# Digital Violence as Affective Disciplining after Feminist Protests

## The Case of #NotLikeThatLadies

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In Latin America there is a severe crisis of violence against women. This situation is aggravated due to the high level of impunity enjoyed by perpetrators and, further, the institutional violence directed at women seeking justice, leading in most cases to revictimization. Feminist protests against said violence have exploded throughout the region. They carry the banner of common slogans such as #NiUnaMenos (NotOneMore) as a way of demanding an end to the impunity. A renewed feminist agency that brings the affects to the forefront has emerged, and with it the affectations of violence, as a way to enrich the political repertoire of the fight against sexual violence (Baer, 2016; de Souza, 2019). An exemplary series of protests of this kind took place in Mexico City after two cases of minors raped by the police went public in August 2019. To protest police impunity, women painted red circles symbolizing blood outside the police station, dumped pink glitter on the head of Mexico City's security secretary and graffitied historical monuments with feminist slogans. Black-masked women also smashed bus station windows and mixed the shards with pink glitter to call attention to these sites of violence against them. These affective interventions permeated with fury, anger, and despair over the devastating situation of gender violence, created shared ways of sensing and being affected by violence.

The responses to the women's mobilizations have been quite ambivalent: On the one hand, there is a tangible euphoria and solidarity among women, as a form of collective resistance, but this is met with increasing *corrective threats* on social networks, on the other. The hashtag #AsiNoMujeres (NotLikeThatLadies)—created in response to feminist protests in 2019—is evidence of that. It was the women who were then condemned as violent and even irrational—not police impunity or the society that tolerates it. These forms of digital violence show the currently contested character not only of female bodies but also of their affects, revealing the deep intertwinement

of how gendered hegemonies are both vulnerable to aesthetic interventions but tend to resort to reciprocal cycles of violence, too.

Cultural expectations have widely been considered in feminist literature as a form of symbolic violence to discipline women by designating the ways women 'ought to behave' as well as by mobilizing the penalties they must pay for their public role (Savigny, 2020). In the same way, with the praxeology analysis of aesthetics, Reckwitz (2016) points out that aesthetics is always bound up with the mobilization of affects. The response to the protests in the media and social networks resulted, however, in practices of disciplining affects (Reckwitz 2016).

In spite of the fact that the public opinion largely denigrated the protests because of women's rage, the protest did find resonance in public policy. The government indeed responded by activating a "gender alert" in November 2019, which implies that a series of measures focused on addressing gender violence must be taken. Moreover, amendments to the penal code were also approved to criminalize digital violence. In the end, feminist protesters have found a way to turn such vicious cycles into virtuous paths toward countering digital post-protest behavioral critique and affect discipline.

This article aims to analyze the intertwining of the aesthetic and political practices that emerged in the protests both as a site of resistance but also as discipline. To do that, we engage with the literature of violence against women in politics and affect theory. We claim that the great diversity of aesthetic-political actions accompanying the protests render visible the evocation of rage as a shared collective subjectivity and thus a renewed feminist agency that is verbalized in the slogan "*Somos malas; podemos ser peores*" (We are bad; we can be worse). We further argue that the intertwining of affects and political practices in these performances and protests characterized by bringing the women's affects to the political arena have transgressed the affective order and political imaginary of how women should protest and what kind of affects they are allowed to bring into public spaces. We read the interventions of collective rage as a revolt against the cultural expectations of women violated feeling ashamed and having to endure it. Due to these expectations, women protesters are routinely punished for showing anger in the public arena—and not articulating their demands (as they "should") in "rational" and "intelligent" ways. Thus, they become the targets of hundreds of misogynistic posts on social networks where users expressed shame and hate toward feminism. Women are also accused of corrupting the meaning of femininity and, finally, provided with male role models and ways in which they should protest.

Methodologically, we undertook a digital ethnography understood as a research strategy that is not limited to the digital space but also includes on-site participant observation and interviews (Murthy, 2011). The main sources of our research comprised field notes of participation in the protests (including the multi-sensory perceptions and the affects they generate) (Pink, 2009) and the collection of various au-

diovisual materials, such as photos, videos, and reviews of the protests. The digital ethnography also included on-site field periods in Mexico City to conduct in-depth face-to-face interviews with activists from the feminist collective Luchadoras. This is a feminist collective that promotes processes of personal and collective political transformation by narrating and disseminating women's stories. Their mission is to build an internet free of violence and to create political spaces for women's empowerment (Luchadoras, 2020). Our digital ethnographic approach was combined with the analysis of posts containing the hashtag #NotLikeThatLadies on the social media platform Twitter. Through data mining techniques, we collected 2172 tweets in the period from August 16th—31, 2019. This hashtag was trending as users mobilized their opinions and expectations for women protesting against violence affectively. Field notes, interviews, and the tweets were analyzed with content analysis (Hernández, Fernández, & Baptista Lucio, 2010).

