

Leuphana Universität Lüneburg / Hamburg Media School

Major Digital Media

**FROM THE STREETS TO THE FEEDS INTO PARLIAMENT:  
THE ROLE OF DIGITAL MEDIA WITHIN THE FEMINIST SOCIAL  
MOVEMENT UN VIOLADOR EN TU CAMINO.**

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

Before reading this thesis, watching a YouTube video of Un Violador En Tu Camino by LASTESIS is advised. The following link leads to the movement's video-aesthetic preparati- on mainly referred to in this work's media analysis: <https://youtu.be/aB7r6hdo3W4>. Further, looking at the lyrics (both in Spanish or translated) is recommended for a better overall under- standing.

## **DISCLAIMER**

Within this thesis, the term WLINTA\* will be used to refer to women, lesbians, inter\*-, nonbinary-, trans\*-, agender-, and all other people who do not identify as hetero cis-male and are discriminated against due to their gender and/or sexual orientation.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>ICTs</b>	Information and Communication Technologies
<b>ITU</b>	International Telecommunication Union
<b>LDCs</b>	Least Developed Countries
<b>UV/ Un Violador</b>	Un Violador En Tu Camino
<b>WLINTA*</b>	Women, lesbian-, intersex*-, non-binary-, trans*-, agender people

# 1. Introduction

In fall 2019, civil unrest shook Chile. A planned rise in local transport prices evoked massive citizen protests and violent riots against the government and social inequalities. During this time, the feminist collective LASTESIS took to the streets of the Chilean capital, Santiago, to perform their protest song *Un Violador en tu Camino* (Un Violador/ UV; Engl. ‘*A Rapist In Your Path*,’ also known as ‘*The Rapist Is You*’). With this, the collective publicly addressed the ubiquitous yet hushed-up issue of oppression of WLINTA\* under the state. Video recordings were posted online and went viral on social media, inspiring transnational reenactments by WLINTA\* of manifold socio-cultural backgrounds. From Chile’s streets to the feeds of social media, onto public places in various countries, and influencing political debate in both the Chilean and Turkish parliament, UV quickly turned into a social movement.

Like many other contemporary feminist social movements, such as MeToo and NiUnaMenos, Un Violador was strongly influenced by digital media involvement. As “technology has become an inherent compound for ... social movements to spread their agenda and organize public gatherings” (Plascencia, Gurgel, and Plaw 2020, 5), analyzing and understanding the role of digital media within Un Violador is essential for two main reasons: First, for contributing to the entangled academic fields of Digital Media, Feminism, and Social Movements, as lines between humans, society, culture, and machines merge increasingly. The second point of relevance arises from UV and its popularity itself, to better understand its dynamics, evolution, and consequences since media and technology are not only information channels but instead part of closely intertwined social discourses (Hegde 2013, 99).

Examining Un Violador, the fields of Digital Media, Political, and Feminist Studies play a role. While feminist foci often lie on investigating “the limiting nature of media texts that reinforce ... dominant social understandings of sex and gender” (Ott 2020, 204), the political perspective discloses how the politics of activism have changed through the digital, or how they differ between online and offline participation (see, e.g., Edwards 2014). Digital Media studies, conversely, are, for instance, concerned with how specific platform interface characteristics and content management features affect activism.

Considering the current state of research on the entanglement of digital media, social movements, and feminism, a third and essential reason to study the role of digital media in UV becomes apparent: the supposed paradigm shift of feminist politics (Baer 2016; Yin and

Sun 2021) from mere offline enactment to a close entanglement with technology (Baer 2016; Wajcman 2010). While it situates feminism in a diverse landscape of emerging opportunities with promising tools for increased public awareness, empowerment, and debate, it also presents obstacles and, at times, poses challenges related to exclusivity that may not be immediately apparent. While much scientific literature has been praising the revolutionary potential of social media (Megarry 2020, 36) and generally digital media involvement in feminist social movements, there now seems to be a shift to more critical and cautionary evaluation. From her radical and lesbian feminist perspective, Jessica Megarry (ibid., 10) points to an “increasing recognition that social media is not politically neutral, and ... instead underwritten by an ideology which advances the logics of imperialism and capitalist alienation.” Further, Jen Schradie (2018, 51) notes that the effects of digital inequality have not yet been given enough attention. After all, foregone research on UV has mainly focused on the movement’s success and empowerment for women, shedding little light on more critical aspects, such as impacts through digital inequality.

While in no respect aiming to degrade or deny the success of Un Violador granted through digital media, the work at hand thus contributes to the emerging more critical and responsible scholarly notion. The goal is to point at hurdles and room for improvement that may be considered in future discussion and research evolving into more inclusive feminist activism. However, it must be noted that it is crucial to “pay close attention to uncovering various nuances in how ... movements unfold, connect, and operate over time across digital spaces” (Mendes, Ringrose, and Keller 2019, 43). As such, the results of this work cannot be *automatically* adopted and applied to other movements. Yet, they may serve as inspirational starting points. Aiming to identify the *unpopular*, *uncomfortable*, and *disregarded*, an intersectional feminist lens will be applied as the theoretical frame to work on the following title and research question:

From the streets to the feeds into parliament: The role of digital media within the feminist social movement Un Violador En Tu Camino.

Which role did digital media play in the feminist social movement Un Violador En Tu Camino?

Asking about the *role* aims at unveiling the impact digital media had on UV, specifically investigating whether and to what extent their use was beneficial or restricting. First, a theoretical backdrop will provide context information on the movement, key term definitions, and an introduction to intersectionality. A media analysis will then offer insights into the most si-

gnificant moments of digital media entanglement with Un Violador, investigating the digital video and audio contributions, as well as examining online opportunities granted through social media and hashtags. Concluding, examples of hate speech in Un Violador will be given. The ensuing discussion summarizes and contextualizes the results of the analysis. Finally, the research question will be answered in the conclusion, followed by future research recommendations.

The work is based both on the results of a self-conducted media analysis, as well as on renowned and contemporary primary and secondary literature of Digital Media-, Social Movement- and Feminist Studies. Since much celebratory literature on the role of digital media in political context was encountered, a specific focus was put onto including critical publications as well. Founded on this selection, this thesis shows that despite beneficial effects in terms of, e.g., overall networking and visibility, the role of digital media in UV needs to be considered as quite ambivalent, as it simultaneously actively and passively reinforced oppressive patriarchal structures and formed an exclusionary barrier for various WLINTA\*.

## 2. Context, Key Terms, and Theory

The following parts introduce the Un Violador movement and define the key terms *digital media* and *feminist social movement*. Further, the concept of *intersectionality* will be explained and presented as the theoretical feminist framework of this thesis.

### 2.1. UN VIOLADOR EN TU CAMINO

The protest performance *Un Violador En Tu Camino* was conceptualized and first staged in 2019 by LASTESIS (Engl. ‘*The Theses*’), an “interdisciplinary, intersectional and trans-inclusive feminist collective” (Martin and Shaw 2021, 713) consisting of four activists from Valparaíso, Chile. With their street performance, they publicly thematized the state’s systematic oppression of and violence against WLINTA\*. Hence, UV is not directed at *a man* or *men* in general but instead accuses the three institutional powers (legislative, judiciary, executive) of granting perpetrators impunity, especially in cases of sexual harassment, rape, and femicide, while actively conducting victim blaming. LASTESIS thus refers to the entire system of the state as ‘el violador’ (the rapist).

