementioned scholars helps to explain and contextualize gender violence in Argentina and the emergence of #NiUnaMenos. Since the movement's beginnings in 2015, rates of femicide have remained high. There is approximately one femicide every twenty-nine hours in Argentina, and this violence often occurs at home, with most women being killed by men they know.[3]

A tradition of feminist activism

Despite this violence, Argentina is known for its strong feminist tradition, which helped set the stage for #NiUnaMenos. Summarizing the feminist milestones of the twentieth century in Argentina, Barbara Sutton (2010, 28) writes, "Women gained the right to vote, greater

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[3] La Casa del Encuentro, home page graphics with statistics, lacasadelencuentro.org (accessed May 1, 2021).

legal authority within families, increased political representation, more legal protections against gender violence, and the expansion of sexual and reproductive rights." While many activist groups were forced to go underground during the dictatorship (1976–1983), Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo emerged during this period of state-sponsored terrorism. This group of mothers of the disappeared began to publicly protest the military government and demand the reappearance of their children, garnering national and international attention for their efforts.[4] Las Madres remain active today, gathering every Thursday in front of the Casa Rosada to demand justice for the disappeared and fight for other causes.

While the group's initial agenda was not focused explicitly on feminist issues, their legacy of public demonstrations, persistent protest, and using individual stories to advocate for collective human rights issues can be seen in #NiUnaMenos. Las Madres and other activist groups are recognized in the group's mission statement for helping to lay the groundwork for the success of #NiUnaMenos. This text, created two years after the 2015 demonstration, positions #NiUnaMenos as part of a historic movement rooted in the Encuentros Nacionales de Mujeres and the Campaña Nacional por el Derecho al Aborto Legal, Seguro y Gratuito, and as part of "the long history of fighting for more rights," in which Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo are central (Ni Una Menos 2017a).

After the return to democracy, feminist groups emerged once again to organize public meetings and demonstrations, and the first Encuentro Nacional de Mujeres took place in Buenos Aires in May 1986 (Tarducci, Trebisacce, and Grammático. 2019, 84). Since then, these annual meetings have taken place each year in different cities across the country, providing a space for women to come together, share experiences, and exchange ideas. Approximately one thousand women attended the first *encuentro* in 1986. At the 2018 event, held in Trelew, there were sixty-five thousand participants.[5]

Yet, historically, cultural change has proved challenging. While previous feminist movements have found success in legislative change, "ingrained cultural beliefs and habits are not erased by legislative act" (Sutton 2010, 28). Laws designed to protect women are often ignored or not adequately implemented. Sutton (2010, 7) explains, "The intersecting influences of the patriarchal state, the Catholic Church, *machista* (male-dominated) culture, and economic havoc have promoted various forms of social control, manipulation, and abuse of women's bodies." Understanding the intersection of these forces is critical in my analysis.

Analysis

Complex vs. accessible

The founding collective of #NiUnaMenos was a group of writers, journalists, communicators, activists, and academics. Although diverse in terms of political ideology, these women shared similar educational and professional backgrounds and were well connected among academic, activist, and artistic groups. As Marcela Fuentes told me, "Everybody came from a particular legacy . . . that's how they knew how to do things."[6] This educated, experienced, and connected group was tasked with communicating the movement's messages to a broad audience. How could the women of #NiUnaMenos craft messages that were accessible to the general public without being oversimplified for the feminist groups that helped lay the foundation for the movement to emerge? Florencia Abbate, a founding collective

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[4] *The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo*, directed by Susana Blaustein Muñoz and Lourdes Portillo (USA, Women Make Movies, 1985).

[5] "Historia del encuentro," 34 Encuentro Nacional de Mujeres, web.archive.org/web/20190722183649/http://encuentrodemujeres.com.ar/historia-del-encuentro (accessed July 22, 2019).

[6] Marcela Fuentes (performance studies scholar and former #NiUnaMenos collective member) in discussion with author, Skype, December 21, 2018.

member, explained, "When you are talking, you are talking to everyone, not just those who read [Judith] Butler in '98."[7]

The maratón on March 26 began with opening remarks from María Pia López, who helped host the event given her role at the time as director of the Museo del Libro y de la Lengua, part of the Biblioteca Nacional. Her nearly three-minute introduction not only set the tone for the event but also provided a discursive foundation for the movement. While she was speaking to an audience of writers, academics, and feminist activists, López was aware that her words would reach far beyond the present audience. Several media outlets were in attendance covering the event, and the entire maratón was filmed. The full recording is still available (as of August 23, 2021) on the #NiUnaMenos YouTube page (Ni Una Menos 2017c).