This article contributes to the literature on violence against women in politics and affect theory by analyzing, in a more integral way, the public demands on women to control their affects as a medium of gender politics and patriarchic power, that is, to be civilized and rational—but at the same time it is arising as a source of new ways of resistance against impunity. We also document evidence of the digital violence and the discipline that activists and human rights defenders face in social media in the wake of feminist protest. In the next section, we draw on contributions about violence against women in politics and affect theory to address practices of resistance and how they in turn face discipline. In section three, we discuss feminist strategies to subvert affective governance during the protests. In section four, we focus on the media response, the digital violence directed at the activists and their bodily reactions. Section five centers on the subsequent affective disciplining that followed the protests by focusing on the #NotLikeThatLadies as a political site. A final section offers our conclusion that women's fear turning to rage has entered the political repertoire of affective feminist politics despite any reactionary discipline to put women back 'in their place,' effectively turning a corner in Latin American feminist politics. Feminism at large has learned to use #NotLikeThatLadies-type disciplining as a source of inspiration billowing up in clouds of pink glitter.

## 2. VIOLENCE AND AFFECTS

Gendered violence is a contested concept (M. Krook, 2020). New discussions are directed toward questioning the focus on physical violence and changing it to the diverse ways in which violence against women is also perpetrated. These include symbolic, semiotic (use of symbols, language, and images), cultural violence and, more recently, digital violence. All these practices take their toll on women's' bodies, professional careers, and their status in society, with considerable physical, psycholog-

ical, moral, and even economic losses (Bardall, Bjarnegård, & Piscopo, 2020). Particularly, current discussions of our platform society have prompted literature on digital violence to explode (Jane, 2014; Jane, 2016; Powell & Henry, 2017). Many other authors have conceptualized digital violence in a broader sense, as any acts of gender-based violence that are committed via the use of information and communication technologies (APC, 2015; Henry & Powell, 2018).

In this article, we focus on digital violence against women protesters. We rely on the conception of violence against women in politics as a distinctive phenomenon from violence against women in general. While the objective of the first concept is to disqualify women (politicians, human rights defenders and activists) as political actors (M. L. Krook & Sanín, 2020), the second is meant to sustain and reinforce women's subordination (Bardall et al., 2020). The literature on violence against women in politics has focused on women politicians to date; we thus claim that there is a research gap about the ways in which women human right defenders and activists are affectively disciplined through digital violence—for in fact mobilizing their own affects as a way to prompt new political repertories in collective action. In this article, we approach digital violence—not as just another type of violence, but rather we understand internet as a social space (Proctor, 2020) where violence is enmeshed into the digital realm.

The literature on violence against women in politics states that misogynistic comments impose a division between 'correct' and 'incorrect' ways to behave and is directed at women as a way to punish them for violating traditional gender roles and stereotypes (Manne, 2017). For instance, by reinforcing the idea that women's place is the kitchen (Jane, 2014), meaning that women should remain 'docile,' because, traditionally, women are seen as being emotional and not rational—but also needing to keep that affect at home on the fainting couch, so to speak—any show of affect in public both plays into the stereotype and simultaneously transgresses it. This transgression in turn invites corrective measures to re-reinforce the stereotype, that is, a form of cultural violence that constructs a morality, one that tends to carry more implications for women than it does for men in patriarchal societies (Al-Rawi, Chun, & Amer, 2021). This means that although men may also be subject to affective discipline, the implications for women are different. These kinds of comments are focused on women's bodies—specifically debasement of a woman's 'looks' or threat of physical violence—or gender scripts undermining women's competence in the political sphere (M. L. Krook & Sanín, 2020). Moreover, misogynistic comments on social media result in symbolic aggressions (M. L. Krook & Sanín, 2020; Savigny, 2020). The violence is expressed in abusive language, implicit irony, and sarcasm, explicit derogatory commentaries or verbal abuse (Fuchs & Schäfer, 2020). Although male activists may also experience disciplinary actions in the wake of their protests, these mechanisms are directed toward the men's actions *and* not based in gender roles or bodily images (Citron, 2014). Digital violence against

protesters altogether inflicts a violation of their political rights (such as the right of freedom of expression, the right of protest) (M. Krook, 2020). These practices have further implications—dangerously stigmatizing and stifling activists—and thus open further possibilities for the state to criminalize such actions and for society as a whole to repress dissent (Amnistía Internacional, 2021).