In tandem with their political intent, the collective aimed to convey feminist theory through the performance of Un Violador (LASTESIS 2021, 122-23), as they recognize femi-

nism as *the* way to liberation from patriarchal oppression (ibid., 35). In creating the performance, LASTESIS drew inspiration from the feminists Silvia Federici, Virginia Despentes, and Rita Segato. By this, they provided the protest with a profound theoretical basis, preventing it from being dismissed as a mere feminist complaint (ibid., 126) and countering common conservative criticism against gender theory (Martin and Shaw 2021, 714).

Notably, the collective never meant for Un Violador to become a protest song (McGowan 2019) or gain as much popularity as it did (LASTESIS 2021, 125). However, WLINTA\* across the globe were quick to appropriate and apply the lyrics and performative elements to their individual historical and socio-political contexts. Today, UV is often referred to as a feminist hymn, and LASTESIS has been listed among the *100 Most Influential People of 2020* by TIME magazine (TIME 2020).

## **2.2. DIGITAL MEDIA**

Digital media, often also referred to as *new media*, are electronic means for creating, disseminating, and consuming digital content (Dhiman 2023; Maryville University 2020). Examples are websites, online platforms and forums, social media, blogs, or online newspapers, as well as digital audio and video.

Today, digital media and significantly *social* media increasingly influence the formation of societies' and people's worldviews (Edwards 2014; Megarry 2020; Zimmermann et al. 2022). Especially as the Internet allows to disseminate and interact with information in a completely new way and at a pace unknown before (Dhiman 2023, 2). At the same time, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has observed significant disparities in percentages of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) users relative to different geographic and socio-economic backgrounds. Although amelioration of that divide has been observed in particular cases between 2019 and 2022, the remaining data speaks for itself: Within most to all categories concerning digital media access and -use, female persons are less represented than male ones, with additional disparities between the Youth and older users (ITU 2023a).

Thus, the relevance of digital media reaches far beyond entertainment and private picture sharing; It is of political meaning. Various literature points at increased media use in political movements and social activism (Li et al. 2020; Schradie 2018; Yang 2016; Yin and Sun 2021; Zobl and Reitsamer 2013). In Feminist Digital Media studies, a broad debate exists

around social media being situated within a “mixed-sex digital space” (Megarry 2020, 13), where gender gaps between internet users prevail (Carstensen 2013; Megarry 2020). Despite rising numbers of female users, Megarry (2020, 137) points out various scientific works that refer to the Internet as an environment dominated by masculinity that is unwelcoming to both women and feminist ideals. In this sphere, problems of the offline world, such as misogyny, persist (Yin and Sun 2021, 1177). More than that, gender stereotypes and inequalities not only endure but are perpetuated (Carstensen 2013, 490). Sue Jackson (2018, 43) thus suitably argues that despite its beneficial qualities, the online sphere is essentially a locus for sexism and rape culture to flourish.

### **2.3. FEMINIST SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

Working on a feminist social movement, it is essential to understand what kind of a phenomenon the term defines, respectively how it is used. What is feminism, what is a social movement, and what is a feminist social movement? The following parts provide an overview.

#### **2.3.1. FEMINISM**

Feminism, as stated by Noëlle McAfee (2018) in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, is “an intellectual commitment and a political movement that seeks justice for women and the end of sexism in all forms.” However, there is no such thing as *the one* feminism. Instead, one should consider it “multiple and dynamic, and in the process of ongoing transformation” (Wajcman 2010, 147).

As an overall movement, feminism has come a long way from its beginnings in the late 19th century. Different eras with supposedly varying main foci are often described as *waves*. However, this term is highly contested for it draws an image of a divided, fragmentary history (Evans and Chamberlain 2015, 4), disregards efforts of feminists during times of setbacks and decreased publicity (Megarry 2020, 62), as well as neglects the fact that feminist fights fought in the past still play a role in contemporary feminisms. Avoiding the metaphor, it can thus be said that feminist activism started between the 19th- and 20th century in devotion to winning women’s right to vote. In the 1970s, feminists were most concerned with “women’s workplace and reproductive rights” (Ott 2020, 218), accompanied by efforts during the 1980s and early 2000s when feminists started to address the importance of intersectionality. As such, a focus was (a.o.) put onto bisexuality and trans identity, as well as classism and racism (Munro

2013, 23), which led to an attention shift from women's oppression to that which the patriarchal system inflicts upon all people (Sowards and Renegar 2004, 545).

Regarding organization and feminist politics, newer contemporary forms of feminism are specifically concerned with the structures and use of ICTs and digital media. As such, for instance, *hashtags* appear to be a popular tool for feminist work (Mandujano-Salazar and Berra-Soria 2020, 238). As mentioned in the introduction, some scholars point at a paradigm shift in feminist politics since digital media increasingly shape feminist presence and activism. *Digital* or *online feminism* is thus sometimes even referred to as this century's core feminist force (Crossley 2017, 97).

### **2.3.2. SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

Social movements are defined by a row of key aspects. One is to bring about social change or resist it through protesting while subjecting to varying historical and cross-cultural contexts (Edwards 2014; Rubio 2023). According to Gemma Edwards (2014, 6), protest events often resemble what people associate with social movements, as they contribute visual evidence of collective engagement in societal transformation. Usually confronting a mighty adversary (*ibid.*, 4) and addressing political and/or cultural meanings, the size of social movements may vary, depending on the issue they pursue (Edwards 2014; Rubio 2023).

Moreover, while initial individual engagement is undoubtedly required, collective and organized efforts are considered vital elements of social movements (*ibid.*). The collectivity thrives through a collective identity — a sense of 'we' versus 'them' in 'this'. Through shared "emotional attachments between participants and the cause" (Edwards 2014, 26) and a "common understanding of the problem and ... solution" (*ibid.*, 5), participants gain motivation to contribute. Thus, social movements are both *constructions* and *constructors* of collective identities (*ibid.*, 142).

Not least owing to those collective efforts, social movements endure for a while rather than being one-time events (*ibid.*, 4). However, the individual interventions are of a direct and perishable nature with quick response (Zobl and Reitsamer 2013, 238). While, historically, social movements were mainly organized and led by bureaucratic and centralized organizations, specifically new media have contributed to more fluid and informal networks (Edwards 2014; Rubio 2023), making social movements increasingly adjustable to evolving circumstances (Edwards 2014, 64).

Through the “interventionist” (Zobl and Reitsamer 2013, 238) nature of short-lived protest events, social movements are considered counter-cultural spaces (Edwards 2014, 143) which, precisely owing to digital possibilities, exercise “counterpower” through “autonomous communication” (Aarts 2013, 399) in a new public space: the intersection between the digital and urban (ibid.), the streets and the feeds. However, Megarry (2020, 92) notes that the evolution and popularity of a social movement depend on factors additional to the means of communication. This aligns with what Gemma Edwards (2014, 79) has argued concerning the possibilities for success of social movements: to reach the goal that participants aim for, the political environment needs to be favorable. Otherwise, the activists’ power must be substantial (solid emotional bond, organizational capacity, network, etc.) to outplay unfavorable political environments.