Aware of this much larger audience, López delivers remarks that oscillate between complex and accessible. After opening with a welcome and a few statements about the organization of the event, López succinctly explains femicide as a public, societal issue, connected to other forms of gender violence that have been accepted and normalized by society. She says, "We believe that femicides, these bloody murders, are the tip of the iceberg [la punta del 'iceberg'] of a collection of socially embedded violences and that they have a very high threshold of tolerance in Argentine society." López uses a common metaphorical expression to explain that a variety of forms of gender violence and aggressions remain unseen and accepted by society, while cases of femicide rise to the top, seemingly isolated. Nevertheless, these forms of normalized violence build the foundation from which femicide emerges. López is limited by time, and perhaps for this reason, does not include specific examples of these other forms of violence. While examples would have aided a lay audience, the use of metaphor helps to introduce and explain a complex idea. As David Machin and Andrea Mayr (2012, 185) write, metaphors are "fundamental to human thought" and "can be used as a tool to help us make sense of things." López's strategic use of metaphor sheds light on how gender violence functions in Argentina.

López continues by explaining that women are not solely victims of physical violence; they are also victims of discursive violence, which places blame on them and their lifestyles, instead of on *los femicidas*. She asserts, "Lo que vemos en los casos de cualquier joven que aparezca asesinada es que lo primero que se interroga es su conducta, su ropa, sus palabras, su vida, y se la convierte en objeto . . ." (What we see in the case of any woman who is found dead is that the first thing that is questioned is her behavior, her clothing, her words, her life, and she is converted into an object . . .). López is specific about how this revictimization occurs. These concrete examples likely resonated with the audience, who had seen similar narratives play out in the media. According to Marcela Fuentes, López's quick-and-easy deconstruction of journalistic discourse resonated with a woman in her family. In my conversation with Fuentes, she told me, "[She] is an evangelical, but she started listening to the feminist reading. So, she was like, 'Yes, it's true that they always focus on this,' or like, 'They wouldn't do this with guys.' I saw her doing the feminist analysis without calling it as such."[8]

López seems to have harsher words for discursive violence than physical violence and spends more time on the topic. In my interview with López, she said, "Violence is written in a certain way in discourse so that it can later exercise itself in other ways."[9] Discursive violence sets the stage for physical violence, an idea that is more complex than López's

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[7] Florencia Abbate (#NiUnaMenos founding collective member) in discussion with author, Buenos Aires, July 14, 2019.

[8] Marcela Fuentes (performance studies scholar and former #NiUnaMenos collective member) in discussion with author, Skype, December 21, 2018.

[9] María Pia López (#NiUnaMenos founding collective member) in discussion with author, WhatsApp, July 23, 2019.

previous messages. While revictimization is explained through examples that likely reso-
nated with Argentines, the idea that discourse can be violent may require another cogni-
tive jump. López had limited time for her remarks and was not able to fully explain every
concept or idea that she introduced. Nevertheless, we see that López is skilled at
presenting feminist ideas in an accessible way, without diluting key arguments.

In the weeks following the maratón, there was little public-facing activity by López and
her colleagues. According to Agustina Paz Frontera, the conversations continued via
Facebook, but a follow-up event had yet to be organized.[10] However, violence continued,
and on May 11, Chiara Páez's body was found (Pomeraniec 2015). In anger, frustration, and
dismay, the journalist Marcela Ojeda tweeted, "Actrices, políticas, artistas, empresarias,
referentes sociales . . . mujeres, todas, bah. no vamos a levantar la voz? NOS ESTAN
MATANDO" (Ojeda 2015a). Within two and a half hours of the first tweet, the June 3 event
had been organized (Ojeda 2015c). The next day, flyers started to circulate (Ojeda 2015b).
Within a week, an official Twitter account (@NiUnaMenos_) was launched, and the hashtag
#DeLaFotoALaFirma was created to demand action from politicians who posed with a
#NiUnaMenos poster (NiUnaMenos 2015a). These first two milestones of the
#NiUnaMenos movement—the maratón and Ojeda's tweet—demonstrate the movement's
oscillation between complex and accessible. While the maratón is recognized by many as
the first #NiUnaMenos event and was critical to the foundation of the movement, it was an
eighteen-word tweet—not thought-provoking prose—that spurred the organization of
the first demonstration.