Social media has been thoroughly analyzed as an affective social space where publics can be mobilized and connected through *feelings* (Hiilis, Paasonen, & Petit, 2019; Papacharissi, 2016). While social movements theory has focused on the emancipatory potential of affect (Castells, 2015), feelings are a site of both discipline and resistance (Bargetz, 2015; Di Gregorio & Merolli, 2016; Reckwitz, 2016). Affect theory has discussed the dichotomies that exist between the celebration and critique of affects and the opposition between rationality and affects (Kahl et al., 2019). Moreover, feminist contributions to affective politics literature have also argued that the relation of certain affects to categories such as gender, race, and class—and thereby their (d)evaluation—tend to confine women to certain affective regimes of oppression that play rationality off against emotionality (Bargetz, 2015; Penz, Sauer, Penz, & Sauer, 2020). It also disputes the idea that some societies are more affective than others, for example non-Western societies (Hynnä et al., 2019; Kahl et al., 2019).

Drawing on the literature of violence against women in politics and affective politics, our contribution here follows three lines of argument: First, we present evidence of the attempts to discipline activists and human rights defenders through digital violence, and in doing so the article seeks to put to rest rational and affect binarisms. Secondly, since we base our evidence on feminist protests in Mexico City and the affective discipline, we also seek to contest the idea that women generally are more inclined toward affectivity. Affective regimes of governance are efficacious as part of the practices that sustain violent practices, particularly in the aftermath of large feminist mobilizations. Finally, this article contributes to the literature on affective feminist politics by analyzing performances and interventions at historical monuments *guided by rage* as a strategy to hold the state accountable for the situation of impunity prevailing in the country.

## 3. THE AFFECTIVITY OF GENDERED VIOLENCE

A context of structural violence prevails in Mexico (Franco, 2013; Rodríguez, 2009). While it is true that violence is generalized for both men and women, it should be noted that gender violence is not related to drug trafficking, which is the main cause of violence in general and is perpetrated by men. Feminicides are, in turn, the extreme case of gender violence that implicates both the state (direct and indirectly) and individual perpetrators (Fregoso & Bejarano, 2010; Lagarde, 2008). This type of violence is rooted in gender inequalities and misogyny because it is expressed in the

killing of women just because they are women. In spite of the increasing trend of feminicides, there are still several difficulties in classifying the murders of women as feminicides, so that some estimates indicate that there could be as many as 20 a day (Linares, 2021). Moreover, not only is violence a problem but also impunity, since 94.8% of all crimes—including gender-based violence—go unpunished (Linares, 2021), because many victims have serious obstacles to accessing formal justice. Faced with this situation, women articulate their resistance via interventions in public spaces—the internet being one of those spaces—showing rage, fed-up-ness against the violence and solidarity with other women. August 2019 was a historic moment for feminist mobilizations in Mexico. First in the protests under the hashtag #NoNosCuidanNosViolan ("They don't take care of me; they rape me") and then the following Glitter Protest. In the next subsections, we will analyze the feminists protests and the affective repertories they mobilized.

## 3.1 The #NoNosCuidanNosViolan protest of August 12th, 2019

This protest followed the two abovementioned rape cases of minors at the hands of police officers in Mexico City (Jímenez, 2019). The protesters' anger was ignited not merely by the act of violence perpetrated by police officers. A series of irregularities occurred when one of the minors went to file a complaint, namely, the minor's identity was exposed by none other than the authorities themselves (Ruíz, 2019). In addition, the authorities alleged that the minor's statement presented contradictions. These types of practices, like leaking personal data in an effort to discredit or invite threats, are common ways for women to get blamed in a double victimization and for police offenders to evade responsibility (Arjona, 2019). The leaks resulted in the minor dropping her legal claim (Pradilla, 2019). The irregularities continued, such as the fact that the doctor did not follow rape case protocol in examining the minor for three whole days after the rape—allowing evidence to disappear. There were also contradictions between the statements of the police chief that the allegedly guilty police officers were still working, and the mayor, who stated that they had already been suspended (Ruíz, 2019). Only three days after this rape, a second case became known of another minor who was raped by an on-duty policeman inside the Museo Archivo de la Fotografía in Mexico City. Claudia Sheinbaum, the mayor of Mexico City, was cautious in her response, stating that a proper investigation would be carried out. In response, various feminist collectives called anonymously for a first demonstration outside the police station in Mexico City on August 12th, 2019.

