Feminist Strategies Against Digital Violence: Embodying and Politicizing the Internet

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ABSTRACT *This article aims to analyze feminist strategies against digital violence and their relation to performative forms of social justice. Based on new feminist materialisms (Coole & Frost, 2010; Souza, 2019), the article shows how female bodies are at the crossroads in our digital society. On the one hand, they are a target of digital violence because of their political activities, while on the other hand feminist protesters are opening new political possibilities for mobilization. By conducting a digital ethnography with two social collectives located in Mexico City – Luchadoras and Laboratorio de Interconectividades – I argue that embodying and politicizing technologies are strategies to mobilize the body as a political, critical and material category, which reveals a renewed feminist agency in hacking the hegemonic meanings of digital technology and resignifying its materiality in order to politicize it. Furthermore, I argue that based on the body as material category, innovative forms of social justice for feminist collectives emerge. These strategies are related to the critical questioning of technologies to repoliticize digital violence, to render visible the memories and affectations in women's bodies, as well as to mobilize a new feminist positioning called hackfeminist self-defense. All in all, this article seeks to contribute to understanding the broader issue of feminist politics performing social justice in the digital era.*

KEYWORDS new materialisms; social justice; performativity; digital violence

Introduction

From Argentina to Mexico, structural violence has led to the mobilization of thousands of women in the last two decades. Female bodies have taken the streets and social networks to demand justice and an end to state impunity. The most emblematic example of such mobilizations was the 2019 performance

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"*Un violador en tu camino*" ("A rapist in your way")[1] from the Chilean feminist collective *Las Tesis*, which was replicated in several cities around the world. The video of the performance flooded social networks showing a mobilization that accounts for a new form of feminist agency, which – by putting the focus on violated bodies – reveals new ways of performing social justice by subverting guilt and holding judges accountable for the violence exercised on women's bodies. However, this same video confronted viewers with a harsh reality: female bodies are violated both in public spaces and on the internet with misogynistic comments and with parodies of the video. These actions aimed to further discipline female bodies (Ananías Soto & Sánchez Vergara, 2019; García-González & Guedes, 2020; Suárez & Mitrović, 2023). Just as in public spaces, the internet has become hostile and violent for women, especially those for whom digital space is a forum for their political activities.

In a context of generalized violence affecting women to varying degrees, as well as the increased penetration of digital technologies into our daily lives, digital violence constitutes an extension of the violence to which women are exposed everyday (Powell & Henry, 2017). Whether it is harassment, threats, or sending images with explicit violence to silence women who take the streets and digital networks, women globally are increasingly faced with the threat of digital violence (Ging & Siapera, 2018; Henry & Powell, 2018; Nidhi, 2015). However, according to judicial authorities, digital violence does not cause bodily harm. Moreover, as is the case with other types of violence, women's testimonies are not taken seriously (Cerva Cerna, 2021; Gardiner, 2018; Jane, 2014; Savigny, 2020). It is particularly problematic that women activists mobilizing for political purposes are constantly exposed to practices of digital violence that are aimed at instilling fear. In this context, the internet is another contested space where women are weaving networks to resist violence.

In Mexico, in the contexts of extreme (including institutional) violence against female bodies and impunity for perpetrators, women have taken to the streets and digital networks to defend their right to life without violence. The mobilization against macho acts of violence in 2016 and the protest *#NoMeCuidanMeViolan* against sexual violence by police in 2019, render visible new ways of women irrupting affectively in the political arena (Suárez & Mitrović, 2023).

New feminist materialism is a pluralistic research agenda for analyzing multiple relations from and with matter (Barad, 2003; Bennett, 2010), which will serve in this article as a guide to analyze the feminist bodily strategies against digital violence. Entanglements between political actions in public and in digital spaces are put in motion in protests in Latin America that have in common a focus on the female body. New feminist materialisms provide a fresh perspective to analyze the paradoxical situation of female bodies in our digital society: the body as the target of violence, but also with a capacity to enunciate renewed agency (Baer, 2016; Souza, 2019). In this article, I zoom in past focus

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[1] Performance of the collective Las Tesis "*Un violador en tu camino*" (see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aB7r6hdo3W4).

on mass feminist mobilizations to analyze the social fabric at the micro-scale of social feminist collectives. The guiding questions of the article is: what are the strategies of feminists against digital violence in Mexico City and how do they relate to bodily performativity forms of social justice?