### **2.3.3. FEMINIST SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

Feminist social movements are thus the product of feminist work requesting gender equality combined with the politics and activist nature of social movements. Aiming for profound changes in society and responding to altering cultural conditions, feminist social movements are devoted explicitly to practicing consciousness-raising (Sowards and Renegar 2004, 535). In this regard, particularly young women have been noted as vividly contributing to feminist activism online (Megarry 2020, 71).

### **2.4. INTERSECTIONALITY AND THE INTERSECTIONAL LENS**

The term *intersectionality* was developed by Black feminist scholars and activists but is often explicitly linked to Kimberlé Crenshaw, who coined it in 1989 through her article *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex* (1989). While initially addressing an overlap and intertwinement of oppressions and discriminations resulting from race, gender, and class, contemporary scholarship has come to relate the term to an even more expansive meaning. As such, intersectionality is applied as a framework to analyze how “societal inequalities and unjust social relations” result from the interaction of “power differentials and/or constraining normativities” (Lykke 2010, 50). These may be race, gender, and class, but also other aspects such as age, gender identity, sexuality, dis/ability, nationality, ethnicity, religion, and so on. Following, intersectionality is a framework to help detect the multi-dimensionality of identities and their subordination to various power structures instead of working along the lines of singular categories (Zheng and Walsham 2021, 2). As Marsha Houston (1992, 49) exempli-

fies: “Women of color do not experience sexism in addition to racism, but sexism in the context of racism; thus, they cannot be said to bear an additional burden that white women do not bear, but to bear an altogether different burden from that borne by white women.”

Nevertheless, it should be recognized that criticism on the concept of intersectionality exists, especially since the term has gained increasing attention in feminist discourse and scholarship. Intersectionality has become a popular term that should therefore be applied carefully and not be misunderstood as a *catch-all* phrase (Davis 2008, 67). Kathy Davis (ibid., 79) thus describes intersectionality as an encouraging tool for scrutinizing one’s assumptions in the pursuit of reflective, critical, and responsible feminist exploration.

### **3. Media Analysis**

The following part analyzes Un Violador regarding its most impactful moments of digital media entanglement. Therefore, a detailed timeline and an examination of the digital video and audio material from the clip mentioned in the ‘*Recommendation*’ (p.iii) is provided. The last section investigates opportunities granted through social media and hashtags, ultimately pointing to online hate speech.

#### **3.1. TIMELINE**

For an overview of the most critical moments of digital media entanglement with UV, this section provides an approximate bullet-point manner timeline. Only ‘approximate’ because Un Violador’s rapid and simultaneous global dissemination evoked much online content and interaction, which can hardly be examined holistically with the basic analysis tools at hand and while aiming to remain within the scope of a bachelor thesis. Further restricting the collection of data, some sources were only partly reliable due to inaccurate, contradictory, intransparent, or imprecise information. The results of this work must thus not be interpreted without those limitations in mind. Information was gathered on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, manifold news outlets, and the OpenStreetMap by IsauraFabra (2022).

- **11/17/2019:** A public invitation is posted on Instagram by LASTESIS to participate in the very first performance of Un Violador in the small harbor city of Valparaíso (Chile) on November 20 (colectivo LASTESIS, Instagram, November 17, 2019e).

- **11/20/2019:** The first-ever performance takes place in Valparaíso. Videos of it are published on social media (Colectivo LASTESIS, YouTube, November 20, 2019; colectivo LASTESIS, Instagram, November 20, 2019c).
- **11/23/2019:** A public invitation is posted on Instagram by LASTESIS to participate in the first interventions in the Chilean capital, Santiago. It includes time and place information and advice on what to wear (colectivo LASTESIS, Instagram, November 23, 2019a).
- **11/25/2019:** Several performances are staged across Santiago. It is the *International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women*.
- **11/26/2019:** Several videos of performances from November 25 are posted on social media (Montse, Twitter, November 26, 2019; colectivo LASTESIS, Instagram, November 26, 2019; Oyarce, YouTube, November 26, 2019b).
- **11/27/2019:** A public invitation is posted on Instagram by LASTESIS to organize an intervention at one's current location on November 29 (colectivo LASTESIS, Instagram, November 27, 2019d).
- **11/28/2019:** A video with English subtitles to the Spanish lyrics is posted on YouTube (INSIDE CHILE, YouTube, November 28, 2019).
- **11/29/2019:** Various performances are staged across Chile. Videos are uploaded to social media (a.o.: Figueroa, Twitter, November 29, 2019, 8:38 p.m.; Kako, Twitter, November 29, 2019, 11:43 p.m.). First international re-enactments are staged a.o. in Costa Rica, Ecuador, England, France, Germany, and Mexico (IsauraFabra 2022) and posted to social media (e.g.: Diaz, YouTube, November 30, 2019; Malvestida, YouTube, November 30, 2019).
- **11/30/2019:** The first more prominent news outlet, CNN Chile, addresses the performance (CNN en Español, YouTube, November 30, 2019). LASTESIS creates a Facebook page and uploads a video of the first performance in Valparaíso (LASTESIS, Facebook, November 30, 2019). A sign language translation of *Un Violador* is posted on YouTube (Carolina, YouTube, November 30, 2019), while a staging of a group in Punta Arenas (Chile) also shows people participating in sign language (Yagán, Twitter, November 30, 2019, 11:27 p.m.).
- **12/02/2019:** LASTESIS creates an official Twitter account and posts a first tweet (colectivo LASTESIS, Twitter, December 2, 2019, 4:33 a.m.).

- **12/04/2019:** A performance of *Un Violador En Tu Camino* is staged by approximately 10,000 WLINTA\* in front of the *Estadio Nacional de Chile* and broadcast live on a Chilean YouTube news channel (T13, YouTube, December 4, 2019b).
- **12/05/2019:** A video of a group performing UV in sign language in Santiago (December 3) is uploaded to YouTube (Viktor, YouTube, December 5, 2019).
- **12/06/2019:** Videos of a performance by Mapuche WLINTA\* in their native language, *Mapudungun* on December 5 in Santiago are uploaded to YouTube (a.o., archivo REDES, YouTube, December 6, 2019; Wechekeche Ñi Trawün, YouTube, December 6, 2019). One video posted a few days later provides translations to Spanish and shows how the group appropriated the second verse to address further violations by the state, such as the exploitation of nature (Carrizo, YouTube, December 11, 2019).
- **12/08/2019:** A Turkish version of *Un Violador* is performed in the streets of Istanbul, but after starting to repeat the intervention in Spanish, the police break it up (DW 2019). At least seven people get arrested, and two are allegedly severely beaten for insulting the president and disrespecting state institutions (BBC News Mundo, 2019). Video material reporting the incident is later posted on YouTube (T13, YouTube, December 10, 2019a; AGENCIA EFE, YouTube, December 9, 2019).
- **12/14/2019:** During a parliamentary session, members of the Turkish opposition party stage *Un Violador En Tu Camino*, using their immunity in Congress to join the movement and show solidarity with the protesters arrested on December 8. The intervention is filmed and published on YouTube (Diario Público, YouTube, December 16, 2019; 24 Horas - TVN Chile, YouTube, December 17, 2019).
- **2020:** LASTESIS uploads the backing track for *Un Violador* to the music platform SoundCloud for everyone to use during an intervention. The platform indicates a publication date of three years ago (as of July 2023), while LASTESIS' song description mentions 2019. It is the first time the collective uses hashtags relating to *Un Violador* (Colectivo LASTESIS, SoundCloud, 2020).
- **05/29/2022:** The map by IsauraFabra (2022) is updated and provides an overview of *Un Violador* performances in more than 50 countries, including stagings after the first active episode in late 2019.