The tweet's message is simple: Are we not going to raise our voice? They're killing us.
Ojeda urges women to raise their collective voice for change. Here, as I will discuss later in
the article, we see the message of collectivity, with the singular "la voz" used instead of the
plural "las/nuestras voces." The raising of a collective voice is suggested as the tool to
combat femicide. In keeping with López's initial message, Ojeda's tweet highlights the
power of discourse as resistance. At the end of the tweet Ojeda writes, "They're killing
us" in all capital letters, almost as if she is shouting. By writing "they're killing us" instead
of "they're killing women," she again emphasizes collectivity, bringing women closer to
the reality of femicide. The simplicity and accessibility of this message allowed it to carry
over to the June 3 demonstration, where women could be seen holding up "Nos estan
matando" signs (Ummo films 2015). While discussions of heteropatriarchy and revictim-
ization are important, a simple message is most effective in reaching a large, diverse
audience.

In reflecting on the first demonstration, and the months leading up to it, López (2020,
71) writes that the "classist inscription of the movement was debated," given the back-
grounds of the organizers and the public figures who helped spread the message of
#NiUnaMenos. While reflections on the intersections of gender and class were largely
absent from the movement's discourse in 2015, López writes that the mass of people
who participated in the very first demonstration included "women from working-class
backgrounds and an enormous quantity of young people." Therefore, she concludes that
"the space that was opened, a political achievement, spanned diverse classes, ethnicities,
and generations" (2020, 71). Thanks in part to accessible discourse, the movement success-
fully reached the masses, which in turn transformed the collective and the focus of the
movement moving forward.

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[10] Agustina Paz Frontera (#NiUnaMenos founding collective member) in discussion with author, Buenos Aires,
July 13, 2019.

Individual vs. collective

In addition to issues of accessibility, the women of #NiUnaMenos were tasked with recognizing individual victims while also demonstrating the collective nature of both the problem and the solution. At the very beginning of López's remarks during the maratón, she explains that it was a series of femicides, culminating with the death of Daiana García, which propelled the women to organize the event: "Cuando empezó, sucedieron dos hechos coincidentes, el último de ellos la aparición, asesinada, de Daiana García, que vino a coronar una serie de ataques, de asesinatos y de violencias sufridas por mujeres." (When it started, two corresponding incidents occurred, the last one being that Daiana García's dead body was found, which culminated a series of attacks, killings, and violences suffered by women.) (Ni Una Menos 2017c). From the start, we see the importance of naming individual women who have been victims of femicide and sharing their stories. López mentions García and then immediately positions her femicide as one of many. With the word *serie* (series) she presents these violent attacks and murders as interconnected.

In their 2019 talk at Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero, Judith Butler discussed this tension between the individual and the collective that we see play out in feminist activism: "I love the story form. There's no politics without the story. But if we only tell individual story after individual story, without asking what is the link among the stories . . . without making the link among individuals, then we become a series of activist individuals, rather than a political community" (Señal UNTREF 2019). Human stories, like that of García, are powerful. But, as Butler describes, isolated stories are limited in their ability to build community and have far-reaching political impact. By positioning García's case as part of a larger issue of femicide that has plagued the country, López demonstrates the breadth and depth of the problem, while still honoring García and her family and telling the personal story that often resonates with people.

Later in the maratón, Vir Cano and Marta Dillon read their essay "Que la rabia nos valga." This text stands out because it positions Argentine women as individuals with agency and as a collective group with power. The following excerpt is taken directly from Cano's Facebook post of the essay on March 27, 2015. To open the text, Cano and Dillon write:

> Yo no soy la mujer de la bolsa. Por eso estoy acá, frente a ustedes, leyendo este texto y respirando todo nuestro dolor, nuestra lucha y nuestra esperanza.

> Yo no soy la mujer de la bolsa, porque esa (entre otras) es Daiana, quien ya no está, y nada debería borrar lo insustituible de su ausencia, lo irrecuperable e insuplantable de su muerte violenta a manos de un femicida.