To explore these questions, I conducted an ethnographic study with two feminist collective projects: *Luchadoras* and the *Laboratorio de Interconectividades*. Based on interviews and analyses of these collectives' web pages and videos, I argue that the main feminist strategies to fight against digital violence involve embodying and politicizing digital technologies. Further, I demonstrate that these are political, critical and material strategies that go beyond the idea of appropriating digital technologies in order to hack their discourses and to return to their materiality, but this time in a politicized form. The politicization of technology by feminist collectives has put in motion a repoliticization of violence and exposed its normalized practices. One example of such politicization is placing digital violence in the context of structural violence against women, and showing the state's responsibility for this violence.

Through a digital ethnography, I foreground renewed feminist entanglements with technologies, which articulate a critique of violence while enabling a political positioning aimed at subverting the logic of this violence in order to accomplish feminists' own political objectives. The feminist strategies of embodying and politicizing are linked to the critical questioning of technologies, the rendering visible of memories and affectations of digital violence in women's bodies, as well as to mobilizing bodily methodologies, for example hackfeminist self-defense and mapping the violence.

In the following section, I present the new feminism materialisms as a dynamic research agenda to analyze the paradox of female bodies in the digital society. In the third section, I analyze women in movement in the struggle against violence in Mexico. Section four discusses embodying and politicizing technologies as a form of social justice. I conclude by presenting in detail the feminist strategies against digital violence and highlighting how this renewed relationship with technology has consequences for the broader domain of emergent forms of social justice.

New Feminist Materialisms and the Paradox of Bodies on the Internet

Renewed forms of doing politics using the internet have been discussed as part of the current feminist agenda (Clark-Parsons, 2016; Esquivel, 2019; Savigny, 2020), while a body of critical literature has focused on online violence and oppression toward female bodies (Baer, 2016; García González, 2021; Noble, 2018). Between these two largely unrelated literatures is an opportunity to provide a more integrated analysis of the political role of female bodies in relation to the internet.

Despite growing critiques of the supposed immateriality of the internet (Parikka, 2015; Reichert & Richterich, 2015; Starosielski, 2015), ways of viewing it as a non-embodied social space continue to persist in the relevant literature. This tends to reinforce binaries such as the digital/non-digital divide, as well as an apparent dissociation of the body into the analog and the digital. More work is needed to provide a more integrated account of the place of the body in our increasingly digital society.

New feminist critical materialisms can assist with the task of discussing renewed ways of situating the body in its multiple power dynamics to account for both alliances and disputes with technologies. This research agenda shares an interest with other interdisciplinary areas of knowledge such as posthumanisms (Braidotti et al., 2016), which critically analyze relations with non-human entities, making visible the taxonomies of what it means to be human and how these materialize in processes of gender exclusion and inequality. With the focus on the body, new materialisms are also nourished by another research area related to the body as a political site (Bargetz, 2019; Sassatelli, 2012; Souza, 2019). There is a common focus in these research agendas to think of the body as a situated place from which we can critically rethink hierarchical relations among "others": humans, machines, algorithms, infrastructures or territories.

In Latin America, recent discussions about the political role of the body are at the center (Souza, 2019). Due to the always increasing violence against women, authors have been linking the body to political atrocities such as the war against the female body (Segato, 2016). Women's mobilizations in Latin America are not only ways of denouncing the violence enacted on their bodies but also ways of rendering visible the responsibility of the state in participating in the war against women's bodies. Thus, this renewed female agency also incorporates a discussion about alternative means for social justice. Women are not only fighting for a politics of redistribution and recognition (Fraser, 2007), they are already performing social justice on their own terms.

At the same time, bodies in movement create a political place of a renewed feminist strategies (Laudano, 2019; Souza, 2019; Sued et al., 2022). The category of the body-territory has also rendered visible the relations among bodies, territories and the practices of extractivism, violence and colonialism (Cabnal, 2010). Body-territory emerges from ecoterritorial feminisms originating from the struggle and resistance of peasant and indigenous women (Tait Lima & Moreno, 2021). Current discussions of the materiality of digital colonialism have also argued the importance of the body to render visible the affectations of territory via the internet (Mejias & Couldry, 2019; Tait Lima et al., 2022).