### **3.2. VIDEO AND AUDIO**

The video used as a primary reference in this work is a montage of different camera angles and performances of *Un Violador En Tu Camino* on November 25 by LASTESIS and diverse WLINTA\*, staged across Santiago de Chile. As encouraged by the invitations LASTESIS posted on social media two days before, some participants can be seen wearing club outfits, green bandanas, and blindfolds. Some also added black and red clothes. Not all performers seem to know the lyrics by heart and thus hold printed versions. Apart from those materialistic types of equipment and requisites, the body movements make essential performance elements. As such, the WLINTA\* are standing side by side in a more or less organized formation facing the same direction. From a very upright posture, some slightly lift their faces upwards and push their chests out. The WLINTA\* follow and support the lyrics with simple yet specific synchronous movements. Collectively, they go into squats, point their index fingers in concrete directions, and flow with much pace and energy during the chorus. By the end, the video includes shaky camera footage showing smoke and rushing people, adding to the overall emotional depiction of the WLINTA\*s faces during the performance.

The audible aspects make additional essential components of the digital video. Generally, the singing equals shout-alike unison *sprechgesang*, which does not require specific singing skills yet takes up sonic space. Beyond the different timbres of the collective voices, sounds of the surroundings contribute to the overall atmosphere. One can hear people screaming supportive slogans, whistles blowing, and audiences cheering on top of an atmospheric sound layer of passers-by, cars, etc. However, throughout the video's last scene with the shaky camera, people can be heard fear-screaming.

### **3.3. SOCIAL MEDIA, HASHTAGS AND HATE SPEECH**

In theory, anyone can create an account and freely upload content on the four social media platforms mostly used for *Un Violador* (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube). Making content internationally available takes very little time since Internet search engine results also include references to social media posts. Uploading content on those platforms thus holds an immediate chance of getting billions of people to watch and interact. To *consume* via the platform, creating an account is not urgently necessary; One may still watch any video and share it on other platforms or channels. Nevertheless, additional interaction with content requires creating one. Adding to the typical *like*, *comment*, and *share* options, some platforms,

such as YouTube, also offer a subtitle function. However, especially regarding Un Violador, YouTube translations often need to be revised and are thus insufficient.

Used by LASTESIS only on SoundCloud, yet vividly applied by supporters and participants on the other four platforms, *hashtags* such as #UnVioladorEnTuCamino, #LasTesis, #ElVioladorEresTu, #TheRapistIsYouhelp, and #UnViolador enable to connect and find UV related content easily. Additionally and cross-platform, hashtags from foregone feminist movements can be found in Un Violador-related posts, including a.o. #NiUnaMenos, #MeToo, or #InternationalWomensDay.

On social media, some UV supporters also created *written* posts in which they tell personal stories of sexual abuse by using the song's lyrics. A typical structure of such a post looks as follows (English translations provided by the author of this thesis):

- Y la culpa no era mía (Engl. *And it was not my fault*): 'age inserted.'
- Ni dónde estaba (Engl. *Not where I was*): 'location added.'
- Ni cómo vestía (Engl. *Not how I dressed*): 'clothing described.'
- El violador eras tú (Engl. *The perpetrator was you*)

As of August 29, 2023, 3:32 p.m, LASTESIS continues to be most active on Instagram (≥267k followers (colectivo LASTESIS (@lastesis, Instagram)) while being less reliant upon YouTube (≥3k followers (Colectivo LASTESIS (@colectivolastesis9596, YouTube)), Facebook (≥26k followers (LASTESIS (@colectivo.lastesis), Facebook)), and Twitter (≥35k followers (colectivo LASTESIS (@lastesisoficial), Twitter)). However, supporters of the movement also turned and actively contributed to the latter three platforms. As such, organizational posts, videos, and other reports on different Un Violador stagings worldwide can be found on all four. Facebook alone leads to more than 30,000 search results on the hashtags #ElVioladorEresTu (14,873 (Facebook)), #LasTesis (16,996 (Facebook)), and #UnVioladorEnTuCamino (≥12k (Facebook)) as of July 24, 2023, 1:27 p.m. Besides social media, a simple Google search leads to more than 220 million results as of June 22, 2023, 3:48 p.m. for *El Violador Eres Tu* (1,630,000 (Google)), *Un Violador En Tu Camino* (2,340,000 (ibid.)), *Las Tesis Chile* (31,000,000 (ibid.)) and *The Rapist Is You* (189,000,000 (ibid.)).

Overall, the online videos, articles, and posts related to Un Violador En Tu Camino add up to several million views, likes, shares, and comments. The movement's currently most popular video-aesthetic representation on YouTube counts more than 9.9 million views alone and has nearly 167 thousand likes (La Nación Costa Rica, YouTube, December 05, 2019) as of August 24, 2023, 12:24 p.m. Regarding online news outlets, the coverage of Un Violador

appears rather patchy. Only a few articles can be found, and especially outside Spanish-speaking news, the coverage becomes increasingly scarce. Further, most outlets address the movement only in terms of its outbreak, reporting less on its evolution and impact as it continued over the years.

Importantly, it should be noted that social media is not only home to UV-supportive content. Many offending, sexist, hateful comments, posts, parody videos, memes, and other material of ridiculing style exist. Below are a few recent exemplary comments found under the referenced YouTube video with English translations provided by the author of this thesis:

- “jajajajaajaj tira de ridículas xD” (@pierreperich8761, June 2023, YouTube, comment on Colectivo Registro Callejero 2019). Engl.: “*hahahahaahah ridiculous bunch xD (grinning squinting face emoticon).*”
- “Baile malo, letra mala, coreografía mala, un desastre” (@niggemkajatt1981, April 2023, YouTube, comment on Colectivo Registro Callejero 2019). Engl.: “*Bad dance, bad lyrics, bad choreography, a disaster.*”
- “Ja ja ja, gracias por hacer reír” (@dragonbass1700, April 2023, YouTube, comment on Colectivo Registro Callejero 2019). Engl.: “*Ha ha ha, thanks for making me laugh.*”
- “Ahora a casa que hay que hacer la cena :!” (@maricelaruizmacias212, February 2023, YouTube, comment on Colectivo Registro Callejero 2019). Engl.: “*Now go home as you have to cook dinner.*”
- “Lesbianas culiadas” (@Fabian-lr6bj, January 2023, YouTube, comment on Colectivo Registro Callejero 2019). Engl.: “*Fucking lesbians.*”

## 4. Discussion

The following discussion examines and interprets the key findings of the media analysis through the intersectional lens introduced earlier. First, the main results will be summarized, followed by an investigation of the different roles of digital media in Un Violador and an evaluation of their ensuing impacts on the movement. This part will be structured along the subcategories of *Content Management*, *Networking*, *Accessibility*, *Visibility*, *Underlying Structures*, and *Political Influence*. Ultimately, this will allow to answer the underlying research question of this work, which was posed as follows:

Which role did digital media play in the feminist social movement  
Un Violador En Tu Camino?

