

## **Digital Feminism and Anti-Feminism in Interaction: Relational Dynamics and Hybridization Across Seven Spanish-Speaking Communities on Twitter**

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This study advances a relational and translocal approach to hybridization through a comparative computational analysis of how feminist and anti-feminist discourses coevolve across seven Spanish-speaking Twitter communities. Drawing on 126,978 tweets from the first year of #MeToo, we use time-series analysis, topic modeling, and cross-national comparison to examine how discourses interact and how national contexts shape thematic trajectories. We identify 4 relational patterns—mutual association, feminist-driven dynamic, anti-feminist-driven dynamic, and no association—showing that these movements are not merely reactive, but dynamically shape one another. Topic modeling reveals that specific countries assert discursive leadership, illustrating that linguistic commonality does not imply homogeneous uptake. These findings provide a comparative framework for understanding how polarized movements adapt, compete, and interact in networked publics, with implications for feminist strategizing.

*Keywords: digital feminism, anti-feminism, counterpublic, networked misogyny, Spanish-speaking communities, comparative computational analysis, hybridization*

Feminist digital activism has become a defining feature of contemporary political participation, producing counterpublics where marginalized voices contest gender inequalities and patriarchal power structures (Fraser, 1990; Mendes et al., 2019). Through hashtag activism and networked mobilization, feminist discourses have challenged dominant narratives, mobilized diverse global and local publics, and reconfigured traditional boundaries of visibility. Yet these same digital environments have also fostered the growth of anti-feminist backlash, generating a dynamic ideological field where feminist and anti-feminist actors compete for visibility, legitimacy, and influence (Banet-Weiser, 2018; Flood et al., 2021).

Research has examined how feminist narratives evolve across digital platforms and how anti-feminist discourses resist feminist advances, often through practices of networked misogyny and the co-optation of feminist rhetoric (Banet-Weiser, 2018; Banet-Weiser & Miltner, 2016; Ging, 2019; Ging & Siapera, 2019). Much of this work has focused on how discourses shift in response to key events, such as #MeToo, and how feminist and anti-feminist actors mobilize symbolic frames and circulate gendered narratives within national and transnational arenas (Ghadery, 2019; Hasunuma & Shin, 2019; Mendes et al., 2019; Suarez Estrada et al., 2022; Zeng, 2020). However, this scholarship has treated feminism and anti-feminism as separate, reactive, and often monolithic forces, overlooking both the internal diversity within each movement and the dynamic interplay that sustains and shapes their discourses. Moreover, while digital feminism and anti-feminism are global phenomena, most research has focused on isolated national case studies or treated geographically dispersed movements as culturally uniform. As a result, few studies have analyzed how feminist and anti-feminist discourses evolve, interact, and influence one another over time across diverse sociopolitical and cultural contexts.

This study addresses these gaps by analyzing the discursive hybridization of feminist and anti-feminist narratives and the patterns of interaction between movements across seven Spanish-speaking Twitter communities in South America, North America, and Europe. Drawing on theories of feminist counterpublics (Fraser, 1990), networked misogyny and the manosphere (Banet-Weiser, 2018; Banet-Weiser & Miltner, 2016; Ging, 2019), hybridization (García Canclini, 2005, 2014; Kraidy, 1999, 2005), and asymmetrical interdependence (Straubhaar, 1991), we conceptualize these movements not as isolated or reactive, but as discursively interconnected formations.

We extend hybridization theory in two directions. First, we examine how feminist and anti-feminist discourses develop heterogeneous national priorities and meanings, even while circulating shared regional themes, demonstrating how linguistic commonality does not imply discursive uniformity. Second, we analyze how these discourses interact over time, mutually shaping and responding to one another in patterns of influence that vary across contexts. This dual focus transcends static global/local or national/transnational binaries, emphasizing the flows of meaning and influence across localities and national contexts, shaped by asymmetrical interdependence and local agency.

Spanish-speaking communities provide a critical context for this analysis. Despite often being treated as a homogeneous bloc because of shared language (García Canclini, 2014), these communities reflect diverse feminist traditions, anti-feminist mobilizations, and political histories (Cabas-Mijares & Wichowsky, 2024; Díaz Fernández et al., 2023; Lagos Lira & Bachmann, 2023; Palmeiro, 2018; Zarembeg et al., 2021). Using a comparative computational framework (Suk et al., 2024) and integrating time-series analysis, topic modeling, and cross-national comparisons, we map the hybridization of feminist and anti-feminist narratives and the patterns of discursive influence between movements. Drawing on 126,978 tweets collected during the first year of #MeToo (October 2017 to September 2018), a period marked by unprecedented feminist activism and anti-feminist backlash, our analysis reveals four relational patterns in discursive dynamics: mutual association, where both discourses forecast each other, reflecting polarized competition for visibility; feminist-driven dynamic, where feminist activism prompts anti-feminist responses; anti-feminist-driven dynamic, where anti-feminist narratives trigger feminist mobilization even in contexts where feminist discourse is initially less dominant; and no association, where the two discourses unfold independently without significant temporal linkage. We also demonstrate how commemorative dates and political events differentially shaped both movements across countries. Lastly, our topic modeling reveals discursive leadership, as some countries consistently amplify distinct feminist and anti-feminist topics within translocal circuits. These patterns indicate hybridization rather than uniform diffusion because these narratives are selectively recombined with national histories and institutions, producing uneven discursive influence across contexts.

By illustrating how feminist and anti-feminist discourses adapt, evolve, and influence one another across Spanish-speaking digital spaces, this study provides a comparative and relational framework for analyzing discursive conflict and asymmetrical influence between polarized movements in digital environments. It also carries practical implications for feminist strategizing, showing that polarization can shape the strategic possibilities of social movements through local inter-movement relations and translocal circulation channels.

### **Feminist Counterpublics in Digital Spaces**

Challenging Habermas' (1991) concept of the public sphere, scholars such as Fraser (1990) and Squires (2002) have emphasized how counterpublics, marginalized communities including women and people of color, play a critical role in articulating their experiences, seeking recognition, and advocating for the integration of their agendas into mainstream public discourse. Feminist counterpublics, in particular, challenge the patriarchal foundations of the public sphere, which, as Fraser (1990) argues, "rested on, or . . . was importantly constituted by, a number of significant exclusions" (p. 59). In today's media landscape, these counterpublics are increasingly "networked" (Suk et al., 2024), constructing their own discursive spaces and strategic practices to contest dominant narratives, amplify marginalized voices, and mobilize for social change.

Digital platforms play a fundamental role in shaping feminist activism by fostering communities, enabling collective action, educating the public, and promoting collective empowerment (Idoiaga Mondragon et al., 2022; Lagos Lira & Bachmann, 2023; Mendes et al., 2019). Scholarship shows that digital feminism frequently engages interpretive repertoires, including a testimonial-justice orientation that legitimizes public testimony of gendered harm and challenges rape culture, and a pedagogical emphasis that treats social media as a site of digitally mediated consciousness-raising through which structural misogyny is articulated as a public problem (Ghadery, 2019; Idoiaga Mondragon et al., 2022; Mendes et al., 2019; Suk et al., 2021). Within this landscape, hashtag activism functions as connective infrastructure, linking diverse users, building affective ties around shared experiences, and sustaining digital solidarity (Papacharissi, 2016; Suk et al., 2021). Hashtags like #MeToo, #BeenRapedNeverReported, #NiUnaMenos (Not One [Woman] Less), #Cuéntalo (Tell it), and #YoSiTeCreo (I Believe You) have become vital counterpublic spaces where participants document experiences, legitimate testimony, and craft collective identities and belonging (Larrondo et al., 2019; Mendes et al., 2019).