Women in Movement in the Struggle Against (Digital) Violence

Large social mobilizations in Latin America have been accompanied by the emergence of feminist collectives that mark a clear difference in the way women *do politics*. One of these differences is the focus on the struggle against violence toward women's bodies. Digital violence increases when female bodies are mobilized either in the streets or on social networks for political purposes. The feminist mobilizations in 2019, which followed the rape of two minors at the hands of police officers in Mexico City, constitutes one such example of digital violence enacted on the bodies of activists. Gender violence was brought back into the public spotlight after protests across 18 cities with interventions on social networks to demand justice, and to stop the impunity of gender violence in Mexico (Internet es Nuestra MX, 2019). Participants gave performances outside the police station and painted graffiti on historical monuments accompanied by the hashtags *#NoMeCuidanMeViolan* (the police do not take care of me, they rape me) and *#MeCuidanMisAmigasNoLaPolicia* (my friends take care of me, not the police). After these protests, some collectives experienced coordinated digital attacks, such as threats of rape and murder (IM-Defensoras, 2019). Likewise, hashtags that demeaned feminist mobilizations such as *#AsiNoMujeres* (not like that ladies and *#EllasNoMeRepresentan* (they do not represent me) began trending on social networks. This example shows that despite the role of technologies in feminist mobilizations, both in the streets and on social networks, technologies have still afforded space for the exercise of violence and disciplining of female bodies.

Violence thus has been consolidated as one of the main axes that articulates women's political struggles. Such violence has provoked a multitude of feminist social collectives, including those constituted of victims, family members, students, artists and activists working at the intersection of human rights, technology, law and gender. Various groups have formed alliances and thus created a social body. As a result, political spaces have now emerged that go beyond the mere circulation of hashtags and street protests. In this article the analysis of the strategies of collectives at the micro-scale emphasizes the ways in which they are performing social justice. To accomplish this task I focus on two feminist collectives in Mexico City: The Luchadoras and The Laboratorio de Interconectividades. The collectives were selected according to the following criteria: (a) that they mobilize strategies through political projects to fight digital violence, (b) that they are organized as a feminist collective, and (c) that they are located in Mexico City.

The two collectives on which I focus have both similarities and differences in their feminist strategies. Luchadoras is a social collective with a strong focus on cyberfeminism to amplify women voices on the internet through communicational strategies, whereas the Laboratorio de Interconectividades, as its names indicates, is a lab specializing in *hackfeminism* with a focus on bodily experimentation. Both collectives focus strongly on bodily strategies to fight digital violence. Members of the two collectives know each other and

collaborate in mutual projects such as workshops on self defense and hackfeminism, and the creation of feminist content on the internet.

Through a digital ethnography, I focus on these collectives' material practices, narratives and events as well as the ways in which they struggle against digital violence. According to Murthy (2011), digital ethnography is a qualitative research approach that focuses on the interweaving of offline/online spaces, and is not limited to cyberspace. Using this ethnographic approach, several types of information were collected in the period from January 2018 to December 2020.

First, face-to-face interviews lasting approximately two hours each were conducted. In the case of Luchadoras, four interviews were conducted with its members at different points in time to inquire about the evolution of certain topics as part of a larger project I am conducting.[2] However, for this article I only analyze one interview out of these four. In the case of the Laboratorio de Interconectividades, one interview was conducted and the communication was continued through an app in text and audios formats. The interviews with members of both Luchadoras and Laboratorio de Interconectividades had an open-ended question format and revolved around the following topics: the interview participants' historical trajectories as activists and feminists; how they became part of the feminist collectives to which they belong; the role that technologies have had in transforming the ways of doing feminist politics; their own meanings of politics, feminism, internet and digital violence; the main political stakes of their collective; and the legislation against digital violence and dialogues with the government after the protest of August 16, 2019.

Ethnographic notes based on participant observation served as a further source of information that emerged from social networks, blogs, websites and diverse events of the collectives. These include face-to-face workshops on various topics such as digital security, feminist self defense, feminist internet, digital literacy, and technofeminism. I also conducted participant onsite observation at the March 8, 2020, protest in Mexico City, online observation of events such as *Jornada de Hacktivismo* and the *#NoMeCuidanMeViolan* protest of August 16, 2019, as well as of a series of video interviews called *Hackear/nos*. Finally, it was possible to collect various audiovisual and textual materials from the collectives, which were sourced from websites and social networks. The main strategies that emerged from interrogating all these materials in the collectives' struggle against digital violence were the embodiment and politicization of technology. Below, I introduce the two collectives and present evidence related to those strategies.