### 4.1. **MEDIA ANALYSIS SUMMARY**

The media analysis highlights various significant components and moments of digital media involvement in Un Violador. Firstly, the timeline results indicate that the movement’s

course included multiple interventions in more than 50 countries until May 29, 2022. Further, it lists a row of stagings by marginal society groups, such as indigenous WLINTA\* and people with disabilities. Participants made very constant use of digital media for posting performance videos and statements on personal experiences of sexual harassment, as well as for distributing organizational information. While LASTESIS mostly used Instagram for public communication and organization, supporters also turned to Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Notably, none of those platforms provided a safe space, as trolls and anti-feminists were quick to interact with the feminist material in hateful ways. Although the collective did not apply hashtags except on SoundCloud, supporters used this digital tool to connect UV-related content online and draw connections to other feminist movements. As November 29, 2019, marked the first date of international UV interventions, the Instagram post by LASTESIS two days earlier, which asked people to organize performances in their regions independently, poses a significant turning point of the movement to cross national boundaries. Yet, the previously posted UV footage (especially from November 25) needs to be considered as equally impactful, as it was the first material to grant the movement public online attention at all.

Regarding the digital video and audio, the analysis points to the visibility and audibility of various creative performance elements, emotions, and surrounding circumstances. Lastly, the non-Spanish speaking mass media was found to have only scarcely covered UV.

## **4.2. INTERPRETATION AND CONTEXTUALIZATION OF RESULTS**

### **4.2.1. CONTENT MANAGEMENT**

Digital media's most apparent and overarching role in *Un Violador En Tu Camino* is *Content Management*, which refers to the creation, collection, management, and publishing of content (Boiko 2005, 72). As such, it means much more than simple terms like 'hosting' or 'curating' would suggest. Different ICT tools, including the Internet, social media platforms, video, sound, or hashtags, allowed UV content to be created, posted, operated, interacted with online, and shared across borders. Notably, different online platforms have different strengths. While one might be more effective for live broadcasting, another might be more suitable for sharing a personal story or increasing user interaction. UV using the four mentioned popular social platforms with ample user interfaces and turning to SoundCloud for sharing the backing sound has thus granted the movement a great variety of ways to manage content.

As a specific power of media, Judith Butler (2015, 93) highlights the "freedom ... to broadcast," the ability to *display* and *disseminate*, as an "exercise of freedom" in itself. Besi-

des a more political relevance hinted at here, which will be addressed later, the value of mere presentation shall be highlighted shortly. The digital visual material of Un Violador serves as a ‘template’ of- and ‘instruction’ on *how* to perform, *what* to wear, sing, etc. Through the visuality, the video thus acts as a ‘teacher’ and communicator of Un Violador’s message. Further, the inclusion of digital sound, specifically music, has the essential function of granting consumers political participation and the possibility for political actors, such as activists like LASTESIS, to communicate with their audience (Weij and Berkers 2019, 289).

On a deeper level, Hélène Joffe (2008, 85) frames the *visuality* of content as a critical aspect to create *authenticity*, as it offers “factual evidence” of what happened. The *evidential* aspect prompts some scholars to consider mobile devices, such as smartphones, as tools for deliberation (Butler 2015; Plascencia, Gurgel, and Plaw 2020; Höner and Schankweiler 2017). In broadcasting and capturing *what happened*, they see the power to circumvent censorship and counter state surveillance. Relating to Un Violador, this can especially be observed in videos from stagings in Turkey, where individuals captured police brutality. Nevertheless, the power of content evidencing violence, hate, verbal harassment, etc., against WLN-TA\* reinforces oppressive structures and must not be underestimated regarding possible effects on mental health.

Additionally, while the analysis showed that UV was only patchily reported on by the mass media, the content management functionalities allowed for the informal dissemination of digital material, granting users journalistic power (Edwards 2014, 97). Moreover, it enabled activists to *see* and *interact* with each other without requiring offline face-to-face encounters. However, these possibilities for networking did not only serve supporters of the movement but also influenced the public perception of Un Violador and were just as accessible to opponents.

Another critical aspect of digital media content management features is the *limitedness* of creation possibilities. Some platforms, for instance, restrict the number of characters that can be added to a post. This incompleteness evokes a risk of decontextualizing words (Megarry 2020, 210) and misunderstanding, which may lead to the spread of misinformation. Further, fast-paced and character-limited online communication and content dissemination lead to the condensation of movements’ political messages (ibid., 203) as well as to a loss of connection between activists and feminist theory, decreasing women’s capacity to effectively counter male supremacy (ibid., 185). While these implications do not depend solely on the platform

interface but intersect with factors such as readers' criticalness, literacy, and overall education, the 'limitedness' in these terms must be considered a significant impact of digital media on Un Violador En Tu Camino.

Further, the *contextuality* of digital media, which is rooted within varying socio-political or cultural contexts, influences Un Violador. For instance, while posting or interacting with a YouTube video of the movement might be liberating and empowering in country *A*, it might be an act of resistance or even pose a legal danger to WLINTA\* in country *B*, simply for the sake of using YouTube. Further, the significance of context reaches down to aspects as inconspicuous as view numbers, likes, or counts of comments and shares. Suggesting a certain level of relevance by indicating numbers, a meaning is implied. As such, Un Violador is put into direct competition and ranking with other videos. This highlights digital media's political role at the intersection of technology and society. The relevance of Un Violador En Tu Camino suggested online implicitly suggests a relevance in the offline world.

Thirdly, the *storing* nature of digital media provides not only the possibility to preserve material of Un Violador but simultaneously pre-programs its loss. Paolo Gerbaudo (2012, 166) reminds that once the active phase of a movement is over, online content and messages linked to it vanish just as well, "[disappearing] into the electronic dustbin." In this respect, Megarry (2020, 2016) points out the danger of digital media destroying access to feminist history, which may lead to consequences in contemporary feminism and society, as "'collective memories' of past contention ... shape current norms and practices" (Edwards 2014, 103). Further, regarding the seemingly independent, decentralized nature of social media *storing* content, Megarry (2020, 216) argues that feminist history is less tangible online because the male-owned and controlled platforms systematically obscure digital feminist content and their archival. These remarks are significant regarding Un Violador because the movement aimed to go against deeply socially and politically ingrained problems. However, if using digital media implies decreasing accessibility and availability, or even the *loss* of feminist work and history now or later, the aims of UV are overshadowed. Finally, through digital media's male-owned and controlled nature, posts on the movement are positioned and 'archived' right next to male-focused and even anti-feminist content. As such, the digital media involvement in Un Violador affected the movement's meaning and presence both while it was topical and in the aftermath, influencing its availability and preservation as part of feminist history.

#### 4.2.2. NETWORKING

The involvement of digital media especially allowed for a digital network of supporters to form around Un Violador. The following subchapter investigates how this formation under digital media took place and highlights its consequences.