However, digital feminism is dynamically and continuously shaped by its surrounding discourses. As Freelon et al. (2018) write, "social movements are not alone in social media: other parties interested in the same topic almost always emerge to wield their own power alongside, against, or orthogonally with respect to the movement" (p. 991). This dynamic interplay of voices and perspectives gives rise to ongoing processes of public contestation, where various actors "make things public" (Kavada & Poell, 2021, p. 193), contributing to the emergence of new actors and the evolution of public issues across both online and offline spheres. Kavada and Poell (2021) conceptualize this as contentious publicness, a process constituted through the material (e.g., platforms), spatial (e.g., transnational flows), and temporal (e.g., rhythms of communication) dimensions of social media. Focusing on the temporal aspects of these discursive dynamics, Suk and colleagues (2023) show that sharing personal narratives and demands for change predicted increased contention surrounding feminist movements. This suggests that increased visibility of feminist counterpublics can provoke public controversies and tensions, which often manifest in the form of online misogyny and hate.

### **Digital Anti-Feminism and Networked Misogyny**

Historically, feminist advancements have consistently faced backlash (Freedman, 2007). This resistance intensified with the rise of digital platforms, transforming networked spaces into contested arenas

for feminist discourse (Han & Yin, 2023). Banet-Weiser and Miltner (2016) describe a “new era of gender wars” (p. 171), highlighting networked misogyny’s aim to undermine feminist progress. Online, anti-feminism typically operates through recurrent discursive patterns, including delegitimizing and ridiculing feminists and their demands, denying and minimizing gendered harm (often through victim-blaming), prescribing the restoration of hierarchical gender relations as normative order, and engaging in overt misogyny and coordinated hostility toward women (see Banet-Weiser, 2018; Dickel & Evolvi, 2023; Ging, 2019; Ging & Siaper, 2019; Suarez Estrada et al., 2022).

Central to this dynamic, the manosphere emerges as a manifestation of anti-feminism, characterized by a distinctive mode of performance (Barnes & Karim, 2026). It comprises interlinked online communities that oppose feminism and are oriented toward restoring gender hierarchy (Ging, 2019). Within these spaces, anti-feminist repertoires are routinized and reinforced through community norms, insider vocabularies, and shared grievance narratives. These include pseudo-scientific and evolutionary claims that naturalize gender roles and justify women’s subordination (often framed as “red pill” awakening), alongside “sexual marketplace” logics that rank individuals according to perceived desirability, invoking categories such as “alpha” and “beta” men. These patterns are stabilized through coordinated attacks and a shared insult or meme vocabulary (see Dickel & Evolvi, 2023; Ging, 2019; Marwick & Caplan, 2018). In this context, emotional rhetoric and toxic discourse function as central mobilization strategies, cultivating strong affect, particularly anger, that fuels targeted harassment, sharp “us versus them” boundaries, and hostile engagement (Gottzén, 2025; Suarez Estrada et al., 2022).

Thus, digital anti-feminism integrates conservative, far-right, and men’s rights perspectives, frequently manifesting in explicit forms of online misogyny (Ging, 2019; Marwick & Caplan, 2018). Although scholarship recognizes the coexistence of feminist and anti-feminist discourses online, highlighting how feminist activism strategically counters anti-feminist resistance in legal and political spheres (Banaszak & Ondercin, 2016) and how anti-feminism emerges reactively against feminist claims (Marwick & Caplan, 2018), the specific interactions and mutual influences between these discourses remain underexplored. Addressing this gap contributes to a more nuanced understanding of contemporary digital gender politics and activism, establishing the foundation for this study.

### **Hybridization Theory**

The growing interconnectedness of digital spaces has accelerated the diffusion of social movements across borders. However, this process is neither linear nor uniform. As García Canclini (2005, 2014) argues, it involves hybridization, that is, the sociocultural process by which elements that have circulated separately are recombined and recontextualized into new formations, recognizing that those elements are themselves products of prior mixtures. This process is political, negotiated, and bound up with inclusion and exclusion in cultural mixing (García Canclini, 2005). In this context, glocalization, the articulation of global forms within a locale, is read as a site-specific manifestation of the broader process of hybridization (Kraidy, 1999). Moreover, because recombination depends on rendering meanings commensurable across idioms, translation operates inside hybridization as the power-inflected mediation that enables circulating frames to be renamed, refitted, and made to work in new settings (García Canclini, 2005; Kraidy, 2005).

Building on this, Kraidy's (2005) translocal perspective highlights interactions among multiple localities, emphasizing mutual influences across various local spaces, rather than merely focusing on relationships between dominant cultures, typically Western, and peripheral regions. It foregrounds how multiple localities co-produce discourses under endogenous and exogenous circuits of power, cautioning against romanticizing "the local" as an uncomplicated site of resistance (Kraidy, 2005). At the structural level, Straubhaar's (1991) asymmetrical interdependence characterizes the uneven field in which translocal circulation occurs: Localities possess differing capacities to project and absorb discourse, resulting in hierarchies of supply, visibility, and uptake. These inequalities shape the recombinatory work of hybridization. In this study, we refer to hybridization as a discursive process of situated recombination and recontextualization of circulating frames and idioms across locales. The process is uneven and power-mediated, yielding novel formations that link particular histories to wider transnational conversations and may contest or reinscribe hierarchies.

### **Hybridization of Digital Feminism and Anti-Feminism**

In the digital world, hybridization is especially visible in feminist movements like #MeToo, which combined global solidarity with local priorities and practices (Ghadery, 2019). This occurs through platform-based space-making, culturally specific language, and interactions among global and local actors, with social media affordances, notably hashtags, playing a key role in moving ideas across loosely connected, transnational networks (Suk et al., 2024). For instance, in South Korea, public testimony spurred hashtags such as #WithYou and the student-led #SchoolMeToo (Hasunuma & Shin, 2019). In Japan, the social costs of disclosure led many women to use #WeToo to express solidarity instead of sharing personal stories (Hasunuma & Shin, 2019). In China, #MeToo unfolded as a fragmented guerrilla campaign in which activists used censorship-evasion tactics to sustain mobilization (Zeng, 2020). In Argentina, #MeToo operated as substitution activism, aligning with #NiUnaMenos, a movement against femicide and gender violence (Garibotti & Hopp, 2019).

Despite growing scholarship on feminist and anti-feminist digital activism, research has rarely examined how hybridization operates across Spanish-speaking communities or how discourses circulate translocally between them. Often grouped together because of linguistic similarities, research treats national case studies as broadly representative (Matassi & Boczkowski, 2023), overlooking heterogeneity shaped by distinct histories and temporalities (García Canclini, 2005, 2014). This oversight is especially consequential given the diverse trajectories of feminist and anti-feminist movements across Spanish-speaking societies.