The protest's slogan—#NoNosCuidanNosViolan—can be read as a statement implying that police officers not only do not observe their duty to provide protection, but instead they themselves commit sexual violence. The protest began at the Secretaría de Seguridad Pública and ended at the Procuraduría General de Justicia, both of the main judicial institutions in the city. The call to protest in social media was

simple: the hashtag, the date and place, and the plea that only women attend. Some women wore black, some wore only miniskirts and bras. Some were carrying banners showing a pig's head, while still others protested performatively by dressing up as police officers with a sign that read "Police Rapist." Others painted blood stains and graffiti outside on the stairs at the entrance of the institution. When the head of the Secretaria de la Seguridad Pública was being interviewed by the press, women threw pink glitter at him. They also broke the glass door of the Procuraduría General de Justicia to demand due diligence in the investigations as well as a stop to the revictimization through leaking victims' personal information.

Mayor Sheinbaum—herself a woman—issued a press release that same day. She stressed that fighting violence against women is part of the government's agenda. At the same time, she called the protests a provocation and said that she would not fall into it. The outrage at Sheinbaum's statement resulted in a rapid, spontaneous, and decentralized response from feminist activists. Immediately, there was a call for a new protest in various Mexican cities for Friday night, August 16, 2019, just five days after the "provocation" protest. As if by magic, glitter was present almost everywhere: Photos with glowing pink glitter were sent from smartphone to smartphone, and feminist memes were created parodying the idea of glitter as an extremely dangerous provocation based on the incident with the secretary. For example, one meme shows a soldier presenting 14 tons of seized contraband—not of drugs, but glitter (Figure 1). The call to protests in over 30 cities in Mexico said bring pink glitter. Thus, glitter became an extremely important symbol of feminist resistance in Mexico.

The group Resistance Femme shared the event via Facebook under the hashtag #NoNosCuidanNosViolan, accompanied by the demand "We want justice!" On the morning prior to the protest various collectives published a statement addressed to both Mayor Sheinbaum and the Secretary of Municipal Security. In the text, they denounced the government's inability to "identify and punish those who violate women's human rights" and declared that "our protests arise because it is the State itself, through its police and military forces, who perpetrates the crimes of sexual abuse, protects the offenders, silences the victims and humiliates them" (Femme Resistencia, 2019).

*Figure 1: Glitter meme on Twitter.*


Source: Redón, P. (2019) "– Already seized 14 tons, boss. – Of drugs? – No, of pink glitter."

## 3.2 Fieldnotes from the Glitter Protest of August 16, 2019: "We are bad, we can be worse"

On the day of this protest, we met at the office of the feminist collective Luchadoras. The office was calm and welcoming. Feminist posters, flyers, and symbols decorated the white painted walls of the room where they had also produced some of the content for their website and social media. Luchadoras made a homemade version of—non-polluting—glitter (sugar and crushed pink eye shadow). Together we walked to the place where the protest would start. We walked until the Insurgentes Avenue, a big street that goes in a circle, a roundabout with various metrobus stations. In the middle, there is a square with the entrances to the metro station. When we arrived, the square was already full of women and journalists. It was impossible to understand a word of what was being shouted through a megaphone. Walking around, the pink glitter was present everywhere, girls were passing around big plastic bags full of it. Purple smoke ascended into the air. In general, it was a good vibe, some women were chanting, but in general it felt like the calm before a storm. The phrase "Demanding justice is not a provocation" was written in a circle of flames on the ground (see Figure 2). In addition, a hooded woman dressed in black with an aerosol can in her hand shouted loudly in the direction of the press representatives, "This protest will be a spectacle!" and thus set the atmosphere of the night.

The black-clad and -masked women of the so-called "autonomous black block" were relatively few. Various feminist movements, groups, and collectives were present. The majority of the women seemed young, schoolgirls or young students, but also other generations came out, from small children to elderly women. Some attended together, like mothers and daughters. Different groups prepared performances.

A member of the feminist collective Luchadoras portrayed the atmosphere of that afternoon in the following way: "the mood was very heated and what was planned was a sit-in, not a march; but with so much rage, it was not possible to have people standing in one place" (Luchadoras, personal communication, October 14th, 2019).