The online network was enabled through the interaction and dissemination features of digital media, as well as the repetitive use of keywords and hashtags. Thereby, WLINTA\* could encounter peers in the digital sphere with shared experiences, emotions, challenges, opponents, goals, and ambitions, that were visually supported by the constant use of specific symbols like the blindfolds, the movements, etc. Evoking a feeling of ‘we’ in ‘this’, such commonalities built up to what is also known as *collective identity*, a vital prerequisite of social movements (Edwards 2014, 141). As those kinds of interpersonal connections maintain bonds among activists and facilitate the resurgence of social movements after periods of backlash or reduced activism (ibid., 68), Un Violador En Tu Camino was and is repetitively revived by various groups drawing from the initial network around the movement. However, it must be noted that the ‘we’ in ‘this’ simultaneously creates a ‘they’, who, vice versa, unite in their antagonism. This is (a.o.) observable by the ridiculing and hateful speech highlighted in the analysis. After all, the manifold and powerful communication, organization, and networking tools of digital media are just as accessible to ‘them’.

Further, even amongst those with a collective identity, an outstanding level of online interaction and apparently strong networking interest should not be evaluated promiscuously. Equally intense dedication or identification with the topic *offline* is decisively only sometimes given. Megarry (2020, 219) thus warns about “activists engaging in perpetual digital conversations without ever acting.” Also referred to as *Slacktivism*, some social media users enjoy shedding a positive light on themselves by posting something protest-related and creating the image of being politically active and supportive. Thence, assuming a movement’s actual relevance according to the number of views, likes, etc., becomes increasingly questionable and unreliable. Under these circumstances, it might be the case that the involvement of digital media in Un Violador suggested a more robust picture of public appeal, network, and collectivity through (a.o.) such numeric measurements than it was behind the screens. Concurrently, the movement might have been of *greater* relevance than the online numbers suggest. As such, the appearance of the digital network around Un Violador may be elusive. Even further, becoming increasingly silent and inactive once a protest is over, the ‘honest’ and ‘devoted’

supporters may recede as quickly as they appeared, taking their network with them — just like the posts that slowly disappear into the dustbin of social media. As the analysis of the course of Un Violador has shown, revitalization depends on collective motivation and is hard to achieve by just a few individuals.

From a wider angle, the inclusion of digital media in UV has contributed to the supposed *paradigm shift* in feminism mentioned earlier, posed (a.o.) by rapid digital networking abilities. However, Megarry (2020, 16) describes the shift away from initial feminist tactics and motivations as rejecting “values of autonomous women-only organising,” pointing at the expansive yet often unacknowledged political meaning of using social media. Situated within the digital male-dominated sphere and thus being just as publicly available to cis-men and patriarchal state institutions as to WLINTA\*, the organization of UV protests through digital media was everything but autonomously WLINTA\* driven. Megarry further argues (ibid., 19) that while people assume social media to afford decentralized power and networks, state institutions still vastly control the digital sphere. But more to that in the section on *Visibility*.

#### **4.2.3. ACCESSIBILITY**

This subchapter addresses the impact of digital media on Un Violador regarding its accessibility. Notably, through the close entanglement with digital media, access to the movement needs to be regarded as positioned under the premise of accessibility of digital media in general. Investigating how accessibility to digital media is governed by a plurality and complexity of power structures will allow to understand *who* was part of the movement and *whom* it represents and benefits. Concurrently, it will reveal which and in how far groups of people were left out through the intense entanglement with and dependence upon digital media.

The in-/accessibility of digital media is also referred to as the *digital divide* and describes a constraint of digital media use by “economic, social, and cultural capital” (Yin and Sun 2021, 1188). However, Zheng and Walsham (2021, 4) propose instead to use of the term *digital inequality* to put a greater focus on “the positionality of individuals within multiple systems of power” instead of solely highlighting a *divide* of “accessibility and usage of technology within particular categories.”

Digital inequality, as such, refers to unequal access to ICTs and their content. Generally, accessibility tends to be granted to a wealthy and educated minority (Edwards 2014, 224). This limitation is amplified by major Internet applications mainly targeting “young, white,

middle- and upper-class men, mostly located in the Western world“ (Leurs and Ponzanesi 2013, 634). Supporting this tendency, the ITU has published statistics on the digital gender gap persisting around the globe, indicating that men use the Internet more than women (ITU 2019, 4). Further data reflects that, compared to men, women are globally 12% less likely to have access to the Internet, reaching up to an estimated 33% in Least Developed Countries (LDCs, as categorized by the United Nations) (EQUALS Access Coalition 2019, 2). Notably, the gender gap has even risen between 2013 and 2019 in the Arab States, Asia, the Pacific region, and Africa (ITU 2019, 4).

While the scope of this work does not allow for a most comprehensive inclusion of the data provided by the ITU and partner organizations on digital access and the digital gender gap, a few main aspects of the resource categories *Geographic Region* and *Socio-Economic Situation* shall be highlighted.

### Geographic Region

Accessibility of sufficient Internet service through well-developed infrastructure varies significantly across geographic regions. In 2019, during the first Un Violador En Tu Camino interventions, an estimated 87% of people living in Developed Countries (as categorized by the United Nations) used the Internet, compared to only 19% of the population being online in LDCs (ITU 2019, 2). The ITU, e.g., classifies Africa as the least connected world region of six, with only 40% of the African population having Internet access (ITU 2022a). Accompanied by Asia and the Pacific (each reaching 64%), the region lags significantly behind Europe (89%) and the Americas (>80%) (ibid.). Considering the dissemination of content and the ensuing possibility to learn of and participate in UV, the regional Internet access shortages thus substantially limit the representation and interaction possibilities of people from LDCs. A look back at the map provided by IsauraFabra (2022) draws a complementing picture: according to the locations pinned, none of the LDCs list a performance of UV, except for Mozambique.

Notably, the problem of violence against WLINTA\* is *most* persistent in those underrepresented regions. According to UN Women (2022), the highest estimates of femicides across the world in 2021 were seen in Asia (17.8k cases) and Africa (17.2k). Consequently, if vast parts of Africa and the Pacific region have little access to digital media, their WLINTA\* are less likely to know of and participate in Un Violador. As such, much fewer Black and Indige-

nous People of Color are visible in the movement online, while they suffer under the highest rates of violence.

### Socio-Economic Situation

#### *- Income and Occupation*

Worldwide and across income levels, a significant divide persists between males and females using the Internet and owning a mobile phone (ITU 2023a). This is related to the financial affordability of digital media. Access to the Internet is most expensive in LDCs, amounting to nearly 6% of the average income in 2022, compared to a global average of 1.5% (ITU 2023b). As owning a mobile phone depends on one's income, African and South Asian populations have the lowest ownership rates, followed by Latin America (ITU 2019, 6). Overall, women are less likely to own a mobile phone than men, regardless of their region and level of income (ITU 2023a). In Un Violador, except for Latin Americans, women from especially those regions low mobile phone ownership rates are thus the least represented.

As nevertheless pointed out by various scholars (Carstensen 2013; Megarry 2020; Schradie 2018; Yin and Sun 2021; Zheng and Walsham 2021), not only monetary income plays a role in terms of economic accessibility of digital media but also the time occupation of WLINTA\* — the amount of their free time. For example, time spent on childcare and household chores must be considered non-free time and unpaid labor, taking up hours and energy, which may thus not be used for the acquisition of money for buying a digital device or conducting online activism. As Schradie (2018, 53) concisely states, “working-class groups and their members face higher costs to produce online content. The Internet is a resource, but it takes classed resources to mobilize it.”