In Latin America, feminist agendas have been propelled by femicide and gender-based violence (e.g., #NiUnaMenos) and by struggles over sexual and reproductive rights, rooted in long genealogies of grassroots organizing marked by class, race, and partisan tensions (Palmeiro, 2018; Rodríguez Gustá, 2025; Zarembert et al., 2021). By contrast, Spain's digital feminism has emphasized institutional misogyny and testimonial justice, crystallized in #Cuéntalo following La Manada gang-rape case (Idoiaga Mondragon et al., 2022; Larrondo et al., 2019). Spanish-language publics in the United States are also entangled in these circuits through diasporic and postregional ties, where Latinx feminisms operate across borders as plural and decolonial digital practices, emphasizing survivor support, anti-femicide solidarity, reproductive justice, migrant and diaspora rights, and anti-racist interventions (Negrón-Muntaner & Calderón-Sandoval, 2024).

Conversely, Latin American anti-feminist mobilization frequently coalesces around “gender ideology” as a strategic umbrella that unites religious and secular actors by casting feminist and gender and sexual diversity claims as threats to children, the family, and the nation, advancing familism and labeling feminism “cultural Marxism” or “radical” (Biroli & Caminotti, 2020). In Spain, anti-feminist communication has leaned on ridicule and anti-feminist pedagogy, often instrumentalized to attack political actors (Bonet-Martí, 2020; Díaz Fernández et al., 2023).

Thus, addressing this gap requires adopting a translocal perspective on discursive hybridization in Spanish-speaking digital spaces that tracks how discourses are co-present, recur, and are recombined across settings, without presuming a single center-to-periphery flow. Rather than treating Spanish-speaking publics as a single cultural space or a flattened “Hispanic world,” we follow Kraidy’s (2005) insistence that hybridities be situated in concrete political economies and connected laterally across locales. In line with feminist critiques of how visibility and knowledge are unevenly organized across colonial histories (Cabezas & Brochner, 2019; Negrón-Muntaner & Calderón-Sandoval, 2024; Rodríguez Gustá, 2025), we treat these publics as asymmetrically positioned nodes in which some sites (e.g., Spain, the United States) hold historically advantageous positions in amplification and agenda-setting, while others are more often positioned as receivers. This vantage cautions against attributing initiative to a singular North.

### **Research Questions**

In this study, we examine digital feminist and anti-feminist discourses as co-present forces in platformed publics. Guided by a translocal framework of discursive hybridization, we focus on how contested repertoires emerge and gain prominence under uneven conditions across seven Spanish-speaking localities in South America, North America, and Europe. We ask:

- RQ1: How do digital feminist and anti-feminist discourses predict each other over time across Spanish-speaking communities?*
- RQ2: What are the themes within digital feminism and anti-feminism in Spanish-speaking communities?*
- RQ3: How do specific countries differ in the prevalence of themes within digital feminist and anti-feminist discourses in Spanish-speaking communities?*

### **Methods**

#### **Sample**

We collected tweets about #MeToo using Synthesio, a social listening platform that gathers public content from digital platforms via the Decahose Stream for Twitter. Although the platform is now known as X, we refer to it as Twitter throughout this study because the data were collected before the name change. We assembled a Spanish-language corpus covering the first year of #MeToo (October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018). This period offers a unique opportunity to explore the global and local dynamics of feminism and anti-feminism during a time of heightened mobilization around gender violence and women’s rights. We

began by querying #MeToo and expanded with locally salient hashtags and terms capturing feminist mobilization and its contestation (e.g., #Cuéntalo, #8M; see Supplemental Material A<sup>2</sup> for the complete keyword list). Given prior evidence of #MeToo's transnational diffusion and its local reinterpretations, we use the hashtag as a temporal and comparative anchor.

Since digital communities are shaped by distinct communication styles, such as jargon or specific word usage, that establish cultural boundaries and identity (Hodge & Hallgrimsdottir, 2019), we employed string detection to identify feminist and anti-feminist narratives. Drawing on existing literature in English and Spanish on digital feminism and anti-feminism, the *manosphere*, and networked misogyny, as well as the research team's situated knowledge, which includes some native Spanish speakers, we constructed two Spanish-language lexicons. The lexicons include multiword expressions, hashtag variants, and morphological variants (complete lists in Supplemental Materials B and C<sup>2</sup>). Tweets containing lexicon terms were included in the corresponding feminist ( $N = 96,096$ ) or anti-feminist ( $N = 30,882$ ) subsample. To assess potential misalignment introduced by lexicon methods, the lead author manually reviewed a subset of tweets from both subsamples, focusing on edge cases, such as irony, sarcasm, and ambiguity. Following this, we drew country-stratified random samples of 300 tweets per discourse, guaranteeing at least 30 per country and allocating the remainder proportionally to country corpus size. Three independent coders judged whether each tweet reflected the intended discourse. We computed intercoder reliability separately by discourse and resolved disagreements by consensus (feminism: 97.6% agreement, Krippendorff's alpha: 0.95; anti-feminism: 97.3% agreement, Krippendorff's alpha: 0.94). Details on the coding protocol and edge-case typology appear in Supplemental Material D<sup>2</sup>.

We focused on Spanish-speaking communities across various regions and sociocultural contexts. From an initial pool of 15 communities identified via Twitter geolocation, we retain seven that jointly maximized data sufficiency—substantial combined tweet volume with observable activity in both stream—regional coverage across the Spanish-speaking sphere, and documented substantive relevance in the period (i.e., publics identified in prior research as central to the cross-border circulation of the movements; see Biroli & Caminotti, 2020; Cabezas & Brochner, 2019; Larrondo et al., 2019; Palmeiro, 2018; Zarembert et al., 2021). Geolocation data were generated by Synthesio using platform metadata (e.g., post geotags / "place" objects) and from geocoding profile information (geocoding the author's free-text profile location). Based on this, it was assigned an ISO-3166-1 alpha-3 country of origin code.<sup>3</sup> Country classifications were stable over the study period. Of all Spanish-language tweets retained, 57.6% were geolocated to the seven retained communities via this ISO-3166-1 classification. The resulting cases are Argentina (Feminism  $n = 21,449$  / Anti-feminism  $n = 7,978$ ), Chile (Feminism  $n = 4,351$  / Anti-feminism  $n = 2,952$ ), Colombia (Feminism  $n = 2,800$  / Anti-feminism  $n = 1,123$ ), Mexico (Feminism  $n = 6,129$  / Anti-feminism  $n = 2,596$ ), Peru (Feminism  $n = 1,575$  / Anti-feminism  $n = 766$ ), Spain (Feminism

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<sup>2</sup> [https://osf.io/pm4xb/files/5gk8c?view\\_only=dc262d69a3d44417911ee799dc3c71f7](https://osf.io/pm4xb/files/5gk8c?view_only=dc262d69a3d44417911ee799dc3c71f7).

<sup>3</sup> ISO-3166-1 alpha-3 is a set of three-letter country/territory designations defined by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). When no reliable signal exists, Synthesio marks the country as unknown using reserved ISO codes. These codes do not designate sub-national detail (states, provinces) or geocoordinates.

$n = 53,413$  / Anti-feminism  $n = 13,260$ ), and the United States (Feminism  $n = 6,379$  / Anti-feminism  $n = 2,207$ ).