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[2] The project is entitled "Feminist Politics against violence in the era of digitalization" and tracks how feminist collectives have been appropriating internet and digital technologies to fight digital violence against women.

The Luchadoras: "The internet is like the street, like the house, like the bed"

> We are a feminist collective that inhabits public, digital and physical space. We want women, young women and girls to live with joy and freedom both in physical and digital spaces, aware of their personal and collective strength and potential. (Luchadoras, 2020)

The collective was born in 2012 with the broadcasting of interviews on the web concerning women who are making a transformation in their environment (personal communication with a member of the Luchadoras Collective, March 9, 2018). Its political objectives are focused along two lines. The first is "*Mujeres Guerreras,*" whereby the priority is to tell the narratives of diverse women as mechanisms of social transformation. This objective is related to the creation of feminist content: video-interviews, blogs, and reviews of protests to render visible the work of social defenders and their diversity. The second is to perform an "*internet Feminista*" as a space for research and advocacy with political and social actors to politicize the use of the internet as a public space (personal communication with a member of Luchadoras collective, March 9, 2018). One of the collective's goals is to have digital violence called out as such because it impacts bodies. For the Luchadoras, the internet is like the street, like the bed: a public space to be inhabited and defended (personal communication with a member of Luchadoras collective, March 9, 2018).

According to Barrera & Rodríguez (2017) the lack of a typology of the diverse practices that encompass digital violence has contributed to significant ignorance of its existence as a public problem. The major motivation of Luchadoras is to create a methodology to render visible the materiality of digital violence. This methodology consisted of inviting 25 activists and survivors of digital violence from different states of Mexico (Chihuahua, Jalisco, Michoacán and Yucatan) to a workshop. The workshop was held over three days in March 2017, during which the activists expressed their testimonies and described the types of attacks they experienced. They poured their testimonies into a body map to render visible the violence experienced. A member of Luchadoras recounts her experience of what she lived in the following way: "it was the first time that the women named and connected the aggressions, with the impacts on their bodies" (personal communication with a member of Luchadoras collective, March 9, 2018). Based on the testimonies, Luchadoras made a typology of digital violence, contrasting it with categories from international organizations. Subsequently, they discussed this typology with other civil society organizations in Mexico such as Article 19,[3] CIMAC,[4] and the National Network of Women Human Rights Defenders, and from there published them in the document: "Online violence against women in Mexico" (Barrera &

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[3] Article 19 is an international non-governmental organization that fights against attacks on freedom of expression, including violence against journalists (www.article19.org).
[4] CIMAC is an investigative journalism organization with a gender perspective that promotes the organization of women journalists (see: www.cimac.org).

Rodriguez, 2017). This document is the first in the country to incorporate a detailed typology of practices of digital violence with a total of 13 categories, as well as the subsequent bodily harm as defined by the women themselves.[5]

In a second investigation, the Luchadoras documented digital violence aimed at taking women candidates out of the electoral process in Mexico. By monitoring testimonies of violence in the media, on social networks, in interviews and through public information requests to the government, the collective documented 85 acts of aggression associated with digital technology against 62 female candidates in 24 states. They divided these into nine types: discriminatory expressions, threats, discrediting, impersonation or identity theft, dissemination of intimate images without consent, harassment, extortion, dissemination of personal information, monitoring and stalking. Based on this evidence, the collective established that these aggressions were carried out in a coordinated fashion, which also included smear campaigns on social networks.

The Luchadoras' process of repoliticizing violence involved three strategies. Their research first provides evidence that digital violence has consequences, not only on women's bodies but also on their political trajectories, given that women candidates were unable to run for political positions owing to the violence they experienced. With this, the collective repoliticizes gender-based violence in digital environments as it shows how attacks in the private sphere of women candidates' lives resonated in the political sphere. Likewise, the report shows that 62% of the total aggressions comprised patterns of gender-related violence, with women judged and sexually objectified simply for being women. Examples of this include the sale of a whole collection of pictures with sexualized female bodies (e.g., "the best female candidates of the elections"), aggressions against one's family and insults based on gender roles or physical appearance. In the case of women human rights activists, the collective identified coordinated trends of digital violence such as viral hate responses to public denunciations on social networks, as well as being banned from social networks, suffering extortion under threat of dissemination of intimate images without consent, state surveillance, and smear campaigns. As in the case of female candidates, these tactics were clearly aimed at silencing and intimidating women for their political activities.