In order to actively participate in Un Violador, a stable economic situation is required, that allows to financially afford a digital device as well as fewer hours working a paid position, eventually paying a child-caretaker for *more* free time, which may then be used for digital activism. If these resources are not provided, WLINTA\*'s access to Un Violador is restricted through limited economic access to digital media overall.

#### *- Education and Age*

The ITU (2019, 10) has pointed out that the lack of ICT skills and digital literacy instills crucial limitations to the perceptivity and effective application of the Internet. In other words,

education is a vital factor in access to digital media and, consequently, in access to Un Violador. The ITU further indicates that in 40 out of 84 countries with data available, fewer than 50% of the population have basic computer skills (ibid.). Countries with even less than 25% are, e.g., Brazil, Cuba, Algeria, Niger, Ivory Coast and Togo, Sudan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Japan, and Thailand (ibid.). Thus, education-based access limitations are found in LDCs, Developing, and Developed Countries. Schradie (2018, 55) complementarily argues that in comparison to traditional activism, “Digital activists are more likely to have higher education levels,” suggesting that digital activism might even *require* those higher levels of education.

Education, however, does not only refer to *digital* but also to *language* literacy. Explicitly affected are thus indigenous populations with minority languages that are not at all or only very scarcely represented in the digital sphere. Overall, people who do not speak English, Russian, Spanish, or any of the other most frequently used languages for web content (Statista 2023) encounter similar disadvantages.

Further, people’s age has been found to intersect with levels of education, thus affecting (digital) literacy and access to Un Violador. The ITU (2022b) showed that across all regions more young people (15- to 24-year-olds) use the Internet, with higher age disparities in low-income groups and LDCs, versus smaller age gaps in high-income populations of Developing and Developed Countries. As Estelle Hutchet and Benedikt Pötz (2020, 20) highlight, digital media access is additionally restricted by the intersection of gender “with age and education in the acquisition of certain digital skills.” For example, in Europe, among people older than 55, women are disadvantaged regarding digital skills compared to men (ibid.).

As such, in addition to gender and economic resources, the level of education and age limit access of WLINTA\* to digital media and Un Violador En Tu Camino. In general, younger WLINTA\* of higher education level have greater access than those of higher age or lower education levels, evoking an imbalance in their representation in UV.

#### - *Dis/Ability*

Another factor influencing the accessibility of digital media and thus of Un Violador is physical and mental dis/ability. While the scope of this work does not allow for an in-depth investigation of digital media accessibility for people with disabilities, it should be noted that the mere presupposition of having to be mentally and bodily able to use an ICT or to have the economic means for acquiring disability assisting technologies, evokes most diverse barriers to

access content of the social movement online. Regarding UV, bodily and mental ability refer not only to accessing digital media and consuming content visually, but also to being able to consume audible factors of the protest song. As the media analysis has shown, early videos of Un Violador on YouTube included, e.g., people performing in or translating into sign language, lowering a barrier for people with deafness. However, as the analysis has further highlighted, the translation functions of social media (as in YouTube) are often insufficient. By limited digital media access for people with disabilities, their access to watch, support, participate, and be represented in Un Violador is also restricted.

#### - *Political Circumstances*

The influence of a country's political circumstances on the accessibility of digital media and UV needs to be recognized as well. The past years have repeatedly shown instances where certain governments forbade access to whole online platforms or specific digital footage. Looking at a map of the most censored countries in the world with data collected by Charlotte Bond (2023), most countries highlighted as limiting access to political media and social media overlap with the ones that least interacted with Un Violador online (see map by IsauraFabra (2022)). Countries in Asia and the Pacific region are emphasized as those with the most substantial censorship. Consequently, even if other factors do not present a problem, governmental restrictions can impose ultimate power over the accessibility of digital media and Un Violador.

#### **4.2.4. VISIBILITY**

From the overview on how access to UV is governed by digital media, examining *who* is granted or denied visibility within the movement becomes possible. To be clear, visibility on the Internet does not automatically result from access to ICTs (Megarry 2020, 11). This subchapter thus investigates the role of digital media in Un Violador by highlighting the power of algorithms and addressing the significance of online visibility for WLINTA\* empowerment.

The *Accessibility* subchapter has shown that only WLINTA\* with sufficient geographic and socio-economic resources have access to digital media and can thus engage with Un Violador online. Consequently, the involvement of digital media offers only those a stage in the movement who already benefit from digital media access, leaving those with fewer resources

behind. As such, Megarry (ibid., 12) states that the ones being most visible online are WLINTA\*, who “obey platform norms and present as white, middle class, able-bodied and heterosexual,” as search engines and algorithms governing the Internet run on underlying biases that are often especially discriminatory against women of color and other non-norm-complying individuals.

With this, Megarry points at two critical aspects: First of all, the fact that platform norms govern the visibility of users on their sites, and second, highlighting the intersecting discrimination along racist, classist, ableist, and sexist categories. As algorithms are “directing, intensifying and focusing viewer choices” (Finlayson 2022, 68), they have the power to hide or at least not support the visibility of performances of WLINTA\* of Color, or WLINTA\* with disabilities, as they do not fit into the favored norms of specific platforms. Consequently, they are less visible to the public.

Further, while the algorithmic control might, on the one hand, enable social media users to encounter content they usually would not have looked for by themselves, it also leads to a loss of user power over what they find and engage with. This unveils the strong controlling, content- and meaning-producing nature of digital platforms. In extreme cases, algorithmic governance can even lead to polarization if users are constantly confronted with content that reinforces their worldview and do not encounter information that contradicts it (Dhiman 2023, 3). While this feature allows for solid networks to build and spread, or to continuously consume content on a specific topic, polarization also enables discriminatory, e.g. anti-feminist groups to grow and concenter.

As such, algorithms have immense power over how visible and popular group performances of Un Violador become, leaving little scope for the ‘natural’ development of content visibility according to actual social and political relevance. If only *specific* women are represented and supported in the movement, the political value and strength of using digital media with the algorithmic-, norm- and bias-based content regulations, decreases decisively (Megarry 2020, 288). Inequality is *propagated* and *reinforced*, instead of providing equal participation (Schradi 2018, 71).

Additionally, the visibility of Un Violador through digital media can be evaluated as a means of portrayal and depiction that enables the *empowerment* of WLINTA\*. As described earlier, the collective identities that evolve through the networking possibilities build upon content visibility, especially as vivid visual depictions are said to “leave a rich and strong

memory trace where less vivid information would fade” (Joffe 2008, 85). With sufficient resources, the visibility of Un Violador on digital media allows WLINTA\* to gain not only a local but a transnational stage. While most societies expect WLINTA\* to not take up too much space or be too vocal in public spheres (Martin and Shaw 2021; Megarry 2020; Ott 2020), doing this online through both visual depictions of physical and sonic street interventions, as well as through taking up online space in the feeds of male-dominated platforms, marks an act of resistance and disobedience against the manifold dimensions of gender roles and stereotypes. As such, online visibility is crucial for WLINTA\* to escape their assigned private spheres and to make their aims, opinions, and outcries heard.