Beyond data availability, volume, and their national trajectories on feminist policy and movements, the countries' selection responds to the assumption that Spanish language allows discourse to travel and adapt across communities from North to South and from South to North. For example, transnational circulation of anti-feminist mobilizations, such as "Con Mis Hijos No Te Metas" (Do not mess with my children), originated in Peru and rapidly gained traction across Latin America (Biroli & Caminotti, 2020). Spain, located in the Global North and historically tied to Latin America through colonialism, is included because feminist mobilizations there both influence and are influenced by Latin American repertoires, with migrant activists acting as bridges across regions (Cabezas & Brochner, 2019). We also include the United States, where approximately 44 million people speak Spanish (13.9% of the population; U.S. Census Bureau, 2025). Many are migrants or descendants who maintain regular communication with their countries of origin and regional networks, with digital feminism serving as one of the bridges between Latin America and the United States (Negrón-Muntaner & Calderón-Sandoval, 2024). Moreover, these countries represent varying levels of freedom, gender equality, and abortion rights, among other factors. Table 1 describes their characteristics.

### ***Analytic Strategy***

For RQ1, we used time-series analyses to test the predictive power of feminist discourses on anti-feminist discourses and vice versa. Our objective was to test whether changes in one type of discourse volume are temporally associated with changes in the other. Specifically, we used vector autoregression (VAR) to capture the endogenous relationships between feminist and anti-feminist discourses while accounting for the impact of external events as exogenous variables. To ensure the stationarity of the variables, we conducted Augmented Dickey-Fuller and KPSS tests, both of which confirmed that the series were stationary. Optimal lag lengths for the VAR models were selected per country based on the Akaike Information Criterion: one lag for Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Spain, and the United States; two for Argentina; and four for Chile.

**Table 1. Characteristics of Selected Countries.**

Country	Population (MM)	Income level	Freedom level	Abortion rights	Gender Inequality Index (0 = equality; 1 = inequality)	Social media penetration (%)
Argentina	44.90	Upper-middle	Free	To preserve health	0.303	76
Chile	18.27	High	Free	To save the woman's life	0.219	77
Colombia	49.66	Upper-middle	Partly Free	To preserve health	0.409	68
Mexico	131.50	Upper-middle	Partly Free	To save the woman's life	0.363	67
Peru	32.74	Upper-middle	Free	To preserve health	0.379	73
Spain	46.42	High	Free	On request	0.062	60
United States	327.90	High	Free	On request	0.194	70

*Note.* Table elaborated by the authors with information from 2018. Sources: The World Bank (n.d.), Freedom House (n.d.), Center for Reproductive Health (n.d.), UNPD (n.d.), and We Are Social (2019).

In the VAR models, we included a list of significant events as exogenous variables. We compiled a list of high-profile accusation cases, global feminist events, and country-specific feminist events. This list was informed by previous studies, news coverage of that time, and the situated knowledge of the research team. This process resulted in the identification of six events: (a) the New York Times story on sexual assault allegations against Harvey Weinstein, (b) Alyssa Milano's tweets using #MeToo, (c) International Women's Day and the Feminist Strike (IWD), (d) the emergence of #Cuéntalo after La Manada (the Wolf Pack) sentencing in Spain, where the defendants of a gang rape were convicted of sexual assault instead of rape, prompting women to share their experiences of violence (Proyecto Cuéntalo, n.d.), (e) Chilean Feminist May, one of the largest feminist movements in the country's history, which sparked discussions about nonsexist education in the region and culminated in a massive march on May 16 (Lagos Lira & Bachmann, 2023), and (f) the voting for the legalization of abortion in Argentina, where the Chamber of Deputies approved the legislation. After fitting the VAR model, we performed Granger causality tests to determine whether past values of one discourse variable were temporally associated with another (Supplemental Material E for details<sup>2</sup>), noting that these tests address forecasting rather than causal mechanisms.

To answer RQ2 and RQ3, we implemented structural topic modeling (Roberts et al., 2019). Before STM, we applied several standard data preprocessing steps, employing tokenization, lowercasing texts, and removing punctuation, special characters, URLs, stopwords, and stemming words. The number of topics was determined by examining exclusivity, semantic coherence, held-out likelihood, and residuals of models with 10 to 100 topics. After selecting the best-performing models, we reviewed each topic for redundancies and assigned labels by examining the top 10 documents associated with each topic. This resulted in a final set of 13 topics for feminist discourses and 11 for anti-feminism discourses (see Supplemental Materials F and

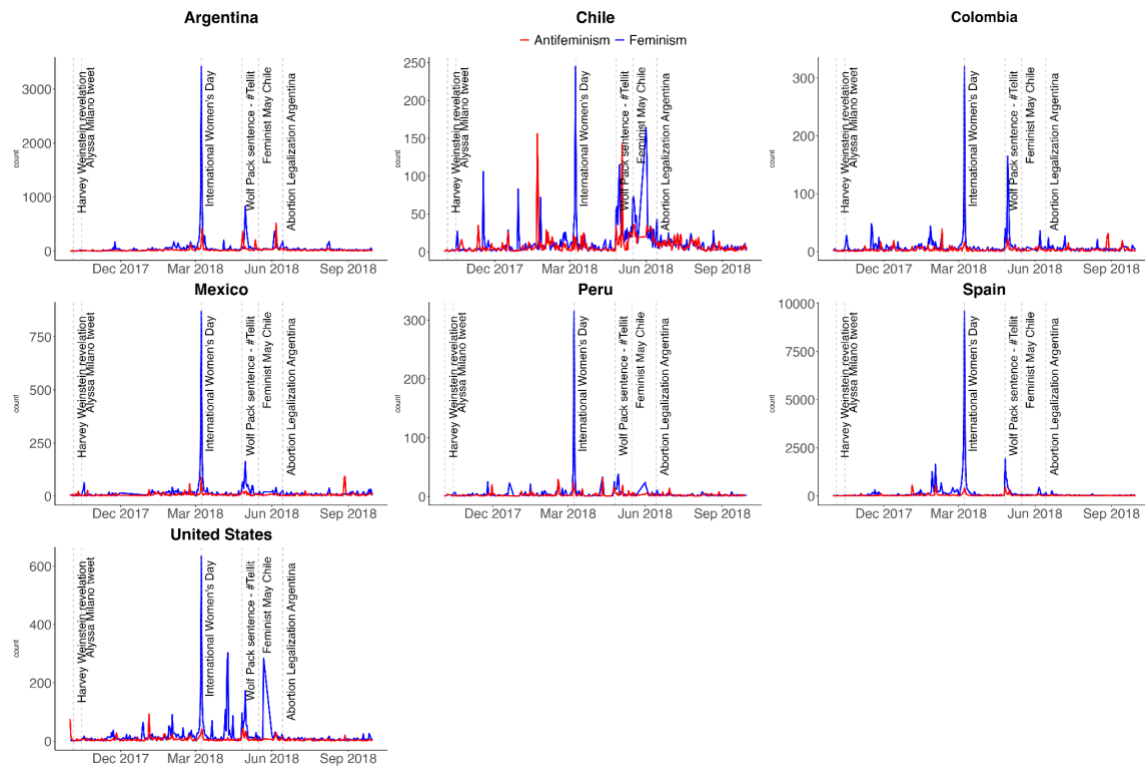
G for further details<sup>2</sup>). For RQ3, which examines the relationship between topics and countries and each country's role in producing specific narratives, we calculated the estimated effects using the function of the STM package. This method highlights how different countries differ in topic prevalence, providing clear insights into the thematic structure of the data.