The collective's second strategy to repoliticize digital violence was to engage in a methodology that I refer to here as embodiment, whereby violence (including institutional violence) was mapped and then connected to bodily effects. That is to say, the methodology did not simply focus on the categorization of the various forms of violence. In addition, the objective was to make visible the effects suffered by bodies. These include bodily discomfort (sweating, nausea, crying, back, head, stomach and kidney pain), emotional

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[5] These categories are: unauthorized access or control; control and manipulation of information; impersonation and identity theft, discriminatory expressions; monitoring and stalking; harassment; threats; dissemination of personal or intimate information; extortion; smearing; technology-related sexual abuse; affecting channels of expression; omissions by actors with regulatory power (see Barrera & Rodríguez, 2017).

damage (nervous affectations, stress, anguish, anger, rage, depression, paranoia, fear, confusion, powerless feelings), bringing one's public image into disrepute, sexual harm, limitations to mobility, invasion of property and loss of identity (Barrera et al., 2018). Thus, this mapping was not only an exercise in the documentation of violence, it was a means of politicizing the effects of digital violence by traversing the category of the body.

Third, digital violence was politicized by providing 13 categories in which the various practices were described in detail. This continues to be key in counteracting reductionist discourses employed by the authorities, which try to diminish and thereby normalize digital violence.

With these three strategies, the Luchadoras broaden the meaning of the internet as a public space, helping to expose its oppression dynamics. Through this process, the Luchadoras collective then articulate themselves as subjects of rights, aiming, first and foremost, to give themselves a public voice.

Laboratorio de Interconectividades: "Everything comes from the body"

The Laboratorio de Interconectividades was created in 2014. On its website, it declares itself a nomadic experimentation space with points of intersection between art, hackfeminisms and cyberfeminism in the development of strategies of self-defense (referred to hereafter as *autodefensa*), and digital collective care. The lab seeks to inhabit the internet as a political space of encounter and a common good accessible to all in the generation of safe spaces of struggle, enjoyment, and in the provocation of an ecosystem of free culture in different interfaces of the internet, Mexico and Latin America. The political aims of the Laboratorio are digital collective care, hackfeminist autodefensa, free culture ecosystems, inhabiting the internet and creating networks and free technologies (Laboratorio de Interconectividades, 2020b).

What are our bodies capable of when they are connected? This was the question that launched the video review of the second edition of the hackfeminist autodefensa workshop held in Oaxaca in 2016 by the Laboratorio de Interconectividades. A female voice opens the video with the following introduction:

> We activate hackfeminist *autodefensa* practices in our daily fights, we want to complement strategies of collective care inside and outside the Internet. We reconnect with our bodies, autonomies, technologies and affects. We explore our intention and put into practices integral to *autodefensa*, both physical and digital. (Zaragoza, 2016).

In the video, women participants can be observed discussing strategies to counteract and reverse the impact of the aggressions of violence: "yes I am tough, and I love to be so," "discovering the inner strength from the body not only from my mind," "occupying spaces that are not for us ... by experimenting

in bodily exercises and in the *compu* that seems to be so complex" (Zaragoza, 2016).

Since 2015, the Laboratorio de Interconectividades and Comando Colibrí have allied to realize the project *Autodefensas Hackfeministas* as a hybrid methodology between martial arts techniques, feminist autodefensa and digital collective care. The goal of this methodology is to create spaces to reflect on bodies, technologies and feminisms that go beyond suggestions for reacting to digital violence, and which focus instead on the body and its work of collective strength. During my conversation with the founder of the lab, she recounted the meaning of this workshop by pointing out that they were encounters, to conspire, to weave networks, to feel, where memories of violence were awakened. At the same time, she spoke of complicity with others but "with the body turned on" (personal communication with the founder of the Laboratorio de Interconectividades, March 27, 2019).