The people began to move; they filled the streets. The situation was a bit chaotic; nobody seemed to know where to go, but the need of the mass to move was clear. When we moved upstairs to the roundabout, women started walking around in circles. There was the building of the Secretaría de Seguridad Pública. The atmosphere was tense, becoming more and more aggressive. The chants in front of the building were getting louder; purple fireworks were fired against it. Black-masked women smashed the bus station's windows, which they had previously covered with graffiti. Most of these actions were supported with applause by the women protesters; only on rare occasions did they shout out for the masked women to stop. All the while, pink glitter floated in the air.

*Figure 2: Demanding Justice is not a Provocation;*

*Figure 3: Protesters Walking with Purple Smoke | Figure 4: Only Female Police Officers Were Visibly Present During the Protest.*

*Figure 5: Broken Glass and Pink Glitter.*


Source Figures 2–5: Mirjana Mitrović (2019), Exhibition "Pink. Glitter. Violence."

Figure 5, a picture of smashed glass and pink glitter, expresses the unique mixture of rage and celebration. The glitter was also used by the young women to "attack" men in general—not just the head of the Secretaria de la Seguridad Pública, as during the march of August 12th. This tactic was also used to push out of the protest potentially supportive men, who tried to enter, because men had expressly not been invited.

After nearly all protesters had left Insurgentes Avenue and moved on to the Angel de la Independencia, a historical monument, the press documented the damage to the metrobus station. On their way, the protesters passed a police station. Only then, when glass was broken and fires were set at this police station, did the fire department intervene. Before that, only female police officers had been present during the protest (Figure 4), and they seemed to have the order not intervene whatever happened. They just stepped back and observed. It is not common in Mexico to just have female police officers at protests, but this was a protest against sexual violence executed by male police officers. It can be read as an acknowledgment by the authorities that something was wrong. Some protesters, however, saw it as an attempt to control the optics. And they saw it going hand in hand with a second tactic used by the city government: erasure. Already the next day, all broken glass had been swept up and replaced. New glass panes and advertising signs were placed in bus stations. The

graffiti had been removed as best and as quickly as possible. This cleanup practice was surprisingly fast in the context of Mexico City. It was interpreted as an attempt to render the protest invisible.

The tactic of cleaning up the broken glass and glitter as a symbol of rage did not work at the historical monuments, where the protesters arrived later that night. They graffitied all over the pedestal of the Angel de la Independencia and the Hemiciclo a Juárez. This can be understood as tactic of "overwriting," not erasing the powerful symbols but attacking and using them for their political claims. After the interventions at the historical monuments, the collective "Restauradoras con Glitter" was formed. Its purpose was to demand that the graffiti should not be removed until the safety of women in Mexico was guaranteed (Restauradoras con Gliter, 2019). In a statement, the collective alluded to graffiti as an aesthetic practice of collective memory to subvert the hegemonic meaning of historical monuments linked to male memory, respect, union, and progress. In the same document, the collective demanded an end to the prevailing impunity for gender violence, through the implementation of public policies with a gender perspective designed in conjunction with civil society, with the mobilization of the hashtag #MujeresNoParedes (women not walls). The collective recognized the aesthetic, historical, and social values of the monuments; however, they pointed out that these values cannot take precedence over the most important value, which is the life of women in full exercise of their human rights. At the end, they called on society to "look, read, reflect, and empathize with the terrible situation of violence against women, remembering that heritage can be restored, violated women will never be the same, while murdered women never return home" (Restauradoras con Gliter, 2019).

## 4. MEDIA RESPONSES, DIGITAL VIOLENCE, AND BODILY REACTIONS

Although the deadly gender violence in Mexico did garner attention after the protests, public opinion mostly focused on the women's rage. In the wake of most protest, there is usually an initial corrective attitude that circulates in response, but this is different than environmentalists being chastised for occupying treetops and disabling machinery or even black-block anarchists being condemned for burning private cars. The wave of threatening responses—not merely calling for behavior correction but rather physical and sexual violence—was arguably unlike anything faced by other groups. In addition to the usual gender-based recriminations of the newspapers, women who protest face threats of rape and murder online.