## **Results**

### ***Temporal Patterns***

Before presenting results for RQs, we first describe the overtime patterns of digital feminist and anti-feminist discourses across countries during the one-year period in the wake of #MeToo. Figure 1 illustrates the daily tweet activity for each discourse by country. International Women's Day (IWD) and the days before and after marked the high point of feminist discourse in all countries, accounting for 24.10% in Argentina, 8.18% in Chile, 14.54% in Colombia, 21.70% in Mexico, 26.35% in Peru, 27.6% in Spain, and 14.56% in the United States. Despite this alignment, feminist narratives also exhibit distinct temporal patterns unique to each country. Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Spain, and the United States experienced peaks related to the Wolf Pack sentence and #Cuéntalo. However, Chile and the United States displayed the most fluctuations: Chilean feminist discourses peaked in November 2017, January, May, and June 2018, while the United States saw peaks in early April and June 2018. Thus, the IWD and the Wolf Pack sentence emerged as important triggers for a surge in feminist narratives across countries.

Anti-feminist discourses exhibited fluctuations, with peaks occurring on different dates depending on the country. In Argentina, peaks were observed the day after IWD, the Wolf Pack sentence, and on June 6, when Congress began discussing the abortion law. In Chile, these discourses peaked at the end of January and at the start of Feminist May. Colombia saw slight peaks in February and at the end of August. In Mexico, peaks occurred the day after IWD and at the end of August. In Peru, peaks were noted in mid-February and early November. Spain experienced peaks in early January, February, and on the IWD, while the United States saw peaks in early October and January 4 (for all dates and proportions, see Supplemental Material H<sup>2</sup>).



**Figure 1. Daily volume of tweets for feminist and anti-feminist discourses by country.**

### **Interconnections Between Feminist and Anti-Feminist Discourses**

To address RQ1, which questions the relationship between feminist and anti-feminist discourses across countries, we performed time-series analyses, first fitting country-specific VAR models, including major offline events as exogenous variables. These models allowed us to estimate the endogenous dynamics between the discourse types while accounting for the influence of external events. We then conducted Granger causality Wald tests based on these models to evaluate predictive relationships between discourse types. The findings of the two-way Granger causality Wald tests indicate significant relationships in several countries. In the United States, feminist discourses Granger-caused anti-feminist discourses ( $F = 5.20$ ,  $p = 0.02$ ), but not vice versa ( $F = 0.59$ ,  $p = 0.44$ ). In Mexico, feminist discourses marginally predicted anti-feminist discourses ( $F = 3.86$ ,  $p = 0.05$ ), with no evidence in the opposite direction ( $F = 0.00$ ,  $p = 0.99$ ). These findings suggest a unidirectional relationship in which anti-feminism reacts to feminism. On the other hand, Argentina, Chile, and Colombia present bidirectional interactions, with feminist narratives Granger-causing anti-feminist narratives ( $F = 78.41$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ;  $F = 3.89$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ;  $F = 5.37$ ,  $p = 0.02$ , respectively) and anti-feminist also Granger-causing feminist comments ( $F = 14.96$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ;  $F = 3.06$ ,  $p = 0.02$ ;  $F = 4.35$ ,  $p = 0.04$ , respectively), suggesting mutual predictability between movements. In Peru, while feminist discourses do not Granger-cause anti-feminist discourses ( $F = 1.25$ ,  $p = 0.26$ ), anti-feminism Granger-causes feminism ( $F = 26.12$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating a one-way predictive relationship from anti-feminism to

feminism. Finally, in Spain, neither direction shows a significant predictive relationship ( $F = 2.86, p = 0.09$  for feminism to anti-feminism;  $F = 1.69, p = 0.19$  for anti-feminism to feminism).

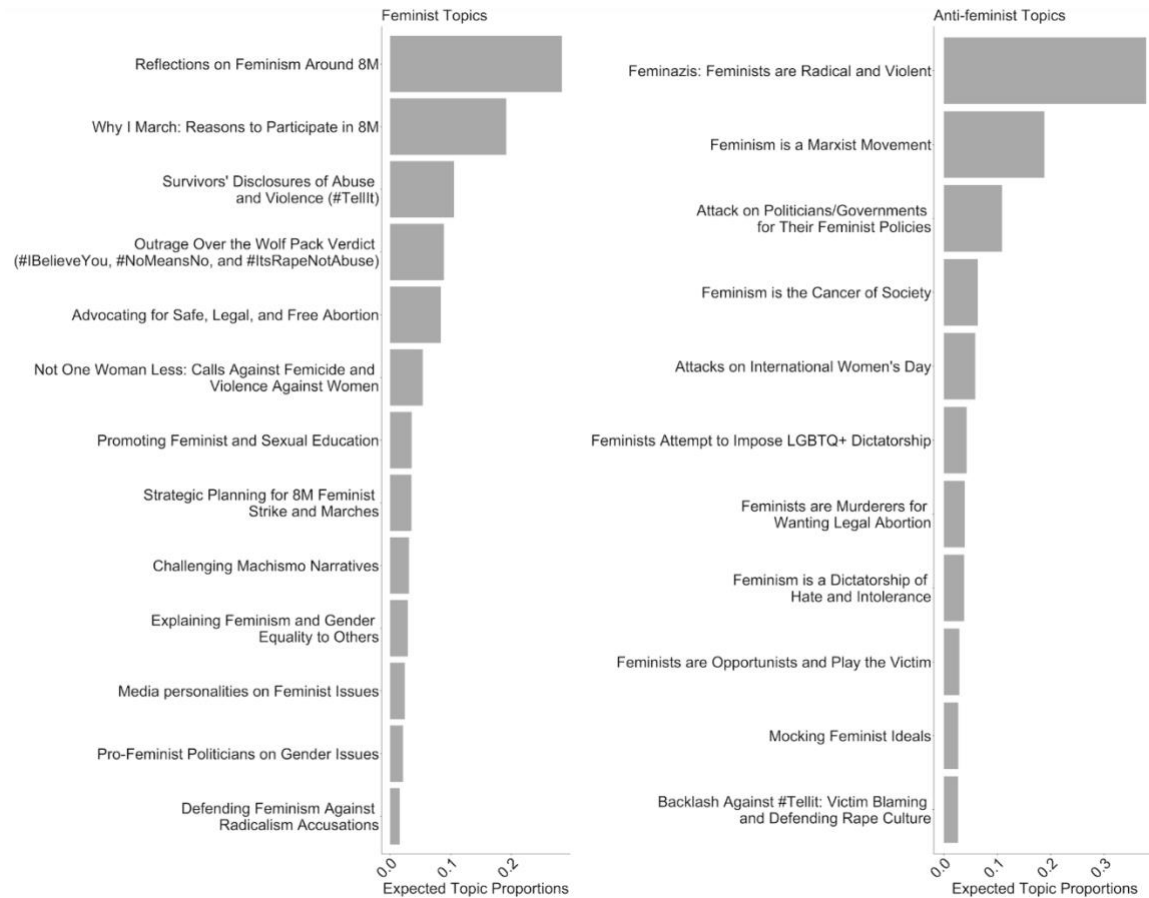
Beyond these inter-discursive dynamics, we also examined how external offline events, included as exogenous variables in the VAR models, were associated with changes in feminist and anti-feminist discourse by country. Not all countries shared the same lag structures, indicating that discursive responses to events varied in timing and intensity across national contexts. IWD emerged as a key driver of feminist discourse, leading to sharp increases in Argentina, Mexico, and Spain. Additionally, the event had a negative effect on feminist narratives in the United States. For anti-feminist discourse, IWD also stimulated these discourses in Mexico and Spain, suggesting it was a flashpoint for both mobilization and backlash. Similarly, the Wolf Pack sentence positively predicted feminist discourse in Chile, Mexico, and Spain. While responses in Mexico and Spain were immediate or near immediate, Chile showed a more delayed reaction. This event also provoked rapid anti-feminist responses in Argentina, Spain, and the United States, demonstrating how localized high-profile events can fuel both feminist and anti-feminist digital discourses.