For the Laboratorio de Interconectividades, autodefensa is not only a way of learning to defend oneself, it is above all political work. The founder explains this as follows: "Autodefensa in Mexico is communal, it is not only defense, and it is not only about martial arts. It is a deeper political process, politicized, of containment and accompaniment" (personal communication with the founder of the Laboratorio de Interconectividades, March 27, 2019). "Hacktivist" is related to the ways in which we can look at the body as our first technology, that which is cared for and defended in each of the territories it inhabits. Hackfeminism, by contrast, becomes the political stance that seeks to transcend exclusion, violence and the reproduction of power relations related to technology (Laboratorio de Interconectividades, 2020a). However, this political stance is not individual; hackfeminism refers to a way of weaving collectivity among women in an area that has been historically excluded: technology. According to Laboratorio de Interconectividades, feminism is the practice of political questioning that emanates from the body, which not only renders the memories of violence visible but also awakens a capacity for agency in terms of what one wants to be.

When the founder of the Laboratorio de Interconectividades refers to the body as the first technology and immediately relates it to hacking, she unveils a meaning that transgresses the hegemonic versions of who is authorized to be a hacker, usually limited to the knowledge of a male expert. Instead, Laboratotio de Interconctividades confronts these discourses when it asks: where is the freedom of bodies in free software technologies, as well as the techniques to hack the body? As a way of hacking corporate discourses related to technology, they appeal to a vision of the body as the first liberating technology and this necessarily implies "getting hands on, arming and disarming not only the machines to see how they work, but above all the bodies" (personal communication with the founder of the Laboratorio de Interconectividades, March 27, 2019). For the Laboratorio de Interconectividades bodies are like machines in the sense that they require self-care to remove the violence by doing a reset (personal communication with the founder of the Laboratorio de Interconectividades, March 27, 2019). They suggest hacking narratives that you

can be part of, where female bodies do fit and where vast technical knowledge is not a prerequisite. With this, the Laboratorio hacks the very discourse that tends to exclude women and reproduce violence within hacker communities.

The Laboratorio de Interconectividades also articulates a critique of the disembodied and unsituated discourse of technologies (Haraway, 1991). Hence, in the autodefensa workshops, care is developed as a form of awareness of the body and its relationship with technologies in order to hack those same technologies. The Laboratorio narrative it is very clear that embodying technologies is a specific means of politicizing the internet. As such, it could be said that hackfeminist autodefensa is just that: crossing the divide between the body and digital technology.

It is thus not surprising that computers were rarely used during the actual workshop. Instead, the body was enunciated in all the activities that took place. Embodied exchanges of information were one such example. This refers to the exercise where bodies precisely simulate antennas in order to regain their materiality and question their impact on both bodies and territories. Each movement in the workshop was part of a strategy to connect the body with an apparently immaterial practice. "How do you move when you see violence coming, how do you make it not only a reaction, but also a strategic one?," asks the Laboratorio de Interconectividades. As such, embodying technologies are related to observing, feeling and questioning the materiality on the internet. The founder of the Laboratorio further explains this materiality as follows: "the body is always there, and it resonates, reacts physically, chemically and emotionally, it is affected by one thing and another. You can feel a blow in the same way no matter what the scenario is, if it is violence" (personal communication with the founder of Laboratorio de Interconectividades, March 27, 2019). Her narrative unveils a continuum of bodies and technologies in political processes. This continuum is not articulated to exalt a triumphalist discourse of technologies. Rather, it is traversed by the body in order to question disembodied corporate discourses, and to emphasize the ways in which digital violence has affective impacts. The Laboratorio refers to technologies as interfaces, which facilitate action, communication and connection. From this perspective, the meetings of the Laboratorio de Interconectividades were concrete moments of interconnection and bodily experimentation. They hacked the corporate narrative and focused instead on the political network of affection in the sense of very close work with bodies. That is why the collective bears the name "laboratorio" (laboratory), as a space of bodily experimentation to reflect and feel what happens when you connect the body within the context of consumer technologies and how this relationship between technologies also consumes you as you are using them (personal communication with the founder of the Laboratorio de Interconectividades, March 27, 2019).