> Nosotras no somos las mujeres que ya no están. Pero todas ellas nos atraviesan. Nos duele su ausencia. Activa en nuestro cuerpo la memoria de las propias heridas . . . (Cano 2015)

> (I am not the woman of the bag. That is why I am here, in front of you all, reading this text and breathing in all of our pain, our fight, and our hope.

> I am not the woman of the bag, because she, among others, is Daiana, who is no longer here, and nothing should erase the irreplaceability of her absence, the irretrievability and irreplaceability of her violent death at the hands of *un femicida* [someone who commits femicide].

> We are not the women who are no longer here. But all of them pierce us. Their absence hurts us. It activates in our body the memory of our own injuries . . .)

Cano and Dillon make an important distinction right from the beginning of the text, one that in part contradicts María Moreno's "Mujeres de la bolsa," recognized as the "texto-grito convocante" for the maratón (Ni Una Menos 2016). They write that we are not "mujeres de la bolsa," the women whose bodies were found in trash bags. We have the privilege of still being here today; we are not the victims, yet we share a common history and memory with these individuals. They write that women are connected to one another through their shared stories and scars, and the death of one woman brings to light the abuses we all have suffered. Thus, while Cano and Dillon are clear that all women have been victims of gender violence, they do not present themselves as victims in the same way that Daiana García is a victim. However, all women share a "tajo común," a shared injury which serves as a tool for women to use their collective anger to enact change (Cano 2015).

After establishing a foundation of collective injury, anger, and action, Cano and Dillon reach a critical message: The root of femicide is the heteropatriarchal society in which we live. They assert, "Ellas, las que ya no están, nos confrontan con el límite más cruento de un sistema hetero-patriarcal que nos quiere sumisas, devotas, calladas, temerosas" (Cano 2015). Cano and Dillon explain heteropatriarchy as a system that subjugates women in many ways, with the most extreme form being femicide. They build on López's remarks, highlighting the connection between femicide and other aggressions that women experience on a regular basis but may brush aside. This is a critical message because it emphasizes the point that femicides are not singular, isolated events caused by a small group of men. They are merely the tip of the iceberg. Segato (2017) explains, "the majority of rapes and sexual aggressions toward women are not committed by psychopaths, but rather by people who are in a society that practices gender aggression in a thousand different ways that would never be classified as crimes." Femicides represent the culmination of a variety of aggressions that have been normalized. If we understand femicides as connected to other forms of gender violence that women experience daily, then all women are at risk of femicide.

The individual vs. collective dichotomy also relates to the positioning of the movement. According to Cano and Dillon, the organizers and participants of the maratón are not an isolated group but rather part of a collective effort spanning generations and organizations. They emphasize that the women at the event are part of a long lineage of feminist activists. While subjugation is part of our shared history, so is resistance. Making these connections to other activist groups, such as Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo, is important for several reasons. First, it serves as a way of honoring and recognizing the women who have come before and, in turn, inviting those women to take part. Second, it helps with identity formation. For example, most Argentines are familiar with Las Madres and their legacy of human rights activism. In referencing and aligning with these women, known for their tenacity and unique form of public protest, the identity of this new movement begins to take shape. This alignment also presents femicide as a human rights issue more broadly. Finally, positioning #NiUnaMenos as part of a larger, interconnected group builds on what Segato (2016, 27) describes as the necessity to resurrect the "rootedness and close relationships" that characterize the history of women.

While references to other activist groups are present in "Que la rabia nos valga" and other texts, they are largely absent in others, including the June 3 manifesto and, according to Claudia Laudano's analysis (2019, 158), the tweets posted on the official @NiUnaMenos_ Twitter account. Therefore, while femicide is presented as a collective problem, the positioning of #NiUnaMenos as part of a larger, collective effort is inconsistent. Although some women reference other groups, the collective's official communications avoid making these connections. Why did the founding collective not explicitly reference the feminist and human rights legacies out of which #NiUnaMenos emerged? Perhaps the collective intentionally avoided these references to attract individuals

without activist backgrounds and avoid alienating certain groups. Further research is needed to better understand how #NiUnaMenos positioned itself within the larger feminist and human rights movements in Argentina, and how and why that positioning has evolved since 2015.