Finally, Harvey Weinstein's revelation, Feminist May, and the abortion legalization vote in Argentina did not influence feminist or anti-feminist discourse, suggesting that not all country-specific events translate into measurable shifts in digital discourse. A summary of these results is provided in Appendix Table A1.

### ***Digital Feminism and Anti-Feminism: Unified and Transnational Movements?***

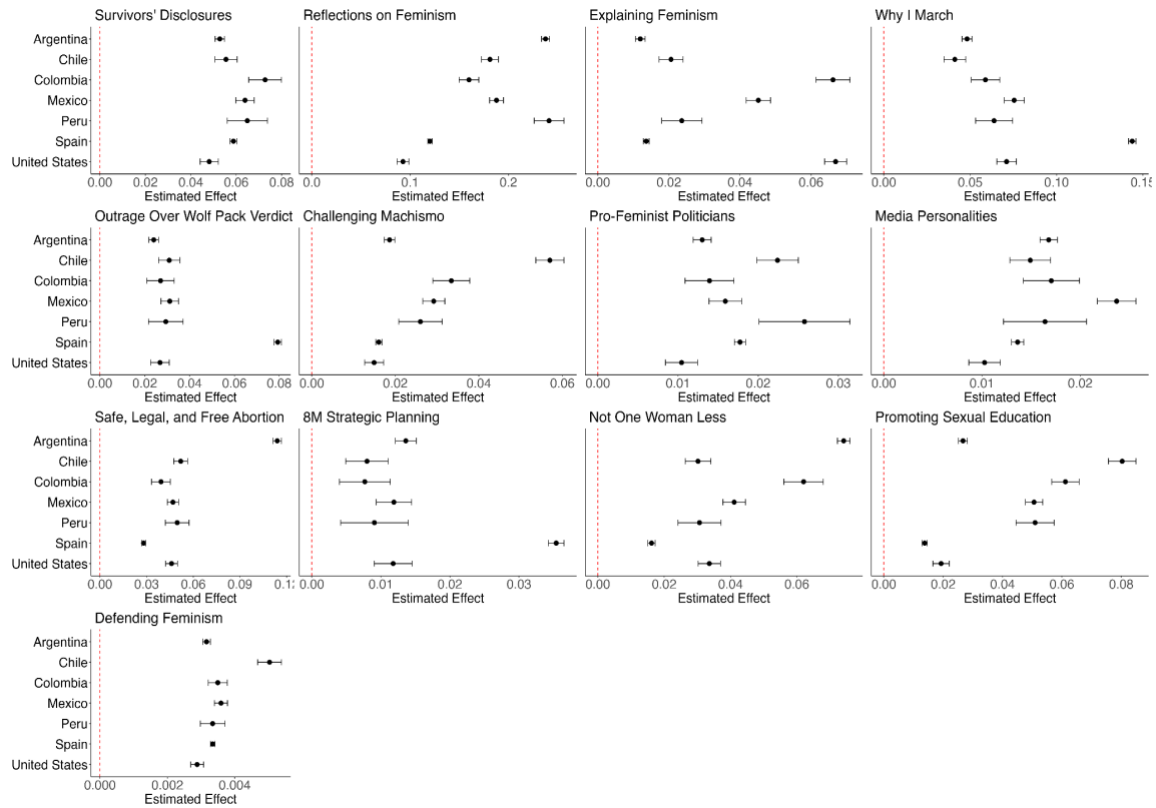
For RQ2 and RQ3, which propose examining themes within feminist and anti-feminist discourses across countries, we implemented structural topic modeling. As STM generates probabilistic clusters, these are illustrative and not exhaustive. Figure 2 shows the topic proportions of each topic. Three topics of digital feminism related to IWD and the Feminist Strike, including "Reflection on feminism around 8M," "Reasons to participate in 8M," and "Strategic planning for strikes and marches." Within these topics, posts framed IWD as a collective mobilization for women's rights, highlighting economic precarity and opposition to patriarchal structure. Additionally, two topics related to the Wolf Pack case and #Cuéntalo, namely "Survivors' disclosures of sexual abuse and violence" and "Outrage over the Wolf Pack verdict." These posts centered on personal testimonies of sexual and gender-based violence and collective reactions to judicial responses, articulating both lived experiences of victimization and widespread indignation toward legal institutions perceived as failing to ensure protection and justice.

Tweets advocating for an end to femicides under #NiUnaMenos, along with calls for legal abortion, were also prominent. Other topics included discourses promoting sexual education in schools, challenging machismo, and explaining feminism's goals. Lastly, tweets celebrating politicians or media figures that identify as feminists and comments defending feminism against accusations of radicalism received less attention.



**Figure 2. Topic proportion by discourse.**

Figure 3 illustrates the strength and direction of each country’s association with digital feminist topics. All countries contributed to the emergence and production of these topics. For the “Survivors’ disclosures” topic, all countries had a similar estimated effect, showing the pervasiveness of sexual and gender violence across geographical and cultural contexts. Likewise, the “Pro-feminist politicians” and “Media personalities” topics showed similar country effects. However, some topics were more country-specific. Argentina was strongly linked to the topic of “Legal abortion,” as the legislation was under debate in the country. It also featured the topics “Reflection on feminism” and “Not One Woman Less: end to femicides,” which focused on feminist activism and gender violence. Chile was notable for “Challenging machismo,” “Promoting sexual education,” and “Defending feminism” discourses because of the Feminist May movement, which focused on sexual education. In Colombia and the United States, “Explaining feminism” had the highest estimated effect, while Peru stood out in “Reflection on feminism.” Spain had the highest estimated effect with the “Why I March” and “Outrage over the Wolf Pack Verdict” topics, reflecting the country’s historic 2018 IWD march (Idoiaga Mondragon et al., 2022) and the prominence of #Cuéntalo (Larrondo et al., 2019).