As could be seen in the Luchadoras workshop, Laboratorio de Interconectividades similarly affirms that women experienced an awakening of memories of violence from years before in the course of their hackfeminist autodefensa work. The Laboratorio explains that many women were shocked

by everything happening in their bodies. She herself had felt pain from physical exertion, but had never experienced what it was like to feel pain because her body was awakening (Laboratorio de Interconectividades, personal communication, March 27, 2019). This idea of awakening can be read as an awakening of the violences that have gone through it, of the impact of hate speeches, of corporate abuses, as well as others that intersect with pain. It is a pain that, when felt, is questioned, situated, politicized, put into movement in the form of effects. These are the basis of the autodefensa as a political strategy.

The Laboratorio de Interconectividades accounts for the imbrications between bodies and territories when the founder states that if you defend territories, you are thinking about the body, and if you defend the body you are also thinking about community (Laboratorio de Interconectividades, personal communication, March 27, 2019). In fact, the Laboratorio's idea of hackfeminist autodefensa is very close to that of defending bodies, and this cannot be understood without situating them in specific territories (Cabnal, 2010), which in this case refers to the consequences of technological corporatism and the institutional violence that they house.

Embodying Technologies as a Form of Social Justice

From the body, the methodologies proposed by both collectives resituated the materiality that is inherent to digital violence. For the Laboratorio de Interconectividades, the body is the first technology – not only to resist but also to liberate and stand in the world. All this gives life to a new feminist political positioning called hackfeminist autodefensa that seeks to transgress the separation between technology on the one hand, and bodies on the other, in order to politicize both. In the same way, for the Luchadoras, the body is the category from which digital violence is politicized. From this category, the dichotomies of public/private, digital/non-digital violence and technology/body are each interrogated to show their continuities and their political possibilities. The internet is then conceived of as a public space to occupy, and at the same time as a disputed territory where bodies are violated. Both collectives are fighting the battle to inhabit the internet as a feminist space, and thereby mobilize these strategies as forms of embodied social justice.

Both projects transgress offline and online dichotomies and especially question the idea that the body cannot be violated on the internet because it is not present. Bringing the category of the body to the forefront broadens understandings of it not only in its material-corporeal aspect, but in its broader effects. These transgress the limits of the body itself in its temporal and spatial dimension (Haraway, 1991; Powell & Henry, 2017). This extension of embodiment coheres with new feminist materialisms in thinking about matter in refreshing ways (Coole & Frost, 2010; Menjívar, 2009). From this position, the body is not a mere object of digital violation. Rather, it is a site of politics

where the capacity to actively inflict physical and material damage comes to the fore. These possibilities of materialization challenge the discourses of governmental and corporate authorities in their attempts to erase female bodies and their effects, and only make them visible in order to monitor or commercialize them (Noble, 2018).

The Luchadoras Collective politicized technology as a way to create a counter-narrative to judicial authorities and demonstrate that digital violence does indeed have an impact on bodies. Moreover, digital violence also has consequences in the political careers of women candidates. They did so by analyzing the cases of various women, including activists and women candidates who were seeking to attain political positions through the electoral process, and who had experienced digital violence.

For its part, the Laboratorio de Interconectividades politicized technologies through workshops to raise awareness of the materiality of infrastructures and of the circulation of information on the internet, which undoubtedly enabled a feminist critique and a counter proposal to the ways in which technologies are currently embodied. This counter proposal stresses not only the use of open software technologies but advocating above all for the liberation of bodies as a condition to liberate technologies as well.

Another point of convergence between both collective projects is in the memory of the violence that was awakened in the workshops. Both methodologies show testimonies of feeling that the body had awakened to the affectivity of violence. Each demonstrated that being in a collective served to contain the linked emotions as well as politicizing them. This was a clear process of politicization of affects as feminist materialist strategies (Bargetz, 2015; Liljeström, 2015). The Luchadoras did this through workshops to unveil the embodiment of the acts of violence, while Laboratorio de Interconectividades carried it out through hackfeminist autodefensa workshops as a bodily method to awaken dormant violence. Once again, the category of the body allowed mapping the various formats of violence (institutional, familial, political, digital) that intersect in it, turning it into an embodied disputed space (Brown & Gershon, 2017). This shows a critical materialist feminist positioning that reveals that these collectives go beyond the discursive dimension of violence in social networks that has received the most attention in the literature (Caro Castaño, 2015; Giraldo-Luque et al., 2018). The strategies mobilized by both collectives to fight against digital violence were located in the body so as to release it from all those discourses that had materialized in effects, and, from there, to embody technologies from a critical positioning.