As mentioned earlier, Ojeda's tweet (2015a) oscillates between the collective and the individual. While Ojeda reacts to the death of Chiara Páez, we know that Páez was the latest in a string of femicides, and it was this pattern of violence that enraged Ojeda and her peers. Initially, Ojeda highlights specific groups, such as actresses and politicians. She understands the political and social influence of these groups and therefore challenges them to act. But then, almost in frustration and dismay, she writes, "todas, bah..," using the plural feminine form of the word *todo*. Femicide is a collective problem that requires a collective solution. Specifically, it requires collective action by Argentine women. While ultimately the movement did involve men, Ojeda specifically calls for women to raise their voice, and then in all capital letters, writes, "THEY'RE KILLING US" (Ojeda 2015a). The pronoun *us* can be used to "align us alongside or against particular ideas" (Machin and Mayr 2012, 84). Using *us* or *we* in discourse transforms passive observers into subjects or recipients of an action. Thus, Ojeda uses the word *us* to highlight our shared reality of violence and encourage collective action.

Political vs. nonpartisan

The political vs. nonpartisan dichotomy became particularly visible during the week after Ojeda's tweet, when politicians began to take advantage of the movement's visibility and momentum and share photos on Twitter with a #NiUnaMenos poster. It was an election year in Argentina, and the #NiUnaMenos collective was wary of the narrative being co-opted by one party or another. They understood that in order to reach the masses and produce real change, the movement needed to be nonpartisan yet political. Therefore, as a growing number of politicians started to jump on the #NiUnaMenos band-wagon, the collective published five demands and launched the hashtag #DeLaFotoALaFirma. This organized social media effort put pressure on politicians not simply to pose with a poster but to sign a public agreement to commit to fulfilling the movement's demands. The demands included the implementation of existing laws and policies related to gender violence; guaranteed access to the judicial system for victims of gender violence; the creation of an official register of victims; the expansion of sexual education; and practices to guarantee protection for victims (Rodríguez 2015, 91–92). In sum, the five demands, along with the hashtag, focused on the responsibility of the state and a need for urgent action by political leaders.

Through #DeLaFotoALaFirma, #NiUnaMenos was careful to not isolate individual politicians or political parties; rather, #NiUnaMenos placed blame on the state. Via Twitter, the collective clearly communicated that #DeLaFotoALaFirma was a call to action for all politicians. On May 21, Marcela Ojeda (2015d) tweeted, "#NiUnaMenos y #DeLaFotoALaFirma es de TODOS. A la dirigencia politica, los esperamos. Siempre. Amigos, nos ayudan?" The movement expected—and challenged—all politicians to partic-ipate. Nevertheless, at times, collective members employed Twitter to demand action from specific individuals and groups. In response to the Salta human rights minister Marianela Cansino's post (2015), in which Cansino shared photos of her and colleagues posing with a #NiUnaMenos poster, Valeria Sampedro (2015) tweeted (in a retweet with comment), "Gracias x la foto. Tambien queremos compromiso #DeLaFotoALaFirma #NiUnaMenos." Sampedro's post does not appear to be attacking; however, she is adamant that the post cannot be simply performative. Social media posts must be backed up by a commitment to real action.

On the other hand, some collective members used Twitter to praise individuals who signed the agreement. Ana Correa retweeted a post by the lawyer and then Progresistas presidential candidate Margarita Stolbizer (2015), who shared a photo of herself signing the five demands. In the retweet, Correa (2015) comments, "Bien ahí @Stolbizer pasando #DeLaFotoALaFirma. Porque para #NiUnaMenos también hay que comprometerse." Overall, it appears that #DeLaFotoALaFirma tweets were directed at both men and women of differing parties. While some members of the collective addressed specific individuals, if we look at the tweets as a group of interconnected posts, we see that the collective maintained its nonpartisan posture.