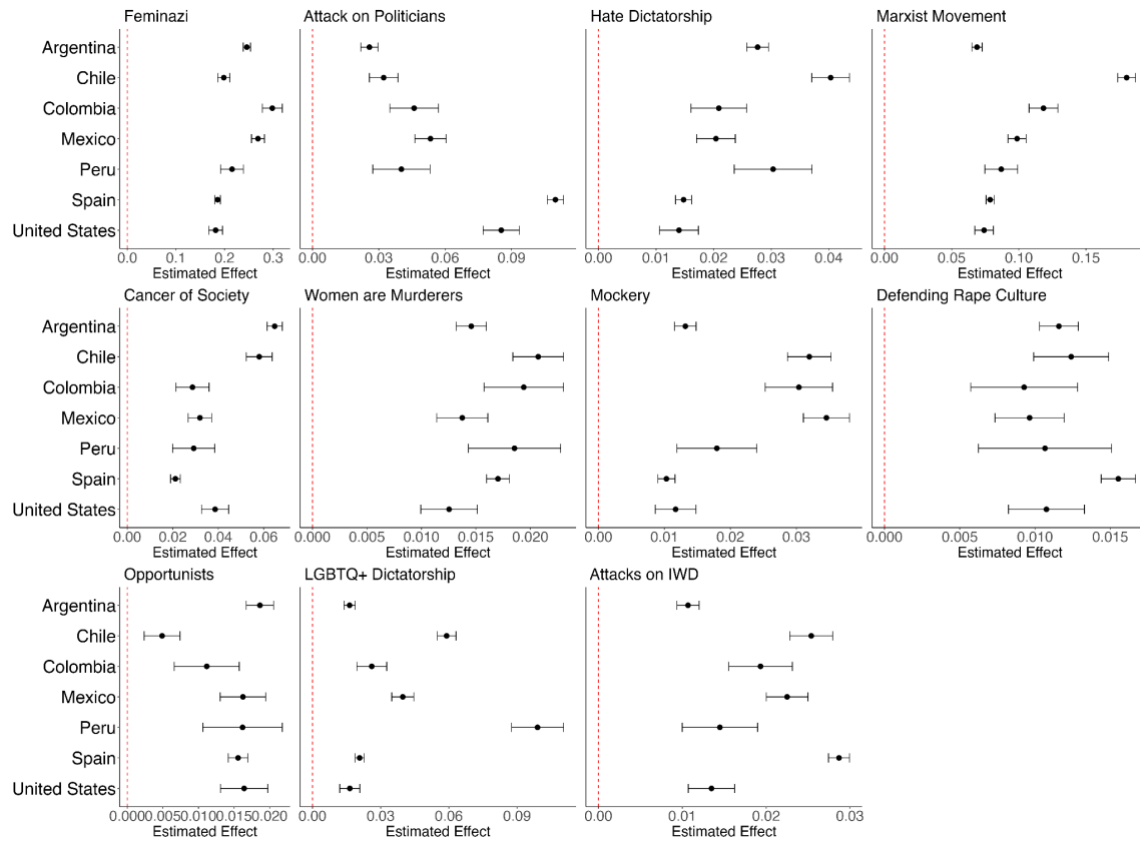
**Figure 3. Estimated country-level effects on feminist topics.**

Among the 11 digital anti-feminism topics identified (Figure 2), the most prominent, representing more than 50%, were attacks labeling feminists as “feminazis” and characterizing the movement as a Marxist or even “satanic” ideology driven by extreme beliefs. Posts frequently relied on derogatory stereotypes, moral condemnation, and claims associating feminism with the degradation of women, the erosion of childhood, and the destruction of families. Topics also targeted politicians for their feminist policies, depicted feminism as a societal cancer poised to destroy the world, and expressed hostility toward IWD. Furthermore, anti-feminism portrayed feminism as a dictatorship driven by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other sexual and gender minority (LGBTQ+) agendas and as a “dictatorship of hate and intolerance,” framing it as incompatible with democracy and society. Women were also attacked as opportunists, accused of playing victim, and labeled “murderers” for supporting abortion rights. Lastly, one narrative sought to defend rape culture by normalizing, trivializing, or justifying sexual violence, while another focused on ridiculing feminism through satirical and hyperbolic imagery.

Like digital feminism, all countries were associated with all anti-feminist topics (see Figure 4). Topics such as “Feminazi,” “Women are murderers,” “Defending rape culture,” and “Opportunists” showed similar estimated effects across nations, indicating more global and unified perceptions of these issues.

However, there are also distinct, country-specific narratives. Argentina and Chile had the highest estimated effects with the “Feminism is cancer” topic. Chile also led on the “Marxist movement” and “Hate dictatorship” topics while also emphasizing “Mocking feminism” and “Attacks on IWD,” positioning Chile as a key player in shaping anti-feminist discourse. This demonstrates that a country’s size does not diminish the strategic use of social media to create narratives that transcend borders.

Additionally, Colombia and Mexico were similarly most associated with the “Mocking feminism” and “Attacks on IWD” topics, while Peru produced more attacks on feminism for being an LGBTQ+ dictatorship. Spain and the United States were most associated with “Attacks on politicians,” reflecting a historical context of heightened politicization surrounding feminism (Larrondo et al., 2019; Suk et al., 2024). Notably, Spain demonstrated a strong, yet shared, presence in “Attacks on IWD.” Thus, while anti-feminist narratives exhibit global themes, the specific expressions and emphases vary significantly across countries, shaped by local political, cultural, and historical contexts.



**Figure 4. Estimated country-level effects on anti-feminist topics.**

### Discussion

This study advances the understanding of digital feminism and anti-feminism as coexisting, interacting discourses shaped by hybridization and translocal dynamics. While prior scholarship has often treated these movements as isolated, nationally bounded, reactive, or episodic, it has rarely examined how they coexist, evolve, and influence each other across diverse cultural and political contexts. Our analysis addresses this gap by focusing on Spanish-speaking communities, often treated as a homogeneous bloc despite their distinct historical, political, and cultural trajectories. Adopting a translocal perspective, we highlight how both discourses are shaped by uneven flows of influence, localized discursive histories, and shared transnational repertoires. Using a comparative computational framework (Suk et al., 2024), we map the temporal interplay and thematic evolution of these movements, offering new insights into how opposing movements structure themselves, respond to one another, and shape the “contentious publicness” (Kavada & Poell, 2021).

Our time-series analysis revealed four relational patterns between the movements. While these patterns are derived from Granger associations, they should be read as heuristic depictions of temporal linkages rather than evidence of deterministic causation. Mutual association reflects an interactive relationship where feminist and anti-feminist discourses forecast each other, indicating a polarized environment where both sides compete for visibility. Feminist-driven dynamic suggests that digital feminist activism shapes the discourse landscape, eliciting anti-feminist responses. Anti-feminist-driven dynamic indicates that these discourses galvanize feminist expression even when initially less prominent. Finally, no association corresponds to the absence of a directional temporal relationship between the movements. These patterns reveal deeper discursive negotiations in which each movement responds to, contests, and at times redefines the claims of the other, challenging simplistic reactions or polarization models (Freelon et al., 2018).

We further examined how external events shaped movement dynamics over time. Among the five events analyzed, only IWD and the Wolf Pack case generated significant discursive responses, and even these effects were limited to certain countries. While these events served as common reference points, the intensity and temporality of discursive reactions varied across national contexts. In this sense, contextual factors mediate both the salience and the interpretive uptake of external events, influencing whether and how movements engage with their symbolic resonance.

Beyond temporal dynamics, our analysis shows that discourses combine broader shared patterns and community-specific themes. On the feminist side, topics such as reflecting on feminism in the context of IWD, challenging machismo, and survivors’ disclosures of abuse and violence align with digital feminism’s emphasis on testimonial justice, acknowledgment, and consciousness raising (Ghadery, 2019; Mendes et al., 2019). Locally rooted emphases also appear across nations. “Why I march” and “Strategic planning for 8M protests” reflect Spanish-speaking communities’ use of digital platforms to coordinate street mobilization (Idoiaga Mondragon et al., 2022; Zaremborg et al., 2021). Likewise, defending feminism against accusations of radicalism aligns with these communities’ history of contesting backlash through innovative advocacy strategies (Zaremborg et al., 2021). On the anti-feminist side, topics like defending rape culture and victim blaming, mocking feminism, and feminazi reflect recurrent delegitimation tactics commonly used in anti-

feminist repertoires (Dickel & Evolvi, 2023; Ging, 2019). By contrast, portraying feminist movement as a Marxist movement and a LGBTQ+ dictatorship are specific to these communities, expressing gender-ideology rhetoric (Biroli & Caminotti, 2020).