As noted by a member of Luchadoras (personal communication, October 14, 2019), after the protest there was a massive wave of hate against feminist activists. This collective alone received 300 comments in just two days following the protest of August 16, 2019 as a result of coordinated actions. The collective received disciplinary

and corrective threats in the form of images of women's bodies cut into pieces. This provoked a series of affectations in the protesters' bodies: fear, nervousness, desire to vomit, intimidation, and crying (Luchadoras, personal communication, October 14, 2019) . Luchadoras was not the only target. Several other activists had also experienced digital violence as a form of correction and intimidation, as well as to instill fear to prevent future mobilization actions (Sanín, 2020). The Mesoamerican Initiative of Women Human Rights Defenders issued a statement in which it spoke out against the defamation and criminalization campaign, alluding to the legitimate right to protest and arguing that these types of practices only contributed to continue normalizing and justifying the gendered violence that prevails in Mexico (IM-Defensoras, 2019).

However, press reports and social media discussions focused in the days that followed on the graffiti on historical monuments and the broken glass of the bus station in the days that followed, paying little attention to the women's demands. The predominantly young women, with bags full of pink glitter in their hands, shattered any societal expectations of how they should protest. To one big misunderstanding about what is violence—smashing things or killing women—some feminist protesters might have responded: 'As long as you talk more about destruction of objects instead of femicides, we will continue to intervene in public space.' It can be said that they held true to this statement, as this repertoire of protest now permeates feminist civic actions in Latin America.

Subsequent feminist demonstrations on November 25, 2019 and March 8, 2020 and 2021 in Mexico replicated the practice of making fire circles in public spaces. The strategy of "aesthetically intervening," not only at historical monuments but also outside of the Government Palace in downtown Mexico City, by painting the door red with stains simulating blood on the walls, was repeated over and over. In such protests, female protesters evoked the image of the 'good girl' who likes pink glitter and subverted it by mixing glitter with broken glass on the asphalt or using spray-paint. The tactic of overwriting was widely used by protesters at this monument, as well as at the Hemiciclo a Juárez, a historical monument that the current government has appropriated as a symbol of its political project of transformation. The monuments were painted with feminist symbols and slogans blaming the state, which were then turned into hashtags, becoming themselves symbols of resistance. By smashing the glass, painting feminist graffiti on the walls and the streets, and above all by throwing pink glitter, they change the aesthetics of public space, often a space of fear for them. Aesthetically and practically they turn it into their space and reclaim it as a feminist space, at least for a moment.

## 5. DIGITAL VIOLENCE AS AFFECTIVE DISCIPLINING

The social networks and major newspapers discredited the aesthetic practices of graffiti at historical monuments and the damage to the bus and the police stations by claiming that it was irrational to ask for the cessation of violence with more violence. DataPopMx (2019), a social data analysis organization, found that most media outlets made on average 51 daily comments about the graffiti on the Angel of Independence and described it as violent, while only 5.6% referred to the main cause of the protest, which was the more serious act of violence—physical, sexual violence by police officers against women. In social networks, the corrective hashtag #NotLikeThatLadies began to trend on Twitter just two hours after the protest had started. From August 16–31, 2019, 2172 posts appeared with this hashtag. The literature on violence against women in politics explains this phenomena, calling it "cultural violence," which employs a double standard by tolerating the sexual violence of police against two minors while decrying the women protesters' vandalism as violence (M. L. Krook & Sanín, 2020). We analyze here the hashtag #NotLikeThatLadies as a site of affective politics (Bonilla & Rosa, 2015; Papacharissi, 2016) where hegemonic constructions about gender roles, in this case shaping public opinion, were mobilized. Out of our content analysis of the tweets, we were able to identify four main categories of the digital violence against protesters: 1) affects that the public opinion evoked toward feminists after the protest, such as shame and hate; 2) affects vis-à-vis rationality; 3) expectations for "femininity" in protests; and 4) models and ways in which women "should" protest.

### 5.1 Affects mobilized after the protest

In the analysis of the tweets, we could identify a pattern in which users evoked affects, such as shame, pity, and hate, as a way to construct shared ways of feeling about the feminist protests, thereby shaping public perception against the protest (Petersen, 2011). The following tweets are examples of that:

#NotLikeThatLadies I get the impression that what they really generate with their protests and destruction is that we hate all these bitches.

It is serious #NotLikeThatLadies who are setting such a deplorable, sad, pitiful, ignorant, low intelligence example. While laws are not enforced and there is insecurity in what head fits that this would produce a change.