Furthermore, the consciousness-raising enabled through visibility is empowering for WLINTA\* by the deployment of information as well as by creating and populating a vocabulary that addresses their very personal experiences (Sowards 2004, 546). However, Megarry (2020, 207) warns that taking up space, being visible, empowering each other, connecting, etc., may raise a feeling of bringing about change while “no structural power has been shifted.” At last, WLINTA\*, who are *not* granted visibility due to, e.g., lacking digital media access or algorithmic restrictions, are thus not as able to create counter-publics online and evoke profound social and institutional change.

Finally, a quickly disregarded downside of visibility through digital media is the authentication of people. With footage of faces and, at times, even real names present online, users become increasingly identifiable. Legal prosecution, personal threatening, and attacking are enabled through the content managing functions that allow for collecting, storing, and disseminating personal data (Dhiman 2023, 2). For this, being activist and identifiable online might reasonably scare or even endanger WLINTA\* and thus keep them from participating.

#### **4.2.5. UNDERLYING STRUCTURES**

As hinted earlier, the underlying structures of digital media that automatically situate Un Violador within a specific context need to be addressed. First, the digital space in which WLINTA\* organize and communicate is “owned, designed and controlled by men” (Megarry 2020, 134). Offering space for hateful, disrespectful, discriminating comments and parodies of Un Violador, as the media analysis has shown, the digital sphere constantly exposes WLINTA\* to misogynist, sexist, and attacking content and behavior (Baer 2016; Megarry 2020; McLean 2020; Yin and Sun 2021). However, as users can also take on acronyms instead of

their real names, online activism comes with anonymous and invisible audiences (boyd 2010, n.p.), making content even easier accessible and attackable by opponents. As Megarry (2020, 242) criticizes, this poses substantial issues concerning the trust in and accountability of users online. She further argues that practicing feminism under constant male supervision leads women to internalize male-centric standards (ibid., 148) — thus, the opposite of what the movement and LASTESIS aimed for.

#### **4.2.6. POLITICAL INFLUENCE**

To better understand the political significance of digital media in Un Violador, this last subchapter touches upon the power of digital media to impact political discourse.

As mentioned earlier, ICTs, with all their platforms, websites, tools, etc., form a new public space located at the intersection of the digital and the urban — the streets and the feeds. Public space, including this new one, is a locus for vocalizing socially relevant topics and inducing those into political discourse (Reder 2021, 19). However, this public discourse is by no means abstract but takes on forms that evoke enormous political influence (ibid.). Through the timely communication of visual and audible Un Violador material, digital media simultaneously report upon the movement and turn into its *scene*. This is what Judith Butler (2015, 91) refers to as an extension of reality, an “extended and replicable visual and audible [dimension].” According to her, it is only under the circumstances of communicating protest footage through the media that urban landscapes gain political relevance (ibid.). Consequently, as a public space with manifold digital visual and audible components, digital media play a crucial role in Un Violador En Tu Camino attaining political relevance by occupying a locus for political discourse and influence.

Wintzer (2021, 282) further points out that the possibility of responding to political events and sharing political opinions through digital media influences political debate culture. The new feedback culture alters the relationship between citizens, journalists, and politicians, narrowing the space and time distance between them (ibid., 284). Even if political online discourses do not always or necessarily lead to discussions in parliament, the mere ability to be politically active in this new public space creates “a feeling of entitlement to form and articulate a political judgment” (Schradié 2018, 70). While keeping in mind the previously discussed limiting impacts of digital media on content, meaning, and accessibility, ICTs generally enable large audiences to participate in political discourses and turn down the monopoly posi-

tion of politicians in social and political discourse (Finlayson 2022, 65). As such, the giant online audiences form a transnational society that shifts and diminishes the central position of the state (Edwards 2014, 243). Finally, regarding UV, the involvement of digital media thus allowed WLINTA\* with respective resources to open a political discourse within public space, attain political power and overcome barriers of mass media and state institutions.

## 5. Conclusion

This research aimed to identify and examine the role of digital media within the feminist social movement Un Violador En Tu Camino by conducting a media analysis and discussing the results through an intersectional feminist lens. This framework allowed to understand the political significance and effects of digital media on the movement in consideration of different and overlapping preconditions.

It has been found that, on the one hand, the inclusion of digital media in Un Violador enabled WLINTA\* with sufficient geographical and socio-economic resources to support, contribute to, and be visible within the movement online. It allowed for a more direct political and journalistic feedback culture, enabled rapid informal networking, and enhanced the representation and construction of a transnational collective identity, ultimately granting WLINTA\* the power to occupy space in local streets, international feeds, and even parliaments.

On the other hand, the results indicate that the close entanglement of Un Violador with digital media played a limiting and exclusionary role. Firstly, content management and meaning-creating features, such as platform interfaces, norms, and algorithms, imposed restrictions on the ability to freely engage with UV-related content online. Further, access to the movement has been found to depend upon general access to digital media inextricably. This access has been unveiled as scarce, especially for WLINTA\* with unfavorable or insufficient geographical and socio-economic backgrounds. By limiting access to the movement, the digital media have thus impacted the visibility of diverse WLINTA\*. Lastly, the underlying male-oriented structures and state-surveilled nature have been highlighted as reinforcing WLINTA\*-oppressive social structures and impacting feminist politics.

Overall, the role of digital media in the social movement is thus manifold and highly ambivalent, making it impossible to describe its involvement as either purely liberating or obstructive. This work has shown that a much broader and more faceted approach is required.

In regards to the research gap this work aimed to contribute to, the celebratory and overly positive attitude towards digital media involvement in feminist social movements by much contemporary research has been challenged. This thesis has added to the still small yet increasing number of works approaching digital media as not purely decentralizing, liberating, and empowering but also recognizing both its obvious and more subliminal limiting, suppressive, and overall political nature.

While the results regarding the role of digital media in *Un Violador En Tu Camino* should not be generalized and directly applied to other social movements, they underline the importance of and need for more critical and intersectional research addressing digital inequality. In this respect, feminist activists could, e.g., benefit from research on more inclusionary and autonomous use of digital media in social movements. In addition, future research could also focus on *Un Violador* again in order to outplay the limitations of this study posed through the lack of stronger data collection tools, the relatively small amount of media footage used for analysis, and the limited accessibility of information through country-specific IP addresses. In this regard, it could be insightful to investigate the role of digital media in UV through a Turkish IP address or through that of a country that did not take part in the movement at all. Moreover, it would be interesting to compare the involvement of digital media in *Un Violador* to that in other feminist social movements, such as MeToo or the latest headscarf protests in Iran. This could allow to learn how digital media may lead to different successes, hurdles, popularity, etc., under manifold and varying circumstances.

As this work has shown, research on the entanglement of digital media and feminist social movements is not only an interesting field for the mere sake of studying and academic understanding. Quite the opposite, it has the actual power to acquire knowledge and insights that can question and ameliorate persisting feminist activist politics and society, ultimately supporting the empowerment and liberation of WLINTA\*. As such, research in this field marks a substantial brick in the wall of closing gender gaps and digital inequality — a long way to go, but the gates are open.

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