While these tweets were not shared significantly on social media, they demonstrate how digital media can be used as a tool of feminist resistance. As Zeynep Tufekci (2017, 124) writes, "Technology alters the landscape in which human social interaction takes place" and "shifts the power and the leverage between actors." The hashtag #DeLaFotoALaFirma allowed the collective and others to directly challenge politicians in a public, digital space in a way that was not possible before. Hester Baer (2016, 18) writes, "Digital platforms offer great potential for broadly disseminating feminist ideas, shaping new modes of discourse about gender and sexism, connecting to different constituencies, and allowing creative modes of protest to emerge." The hashtag #DeLaFotoALaFirma served as a "creative mode of protest" in which feminists were able to broadly disseminate a message while engaging digitally with individuals to whom they previously did not have access. Overall, this social media effort was significant in setting the stage for how the movement could use digital tools moving forward.

Arguably the most significant political division among the women of #NiUnaMenos was the question of abortion and its place in the movement. The founding collective does not appear to publicly reference abortion until the June 3 manifesto, and even then, abortion is not explicitly addressed. Rather, the manifesto refers to a women's right to say no, whether that be to physical violence, rape, or an unwanted pregnancy (Ni Una Menos 2015b). The movement's approach to the issue of abortion in early 2015 is a clear representation of the political vs. nonpartisan balancing act. Abortion was, and still is, a highly controversial and politicized issue in Argentina. In Paula Rodríguez's *#NiUnaMenos* (2015, 103), Vanina Escales describes how the collective approached this sensitive issue: "The word 'abortion' was not included. There was an internal debate in the collective. The only thing that was written in the document was 'the right to say no to a pregnancy.' Many victims of gender violence said no to something and were punished because of that freedom to say no. So, we thought saying no to a pregnancy was a possible point in the document." To explicitly include abortion in the document would have alienated a large group of people. Therefore, abortion was not specifically addressed in the manifesto or prior #NiUnaMenos texts.

However, some did not agree with this approach. During my visit to Argentina in July 2019, one feminist scholar told me that the June 3 document was "an embarrassment" and that nobody liked it; she said it was too watered down and did not address abortion. Additionally, as part of that trip, I presented my research at a conference in Buenos Aires. One conference participant said that what made #NiUnaMenos so massive in the beginning was not its approach to discourse, as my research proposes, but its exclusion of abortion. I agree that the way #NiUnaMenos distanced itself from the topic of abortion allowed the movement to reach more people. However, does this distancing or exclusion adequately explain the success of #NiUnaMenos and its emergence on a global scale? I argue the movement reached so many people by finding a discursive equilibrium across a variety of messages—including, but not limited to, abortion—and then communicating those messages broadly in digital and physical spaces. Over the years, as can be seen in the evolution of the movement's manifestos and other texts, abortion has become a key topic

for the movement (Ni Una Menos 2017b).[11] However, in the months leading up to the June 3, 2015, demonstration, abortion did not appear in the movement's communications.

Digital vs. physical

The diffusion of messages in both online and offline spaces—and the interplay of digital and physical texts—is an important part of my analysis and was critical to the success of the movement. However, it is important to highlight that while social media can be employed to enact positive change, it can also be used as a weapon to cause division, intolerance, and hate. In *Apuntes para las militancias*, María Pia López (2019, 59) writes about the dangerous echo chambers that exist in these spaces. At first, Twitter may appear to be a democratic space in which everyone has a voice, and all viewpoints are present. Yet often Twitter is antidemocratic. It presents widespread misinformation, and many users only follow those who represent their own beliefs. Laudano (2019, 169), while praising digital feminist activism, reminds us that Facebook and Twitter are corporate platforms, and "the debate about strategies that use free software is still pending." Nevertheless, López affirms that "the Argentine women's movement … sees more overlap than opposition between the virtual and material planes," and that "social networks are fundamental to the diffusion of calls to action and to the production of autonomy, essential to street mobilization and assembly, in-person meetings, and the construction of collective politics" (2020, 122). Although the negative impacts of social media must be acknowledged, these digital channels were used in positive ways by the movement.

The importance of digital media—in particular social media channels like Facebook and Twitter—was apparent from the beginning of the maratón. In my interview with López, she told me that Facebook served as the primary communication and organization tool for the event.[12] In her opening remarks at the event, López states that discussions about organizing a series of actions in response to femicide first originated on social media. She communicates the key message that this is a grassroots event, organized by friends and colleagues, not institutions, via social media (Ni Una Menos 2017c). López conveys an authentic, democratic organization, which I argue was important to the movement's success in reaching the masses.