The first tweet mobilizes hate in a misogynistic way of referring to protesters as bitches. The literature on violence against women in politics states that the use of denigrating words such as "bitch" has the objective of silencing women, reflecting the idea that women should be seen and not heard, and is thus a way of rendering women's voices inaudible (Nadim & Fladmoe, 2021; Savigny, 2020). The second tweet evokes the pity and shame these women 'should feel' by imposing a moral standard

between the correct and the incorrect or out-and-out good and bad ways of protesting (Manne, 2017). It also implies that women should be exemplary in protesting; however, because they chose the bad ways, the protest would thus have no impact in producing political change. The idea that women should be exemplary also resembles what is discussed in the literature regarding related expectations according to gender (Sanín, 2020). Both tweets give evidence that affects are mobilized to shame women for the ways they protest, creating at the same time an hostile affective environment in platforms (Di Gregorio & Merolli, 2016). These misogynistic comments can also be understood as a means to discipline women who had entered into the public sphere and a warning to other women to stay away from protesting like that, *or else* face similar consequences (M. Krook, 2020; Wagner, 2020).

## 5.2 Affects vis-à-vis rationality

Other ways of denigrating women presented in the #NotLikeThatLadies posts established a division between 'smart' versus 'pointless' protest, as evidenced by these tweets:

| |
|---|
| #NotLikeThatLadies, it is regrettable strategy of female primates |
| One must have very, very little gray matter in the brain to defend the actions of feminist troglodytes, #NotLikeThatLadies, shit is what they've got in there. |
| I do not know if it is right or wrong, if it is the wrong way or the perfect symbol of enough is enough, I just hope this does not lead to more violence. I know it's about progress and not staying in resentment #NotLikeThatWomen, #YesLikeThisWomen #TheyDoRepresentMe #TheyDoNotRepresentMe |

These tweets delegitimize the ways in which the women protested because it did not correspond with the cultural expectations of how a feminist social mobilization 'should' be done. The misogynistic comments stating that women have very little gray matter or even accusing them of having 'shit for brains' are ways of disqualifying women for showing rage during the protests. This can be explained by the division between rational and affective politics and traditionally relating 'the rational' with male models and 'the emotional' with women, as in 'they are too emotional' (Kahl et al., 2019; Liljeström, 2015). According to the literature on women in politics, these attacks toward protesters can be traced back to the women having challenged traditional gender stereotypes (M. L. Krook & Sanín, 2020).

The last tweet in particular reflects the usual antagonism between progress and resentment with the assumption that women are resentful. The tweet implies that

there cannot be progress when women have these affects. Likewise, the tweet alludes to the binarism of positive and negative affects (Kahl et al., 2019), whereby resentment, besides being negative, does not allow societies to progress. It highlights in particular the linear and rational idea of progress implied by the division between affections and rationality (Latour, 1993). Moreover, the tweet is also inscribed in the binarisms that reinforce the idea that certain groups of societies, in this case women and non-Westerners, are more affective than others (Hynnä, Lehto, & Paasonen, 2019).

Further tweets along the same lines condemned the affect of rage in public spaces by pointing out "that they [the tweeter] have also had family members disappeared or murdered but they do not vent their anger in the public arena." Another tweet claimed that "women caused hatred toward the movement by showing irrationality, calling for intelligent women to demonstrate with class." All these tweets have in common the practices of affective disciplining (Reckwitz, 2016) that, on the one hand, disapproved of the womanly ways of the protesters and, on the other, command women that they should protest in a certain way and above all what affects they are allowed to show in public. This is basically the meaning of the hashtag #NotLikeThatLadies.

## 5.3 Expectations of femininity in protests

Cultural violence literature has stated that the construction around femininity operates as an form of social control and discipline (Savigny, 2020). In the #NotLikeThatLadies tweets, there were different ways in which users rendered visible their expectations of femininity for the protesters. The following tweets show examples of constructions of femininity:

| |
|---|
| An authentic woman is one who does not lose her values, not feminazi women. |
| It is shameful that they are women. My gender should show intelligence and class. This denigrates my gender there are ways to demand our rights even if they are not women. |

The first tweet reveals what users relate with femininity, for example "values," and then uses the word "feminazi" as a way to delegitimize the feminist protests by comparing them with an authoritarian fascist regime that uses extreme practices of violence. The second tweet evokes shame toward women protesters. It clearly shows that women should protest with "intelligence and class" to demand rights. These tweets show cultural constructions based on gender scripts of how women are expected to behave (Sanín, 2020). These expectations are the root of cultural sexism

and explain why women who transgress these cultural norms of femininity in the framework of protests are punished, shamed, and made invisible (Savigny, 2020).