The current study's focus on topic-level patterns captures recurrent clusters of meaning within feminist anti-feminist discourse. We note that these topics can be tied to underlying framing dynamics, such as feminist frames of justice, agency, and care, and anti-feminist frames of tradition and authority. Future work could explicitly analyze how these topics are mapped onto theorized frames or how competing frames exist within each topic.

Furthermore, while all countries participated in circulating each topic, closer examination reveals discursive leadership, with some communities consistently amplifying particular themes more than others. Rather than suggesting cohesive transnational feminist or anti-feminist movements, these patterns reflect actor-led and power-aware recombination in which discursive patterns that travel well are selectively amplified within local genealogies, while remaining contestable. It also traces bidirectional circulation across the Global South and North. Crucially, hybridization is not intrinsically emancipatory. It may arise endogenously from grounded practices or be shaped by external market, media, and policy environments that condition unequal visibility by influencing which frames circulate, gain salience, or fade (García Canclini, 2005; Straubhaar, 1991). Thus, our results underscore the importance of a translocal perspective: hybridization operates through consistent country-level amplification of specific topics under asymmetrical conditions, clarifying why shared repertoires do not produce uniform outcomes and how country-specific selections reorganize the field.

This study contributes by offering a relational approach to hybridization that clarifies why strategy matters for feminist contention in platformed publics. Beyond merely exchanging claims, feminist and anti-feminist actors co-constitute the discursive field under unequal conditions of visibility. The cross-national patterns we identified—heterogeneous interaction dynamics, event-linked fluctuations, and uneven topic leadership—indicate that their discourses are structured by local genealogies and infrastructures rather than by a single provocation-response sequence. In this sense, polarization is the terrain on which strategy is made, where what is strategically possible depends on the locally prevailing mode of inter-movement relation and the translocal circuits through which frames acquire salience.

These findings have practical implications for feminist strategizing in polarized digital environments. First, the heterogeneity of interaction patterns across countries implies that strategic and tactical reasoning is context dependent. Since the same repertoire hybridizes differently across settings, viable moves must be grounded in local relational dynamics rather than in assumed generalizations or the homogeneous acceptance of messages based solely on shared language. Second, temporal flashpoints (e.g., commemorations and emblematic cases) present both opportunities and risks, with effects that are recurrent yet not uniform. Thus, visibility is redistributed in patterned ways that determine when narratives travel and when they stall. Third, anti-feminist intervention must be recognized as a structuring force that elicits reactions and sets an agenda. Digital anti-feminism operates through logic of hybridization, strategically using online platforms to disseminate a shared overarching discourse that local actors then contextualize. Consequently, feminist movements recalibrate over time as these shifts occur, indicating that adaptation is

relational rather than unilateral. Finally, because feminist and anti-feminist actors compete for visibility and persuasion in publics that include nonaligned users, the struggle over salience and credibility becomes asymmetric across contexts, with consequences for which discourses attract undecided audiences and which remain peripheral.

This research is not without limitations. While the words for each subsample were drawn from extensive literature and the researchers' situated knowledge, it is possible that relevant terms specific to each country were not fully captured. Moreover, lexicon-based classification cannot fully capture rhetorical nuances, such as sarcasm, satire, irony, or ambiguity, so some tweets may have been misclassified even after manual review. As a result, certain strands relying on euphemistic, insider, or meme-based language may be systematically underrepresented. Finally, our analysis is based solely on Twitter, a platform that privileges brevity, speed, and visibility along with its global reach. This may not fully reflect how feminist and anti-feminist discourses unfold in more visual or community-based platforms. For example, Facebook's real-name, mutual-tie networks concentrate engagement among known audiences and can constrain what women post, whereas Tumblr's pseudonymity and dashboard curation enable more intimate and often more radical discussion with greater control over exposure (Keller, 2019); Instagram and TikTok emphasize visual, recommendation-driven circulation and trend remixing. By contrast, Twitter has historically favored public critique and advocacy, amplifying transnational mobilization through hashtags, translation practices, and tagging influential figures to increase visibility (Keller, 2019; Li et al., 2024). However, the platform's transition to X, along with changes to affordances, policies, and algorithms, may be reshaping these dynamics. Future work should assess the effects of these new affordances and undertake cross-platform comparisons to evaluate how movement-counter movement interactions adapt to distinct affordances and audience structures. Future research could also expand this analysis to other non-Anglophone countries and digital social movements.

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**Appendix**

**Table A1. VAR Model Results With External Events by Country.**

	Argentina		Chile		Colombia		Mexico		Peru		Spain		United States	
	Femini sm	Anti-feminism	Femini sm	Anti-feminism	Femini sm	Anti-feminism	Femini m	Anti-feminism	Femini sm	Anti-feminism	Feminis m	Anti-feminism	Feminis m	Anti-feminism
Weinstein revelation	-24.3 5 (46.34)	-8.61 (21.27)	-4.16 (13.70)	-2.69 (9.06)	-3.12 (14.09)	-1.71 (2.86)	-5.73 (11.41)	-3.70 (5.60)	-2.41 (12.23)	-1.02 (2.66)	-42.59 (146.76)	-14.69 (35.76)	-4.96 (29.14)	-3.82 (4.77)
International Women's Day	3117.18*** (66.68)	54.04 (30.60)	-13.7 (25.16)	-22.4 (16.6)	2.33 (19.88)	4.57 (4.03)	806.42*** (16.47)	79.84*** (8.08)	-3.21 (17.27)	1.50 (3.75)	8674.71*** (214.04)	293.65*** (52.15)	-243.27*** (59.52)	10.83 (9.75)
Wolf Pack sentence	21.70 (47.42)	229.61*** (21.76)	34.35* (14.08)	-5.60 (9.31)	-8.26 (14.48)	-1.80 (2.94)	40.87** (11.44)	10.05 (5.61)	-0.45 (12.23)	3.28 (2.66)	995.68* (153.49)	196.99 (37.39)	-2.68 (30.23)	14.32** (4.95)
Feminist May	-13.7 2 (46.32)	15.79 (21.26)	10.15 (14.25)	1.68 (9.43)	-3.31 (14.08)	-0.58 (2.86)	4.85 (11.41)	1.38 (5.60)	-2.02 (17.27)	1.51 (3.75)	-22.76 (146.70)	-9.98 (35.74)	-1.81 (29.11)	-0.32 (4.77)
Abortion legalization	18.33 (46.39)	-11.22 (21.29)	-2.01 (13.72)	-2.91 (9.09)	5.44 (14.08)	0.19 (2.86)	1.40 (11.42)	-0.82 (5.60)	2.89 (12.24)	1.20 (2.67)	8.80 (146.69)	-9.79 (35.74)	-8.33 (29.10)	-1.42 (4.77)

Constant	23.78 *** (4.07)	8.80** * (1.87)	3.87* * (1.49)	3.10* * (0.99)	3.88* * (1.36)	2.01* ** (0.28)	10.59* ** (1.15)	4.50* ** (0.57)	0.76 (1.15)	1.60* ** (0.25)	68.80** * (12.95)	19.70* ** (3.15)	6.65* (2.85)	3.47* ** (0.45)
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.90	0.58	0.24	0.19	0.11	0.13	0.90	0.36	0.14	0.08	0.87	0.38	0.19	0.25

\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001

Note. Standard errors in parentheses. Lag determined by country using AIC: Argentina (lag = 2), Chile (lag = 4), and Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Spain, and the United States (lag = 1).