The text "Que la rabia nos valga" also demonstrates the importance of the digital-physical interplay. After the text was read at the maratón, Cano and Dillon shared it via their personal social media (Cano 2015; Dillon 2015). Beyond these posts, I did not find extensive online sharing. Nevertheless, two years later, a thirty-five-second abbreviated version of "Que la rabia nos valga" was included on Miss Bolivia's 2017 album *Pantera*. Miss Bolivia, an Argentine musical artist who has found international success with her unique blend of cumbia, reggae, hip-hop, and electronic music, does not shy away from using her platform to spread feminist messages.[13] The "Que la rabia nos valga" track on the *Pantera* album is an abbreviated version of the original text and is read by Dillon, not Miss Bolivia. The track immediately follows Miss Bolivia's (feminist) hit "Paren de matarnos." Therefore, for those listening to the entire album in order, either online or with a physical CD, Dillon's voice is heard immediately after one of the most popular songs. While the lyrics are only a portion of the original text, they concisely communicate the key points that were just as timely and relevant in 2017 as they were in 2015.

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[11] The manifestos are available on the #NiUnaMenos website as of August 23, 2021, niunamenos.org.ar/manifiestos/.

[12] María Pia López (#NiUnaMenos founding collective member) in discussion with author, WhatsApp, July 23, 2019.

[13] "Miss Bolivia," CMTV, https://www.cmtv.com.ar/biografia/show.php?bnid=2328&banda=Miss_Bolivia (accessed June 5, 2019); Miss Bolivia, *Pantera*, Sony Music Entertainment Argentina S.A., released February 2017, compact disc.

The inclusion of "Que la rabia nos valga" on *Pantera* is a perfect example of how #NiUnaMenos texts were repackaged and shared across a variety of channels. Digital media and collaboration among feminist activists allowed texts to break free from their original context and purpose to be shared with larger groups. Originally, "Que la rabia nos valga" was read at a relatively small event for a specific audience. However, two years later, Miss Bolivia and Dillon worked together to make the text accessible to Argentines and Miss Bolivia fans across the globe.

After Ojeda's tweet in May, the founding collective was formed, and the women began to use the hashtag #NiUnaMenos in an organized, intentional way. Quickly, the hashtag became the movement, similar to what has happened in the United States with the #Occupy, #BlackLivesMatter, and #MeToo movements. As Tufekci (2017, xxvi) explains, "Digital technologies are so integral to today's social movements that many protests are referred to by their hashtags—the Twitter convention for marking a topic." Hashtags serve several functions. By clicking on a hashtag, a social media user can see all posts that include the hashtag. Thus, hashtags create broader, networked conversations that link users. Baer (2016, 29) writes that "hashtag feminism highlights the interplay of the individual and the collective." Hashtags allow individual users and their stories to become part of a larger, collective narrative. Often, it is these narratives that spur social movements forward. Thus hashtags have become an important organization and story-telling tool for activists.

In addition to a hashtag's technical capabilities, it has symbolic functions. An Xiao Mina (2014) writes that "adding a # to a phrase can make it a certain kind of political statement in and of itself." Hashtags add meaning to a phrase or slogan by politicizing it. Additionally, as Mina explains through the example of #BlackLivesMatter, hashtags build a sense of community. She writes that hashtags are "a common reference point, a way to join hands across spaces." Therefore, as can be seen in the June 3 demonstration, hashtags are not solely used in digital spaces to network users and stories. The #NiUnaMenos hashtag was also used offline—on posters, banners, and T-shirts—because of its political message (Mil Volando Cooperativo Audiovisual 2015).

The hashtag #DeLaFotoALaFirma further demonstrates the critical role of digital media in #NiUnaMenos. The women's strategic use of social media and personal networks made #NiUnaMenos into a popular trend among politicians, celebrities, and other public figures. As the collective member Agustina Paz Frontera told me, "The relationship that the women on Twitter had with the entertainment industry was very important . . . . All of a sudden, everyone wanted to ride the wave of Ni Una Menos."[14] While the movement certainly benefited from the influence and followings of these individuals, the founding collective also felt it necessary to hold them publicly accountable via #DeLaFotoALaFirma. In addition to cultural change, the movement sought political change.