## 5.4 Models and ways in which women should protests

Several other tweets the disqualify the actions of women protesters by offering male personalities as role models:

| |
|---|
| By the way, in the civil protests against corrupt judges: zero violence, no mess, not one graffiti, flagging the cause in a rational way #NotLikeThatLadies |
| #NotLikeThatWomen #TheyDon'tRepresentMe #NotLikeThat Luther King represented an entire race that was enslaved for centuries, men, women, and children.... He only began his memorable speech by saying "I have a dream." Meme translation: Next time a feminist says that her violent attitude is to make herself heard, introduce her to Luther King. He defended a race without harming anyone. |

*Figure 6: Martin Luther King, Jr. meme*


Source: Elias, R. (2019). #ASiNoMujeres #EllasNoMeRepresentan #AsiNo

The two tweets cited reveal the idea of rationality as another of the expectations for how feminists should protest. In the first, rationality is related to the lack of graffiti left behind by a separate protest against corruption. The second tweet, in addition to the post, includes a meme that was widely circulated after the protest (Figure 6). The meme puts Martin Luther King Jr. forward as a model of protest, a personality with historical transcendence who, in a civilized way, begins his speech solemnly alluding to peace and yet who provokes a radical change. The photo highlights the fact that Luther King is dressed in a suit as a model of how women should raise their voices: well-dressed and through a speech that transcends history. The tweet gives evidence of what Penz and Sauer (2020) point out: Affective regimes are part of society's cognitive schemas. In addition, the tweet also accounts for the binarism that prevails in separating negative and positive affects (Kahl et al., 2019), whereby victory would then only be achieved through positive affects. Finally, the meme also provides gendered ideas of how to protest, placing men above women (Savigny, 2020) and thus resisting gender transformations in the political arena (M. L. Krook & Sanín, 2020). The provision of masculine ideals, in this case to protest, is also an expression of cultural sexism, because they reflect the stereotypes of men that are associated with political transformation of the public space—whereas women are relegated to the private sphere in such thinking (M. L. Krook, 2020).

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has argued that renewed feminist agency as the intertwinement of affective and political practices in the protests transgressed the hegemonic aesthetic and political imaginary of how women 'should' protest and what kind of affects they are allowed to bring into public spaces. This renewed agency conflicted with cultural expectations of women protesting in a "rational and peaceful" way. We have shown that these expectations are based on gendered scripts (Sanín, 2020) that resulted in digital violence that had the objective to affectively discipline women in politics (Reckwitz, 2016). However, the intertwining of the mobilized aesthetic-affective and political practices aimed at contesting the hegemonic affective orders on two levels: first, the domination exercised by men over women in the form of violence; the second, the aesthetic orders of how women 'should' protest and the affections they 'may' show in public.

The slogan "We are bad, we can be worse" showcases the affective politics of rage. The second part of the sentence, "we can be worse," can be read as a threat in the political arena. This slogan expresses the fact that women's fear has become politicized and turned into rage. Women did not isolate themselves in their homes with their affections to cry over the precarious security situation, but rather they transformed anger itself into new repertories for action. This provokes fear in the government,

the perpetrators (perhaps even in those women opposed to the protests), because such a basic social affection has become politicized. The "critics" try to reestablish the old gendered collective affective orders by devaluing this anger and by scolding the women like little girls. But the affective repertories show that the 'little girls' can be also bad, because they do not just throw pink glitter. Their best weapon is anger, which subverts the affections by which they have been ruled (Penz & Sauer, 2020). Finally, the images of mean, angry activists intervening in monuments and breaking glass render visible the affective disputes on the internet. They show that even though new images of affected and affecting women were mobilized in the public arena, affective disciplining practices continue (Reckwitz, 2016). Paradoxically but predictability, these protest practices faced the corrective ways of disciplining protesters' affects as a response, by trying to impose on the women how they 'had to protest'—also by providing male role models for how to do so.

What was thought in 2019 to be just a rabid women's protest that would quickly fade into history when the monuments were cleaned up has instead become entrenched as part of the political repertoire of affective feminist politics. These actions have been repeated in subsequent feminist protests, such as the 8M of 2020 and 2021, to such an extent that the fear-based government surrounded the palace and historical monuments with protective fences, in addition to deploying hundreds of police officers. The implications, however, of the digital violence to protesters is that the criminalization, stigmatization, and the violation of their political rights and ultimately exclusion from the political arena. The research suggests also that further work is needed to investigate the life implications for women and the political trajectories of protesters.

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