Special issue editorial No. 40: *Feminism in the Era of the Algorithm*

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The images catch our attention. Digital devices have become the perfect lure to make our eyes fall spellbound, time and time again, on the dark sheen of their screens. We know that behind that smooth surface an infinite network of images awaits us that, like a whirlwind, carry us, by a simple touch, from one to the next. This horde of pictures comes organized and available on various platforms that, gradually and progressively, have come to organize and control the time and the daily lives of millions of people.

Checking email, performing bank transactions, purchasing, working remotely, listening to music, watching films, texting, reading news, giving opinion, falling in love. The possibilities virtual platforms offer seem infinite. This overflow affects in a way that is unsuspected what is understood as private and public, as well as the relationship between these two spheres. Today people can do privately what previously was generally done in public, and vice versa. However, it is important to note that the shift in the private-public relationship must not be understood as a simple inverting of dimensions. It rather refers to one or another place becoming confused to such a degree that neither the public nor the private can be described so clearly as was once done by philosophy and liberal political theory.

Perhaps this clear distinction was never that clear or, if it was, it acted in favor of a determined order. We know well that the public and private distinction has implied other distinctions such as public/masculine, private/feminine and, even more so, private/feminine/domestic. The public/private distinction acts like a particular organization of the world that presupposes a defining of the differences of the sexes in which the masculine inhabits the kingdom of the so called public sphere and the feminine clings to the decency of the private. Therefore, the distinction between the public and the private spheres does not occur on neutral ground, but rather supports the political, social, and economic order that establishes hierarchies, dominions, functions, and places. Mary Wollstonecraft, Olympe de Gouges, Harriet Taylor, Flora Tristán, Alexandra Kollontai, Simone de Beauvoir, among many others, have made visible -at different moments and under different frameworks- the gender device that underlies the distinction between the public and the private. This heteronormative and reproductive device continues to limit a woman's place as being closer to the family and motherhood likely to a script that seems to be no other than that which romantic love dictates. The feminists of the 70's were who revealed the presuppositions that underlie the distinction of the public and the private with the minimal, but radical and subversive affirmation: "Personal is political".

This same feminist affirmation today can be found throughout the world and appears on forums, communication media and social networks. "The personal is political" takes place in contemporary feminist protest, and at a time in which digital platforms are part of the daily activity of an enormous majority. For this reason, the "the personal is political" feminism emerges from activisms that appropriated the possibilities of communication and connection the networks promote. #Me Too, #Balancetonporc, and #Niunamenos are ways in which feminism uses social networks to capture attention. They use minimal mottos that operate in those dynamic network contexts as content organizers and classifiers whose mechanism of search, circulation, and transmission rely on a sequence of prompts called an algorithm.

Contemporary feminism uses the algorithm and the way it operates to its advantage and dynamizes stories, complaints, and images that show the persistence of a patriarchal order whose main sign is violence against women. Although online platforms have subverted the distinction between public and private, it does not seem like they have correspondingly subverted in a similar manner the heteronormative and reproductive gender device.

Paradigm example of such is that abortion is illegal today in a large number of countries worldwide, despite the resonance that initiatives to legalize it have had on digital networks.

This monographic section of the journal *Comunicación y Medios* by the Institute of Communication and Image of Universidad de Chile is devoted to exploring the strategies of contemporary feminism related to its use of media, social networks, and online platforms regarding the persistence of the patriarchal order. The articles assembled here show the state of the affair based on the cases studied in various Latin American countries and Spain and the resulting experiences relative to the diverse uses that are carried out with digital communication.

There are three main topics that bring together these articles: Digitalization of sexual politics on the internet; feminisms and their practices in the media and, in particular, in written and digital press; and the digital strategies against gender violence. Referring to the digitalization of sexual politics online, there are three articles, written by Claudia Pedraza and César Rodríguez (México), Luis Parra and Augusto Obando (Chile), and Ainara Larrondo-Ureta, Simón Peña-Fernández, and Julen Orbegozo-Terradillos (Spain) showing the methods and ways that make the difference regarding heteronormative differences when generating in the digital space and via network configuration, more or less specific, techno-politic devices of discursive order that can make a difference, not only in terms of gender, but also class and race, in creating alliances that favor the agency of women or certain forms of sexual sociability in social contexts in which the patriarchal veto operates in relation to it.

In terms of feminisms and their mediatic practices, another three articles are included, written by María Dolores Brito (Ecuador), Karen Gheza (Chile), and Marina Sánchez de Bustamante (Argentina) offering a reflection on the imaginary tools used by communication media, both printed and digital, to continue supporting the sexual division of the public sphere. Said communicative operation leads to the reinforcement of inequalities that are not only imaginary, like the persistence of gender stereotypes that are the foundation of the organization of the multiple and diverse hierarchies in production chains, and also that which concerns processes of subjectivation limited to women, such as the case of motherhood.

Finally, the articles closing this monography, led by Gema González (Argentina), Daniela Esquivel Domínguez (México), and Marina Acosta (Argentina), address some of the main strategies explicitly oriented towards organizing a feminist movement online against gender violence. Gender violence, understood as a structural phenomenon that responds to systematic and structural hegemonic interests whose complexity requires being confronted through articulated actions when taking over the digital environments. These actions are carried out, for example, applying the instructions of a finite sequence of operations and reorganizing data already in existence to expose situations to which even the States and their institutions show indifference.

Feminism in the era of the algorithm implies evaluating the strategies, discourses, and practices that have been part of the feminist movement in the context of the image, of the platforms, and of the virtual environments. This evaluation –or perhaps, rather, a catching up of such strategies, discourses, and practices– is what encourages us to present this special issue of the *Comunicación y Medios* journal.