As part of my analysis of this social media effort, I used the Twitter advanced search function and digital humanities tools MassMine and Voyant Tools to mine 311 original #DeLaFotoALaFirma tweets and identify key terms and phrases.[15] I sampled the data using a location restriction of Buenos Aires. Thus the corpus includes only publicly available tweets by users who turned on their geolocation. While certainly not comprehensive, this corpus of tweets—mined and analyzed in March 2019—serves as a sample of the Twitter activity that took place in 2015. My analysis shows that the two terms with the highest counts are *niunamenos* and *delafotoalafirma*. While on the surface this data

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[14] Agustina Paz Frontera (#NiUnaMenos founding collective member) in discussion with author, Buenos Aires, July 13, 2019.

[15] See the results of my search for the terms *niunamenos* and *delafotoalafirma* using Voyant Tools, version 2.4, March 19, 2019, https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=f2dd18b01ff99082d089e9d77b56a69f.

may seem obvious and not particularly noteworthy, these counts are valuable because they demonstrate that the users participating in the effort understood the connection to #NiUnaMenos, the function of a secondary hashtag, and the importance of linking the two messages by using the hashtags together. For a grassroots movement that began quickly, the social media strategy and coordination is impressive—from #DeLaFotoALaFirma to the first demonstration and beyond.

Conclusion

In my 2019 email exchange with Cecilia Palmeiro, a member of the current #NiUnaMenos collective, she described the very first #NiUnaMenos demonstration as a moment that "marked a before and after in the culture and history of Argentina."[16] Similarly, Marcela Ojeda told me, "June 3 was historic, unrepeatable . . . it was the creation of a new agenda that of course added or took up the claims of other women's movements."[17] The June 3 demonstration had such an impact because of the way the movement was able to reach the masses—not just feminist activists—in the months leading up to the demonstration. Instead of allowing political differences to cause division, the founding collective successfully navigated these tensions, engaging in a discursive balancing act that constructed texts as strategic "sites of struggle" to reach diverse groups of people. Texts were complex yet accessible, political yet nonpartisan, and focused on the collective while highlighting the individual. They existed in both new digital spaces and traditional physical spaces. And while the collective itself had differing opinions regarding the place of social media within the movement, we see that, as Marcela Fuentes (2019, 185) writes, "social media platforms are, entangled with streets and squares, key sites for mobilization and intervention." The convergence of the digital and physical allows feminist discourse to permeate society and facilitates reimagined forms of protest.

The backgrounds of the women of the collective cannot be understated. As I have highlighted throughout this article, these women were communicators, journalists, activists, and academics who had a deep understanding of communications. They were keenly aware of the different audiences they needed to engage, and they knew how to navigate the Argentine media landscape to best reach them. They understood, from the very first #NiUnaMenos event, that they were not just combating physical violence. They were also combating discursive violence, particularly in the media, and therefore they focused on using discourse as resistance and shifting the conversation about gender violence. While the lack of diversity within the collective cannot be ignored, the experiences and skill sets of the organizers made them successful in reaching people from a variety of backgrounds.

Since 2015, the discourse of #NiUnaMenos has evolved significantly. As Francesca Belotti, Francesca Comunello, and Consuelo Corradio (2020, 4) explain, the 2015 discourse focused on femicide and gender violence more broadly, so that "femicide became a civil society issue" and not just a feminist issue. Since then, "conversations shifted over time to invoke #NiUnaMenos as 'the mother tag' for wider political purposes" (Belotti, Comunello, and Corradio, 2020, 23). The evolution of the movement's discourse raises several questions that deserve further investigation. Has recent discourse engaged or alienated participants of the 2015 demonstration? How have changes in the collective resulted in new discursive strategies? And how have #NiUnaMenos groups in other countries adapted discursive strategies within their specific cultural contexts? As activists across Latin America and around the world continue to employ discourse and digital media to bring

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[16] Cecilia Palmeiro (#NiUnaMenos collective member) in discussion with author, email, March 19, 2019.

[17] Marcela Ojeda (#NiUnaMenos founding collective member) in discussion with author, WhatsApp, July 7, 2019.

about change, understanding how language can be used via online and offline channels is increasingly important. The #NiUnaMenos movement provides an example of how feminist activists can bridge differences and reach diverse groups through discourse, connect new messages to traditions of activism, and embrace emerging communications tools to resist gender violence and produce change, *para que no haya ni una menos.*

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