

2023 Award for Best Open Science Doctoral Contribution

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Title of the thesis

Networked Feminisms Ecologies: A Comparative Analysis of Two Case Studies

Abstract

The aim of the thesis is to analyse how the hybrid (online/offline) networked practices of three Catalan feminist groups evolve as they interact with other key stakeholders involved in the social reality they seek to transform. The three groups are #OnSónLesDones, which seeks an equal representation of women and men in the opinion slots of Catalan mass media, and Kellys Barcelona and Kellys Unió Catalunya, the two of them demanding better working conditions for hotel room attendants. The thesis has three main objectives: identifying opportunities and limitations of networked, feminist practices for the achievement of feminist goals; comparing the networked feminism practices of the three groups, and contributing to the strain of activist studies research that develops an ecological model for the study of contemporary, hybrid forms of activism.

Description of the research

The thesis uses an embedded, mixed-methods approach in which quantitative social network analysis of each group's Twitter interactions is used to complement qualitative research conducted using the situational analysis methodology.

Situational analysis is aimed at studying all the factors that influence one issue of contention, from the relationships between human and non-human elements, the opinions human actors hold regarding the issue of contention, the main social discourses that shape it, as well as other spatial and temporal factors –from the local to the transnational and from the mundane to the historical. In my thesis, situational analysis is conducted mainly through interviews with feminist activists and other stakeholders (politicians, journalists, academics, members of trade

unions) that are important actors in each scenario, as well as through the analysis of materials –tweets, reports, publications, websites– created by each group.

The research has been designed following the principles of data feminism. Its main objective is the creation of lasting social impact by, on the one hand, using data science to challenge power hierarchies and, on the other, making their methodologies accessible to the community. Therefore, it pays great attention to how data is created and retrieved, how the human sources of these data are treated by the researchers and who and what is involved in the process of generating that data. Three data feminism dimensions align with UOC's open science policies regarding open educational resources:

First, the content of a data feminism project challenges power by choice of subject matter. In this regard, the thesis' aim and objectives have the will to support feminist groups in their contributions to women's emancipation. Following intersectional feminist scholarship, the three feminist groups selected differ in terms of the socio-demographic characteristics of its members (ethnicity, class, language, nationality), with the aim to study how digital technologies are appropriated by women with different backgrounds.

Second, the form used to display data feminism projects challenges power by shifting the aesthetic and/or sensory registers of data communication. Following this, the graphics of the thesis are suitable to be read by colour-blind people, whereas I am working on publishing the conclusions of the research in Catalan and Spanish "easy reading" formats (aimed at people with learning disabilities) in mass media that offer this kind of content. I will soon talk to several associations to find ways to make some excerpts of the thesis available to blind people, as well as I will look for a venue to defend the thesis that is accessible with a wheelchair.

Finally, the process of elaborating the research challenges power by building participatory, inclusive processes of knowledge production. The theoretical sampling facet of situational analysis encourages researchers to be in constant contact with their sources, making them an important part in the design of the research. For instance, the answers of the first round of interviews with members of each group cement the elaboration of the questions in the subsequent interviews with other members of the group. The opinions and knowledges created by feminist activists are used in the interviews with powerful stakeholders with the aim, if necessary, to check and question the information they provide. Also, the social network analysis of the interactions each group establishes on Twitter has been designed according to needs expressed by the activists during the interviews. Due to all of these, there is an agreement with the three feminist groups to share the results of the thesis with them.

Data management plan and other open science guidelines

Initially, the data management plan was designed according to UOC's Ethical committee guidelines. It has recently been updated following the template for doctoral theses available at the portal CORA (<https://dmp.csuc.cat/>).

Open access to publications

- I will prioritise the submission of my articles in open access journals located at the highest quartiles, such as *Social Media and Society* and *Comunicar*. So far, I have published a book review in the open access journal *Tecnocultura*: <https://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/TEKN/article/view/76569>
- In the case of those articles published in journals that privatise the access to knowledge, I post a pre-print version of the article in the UOC's O2 Repositori Institucional. This is the case of the article, co-written with Dr. Sofia Caldeira, published in *Media, Culture and Society*: <https://openaccess.uoc.edu/handle/10609/148111>
- All the work created during the three years of the doctorate –conference presentations and proceedings, journal articles, newspapers and magazines articles, book reviews, etc.– is published in an open access format in my Academia profile: <https://uoc.academia.edu/MartaRoquetaFern%C3%A0ndez>
- The thesis will be uploaded at the repository Tesis Doctorals en Xarxa (<https://www.tesisenred.net/>).

Open software/source code

- The social network analysis is conducted using the open-source software R and Gephi.
- The rest of the software and hardware tools used in the research are the ones provided by the university, which belong to companies such as Microsoft and Google: Microsoft office, Gmail, Google cloud, etc. The metadata I expect to use is the one of programmes like Excel and Word.

Research data

Interview transcripts are not going to be shared in any online portal designed for data sharing purposes due to ethical reasons, as well as to legal obligations regarding the protection of personal data. The information provided by some sources was, in some instances, politically sensitive, in the sense that some of them either expressed political beliefs, detailed activist strategies, or manifested that their political activity may entail suffering different sorts of backlash. Some of the information gathered that is important for the research is legally considered sensible data, such as ethnicity, gender or affiliation in trade unions.

Interview data has been analysed through the creation of the different maps that constitute the situational analysis methodology. These maps have been created manually, using simple software tools such as PowerPoint and Word. The final versions of the maps will be published in the thesis. The data used to complement the interview analysis comes from publicly available databases and sources, such as blogs of the activist groups studied or their publications on online social networks.

I am working with one of my thesis supervisors to publish the data generated during the social network analysis of each group's Twitter interactions, consisting of Excel spreadsheets and R and Gephi files, in a research data repository, preferably CORA.RDR (<https://dataverse.csuc.cat/>). The raw data was provided by Twitter's API, after a request to analyse data for academic purposes, and it is stored in the Cloud service provided by the university. Twitter data has been mined by my thesis co-supervisor, according to my research needs, and made available to me in pre-processed format for further analysis in Gephi.

It is estimated that the final volume of the data generated would be less than 10 GB. Besides the Cloud storage provided by the university, backups of the data are stored in an external hard drive. This hard drive is also of restricted access to anybody but me. All the data preserved in both the Cloud and the external hard drive will be erased three years after the defence of the thesis, as stated in the thesis' ethical plan approved by the university.

Data anonymisation

People interviewed are not identified either in the memories, maps, diagrams, interview transcripts, interview audio recordings or the folders where all this information is stored, since their identification is relevant neither for the methodology nor for the results of the research. A code (A1, B1, C1) has been assigned to every person interviewed, and this code is what identifies this person both in the final version of the research as well as in the word and audio files containing their interviews.

There are two separated documents with the codes of one of the two case studies, which are not accessible to anybody but me. Once the audio files are transferred to the Google cloud service, they are eliminated from the recording device.

In the social network analysis of Twitter interactions, some users are identified because they publicly display their real names. A relevant part of them are mass media, organisations or renowned activists, journalists, politicians, or other public figures.