Therefore, both projects also have similarities in politicizing affects. In the Luchadoras project, the effects of digital violence on the body are situated. In the case of the Laboratorio, the effects of the violence of the body that were awakened in the encounters are politicized to weave networks of affection and organize from the hackfeminist autodefensa. Both projects imagine innovative forms of social justice from the body and its effects; for example, the idea of taking effects as a political motive materialized in the slogan "choose to live," which advocates the right to life in a context of extreme violence against female

bodies. Choose to live contentedly feeling peace, not just reacting to violence (personal communication with the founder of the Laboratorio de Interconectividades, March 27, 2019). This slogan is also a way of vindicating women as subjects of rights to a life free of violence.

These accounts aimed at seeking forms of social justice, the focus of which extended beyond the distribution or the recognition of rights (Fraser, 2007). These rights are articulated beyond universalist categories (Souza, 2019) and are therefore not limited to the actions of the government. In the face of a context of systematic violence as in Mexico, the feminist strategies show female bodies with agency, bodies determined to shake off the label of victims. Instead, they perform social justice, in the sense of creating enunciated reality (Barad, 2003): the kind of justice that the state cannot provide. This agency is also expressed in a renewed emphasis on technologies not as neutral extensions of the body, but as entities to be politicized. From these effects of violence, there emerges a capacity for women to assert their agency and actively make demands.

In addition, both projects see the internet as more than a communication network. The internet is a disputed territory where women's bodies continue to be objectified, controlled, disciplined and violated (La_jes, 2018). The Luchadoras emphasizes the internet as a public space that women have to fight to inhabit. The Laboratorio de Interconectividades, on the other hand, reappropriates the category of body-territory (Cruz, 2016) to explore the internet as a territory that is not disembodied. Given that bodies are linked to territories, and that at the same time the internet has impacts on diverse territories, hackfeminist autodefensa is practiced as a real political option for social justice. By making the materiality of the internet visible in terms of bodies, spaces and disputes between its diverse actors, hackfeminist autodefensa is a performative way to inhabit that territory, to defend it, to embody it and politicize it. In fact, after the demonstrations of August 2019, in the face of failed attempts to engage in dialogue with the Mexico City Government, women organized themselves in feminist assemblies where the option of creating autodefensa nuclei throughout Mexico City was discussed. These assemblies were created as a counterweight to the government's weak actions in the face of gender, political and institutional violence. As a result, the groups *Asamblea Feminista Metropolitana* and *Asamblea Feminista Autónoma e Independiente* were created as coordinating entities for various actions and mobilizations in micro-collectivities.

Conclusions

In this article, I have proposed that new feminist materialisms have allowed us to bring materiality back to the internet, with the focus not only in infrastructures but above all bodies and their affectations. I have also argued that embodiment and politicization are the main feminist strategies to fight

against digital violence. These strategies involve the politicization of technology and with it, the repoliticization of violence by rendering visible the effects on the body. My argument contributes to a movement beyond current debates on the utopias and dystopias of the internet. New feminist materialisms have allowed us to situate female bodies at the crossroads of digital society. Bodies can be located as the target of disciplinary acts of digital violence enacted as retribution for their political mobilizations, as well as for their ability to hack technology with a view to carrying out their political objectives. It is from these actions that innovative forms of social justice emerged. By engaging in methodologies of embodying technologies, feminist collectives created innovative forms of social justice in the face of a bleak panorama of violence against women's bodies under extreme cases of negligence, impunity and omission of action by the corresponding authorities. The politicization of technologies to render visible the memory of violence and the mobilization of effects, as well as hackfeminist autodefensa, were ways in which women showed a capacity for agency as political subjects with the right to justice beyond the tutelage of the state (Souza, 2019).

   The politicization of both technology and violence served as a form of social justice in three ways: first, to argue that technologies are not neutral and that the internet is a space where violence and the disciplining of bodies are reproduced; second, to articulate a counterargument to that of the government in order to assert that digital violence does harm bodies; and third, the refusal to see digital violence as a new phenomenon that would erase the trajectory of historical feminist resistance. In the war against female bodies (Segato, 2016), these are embodied forms of social justice that, above all, defend the lives and integrity of women. This shows a renewed feminist agency in organizing to defend the territory of the internet. Ultimately, what is stake here is feminist politics performing social justice in our increasingly digital society.

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