The Political Women of «Change» in X: Criticizing the Opponent and Monitoring Power

LAS MUJERES POLÍTICAS DEL «CAMBIO» EN X: CRÍTICA AL ADVERSARIO Y MONITORIZACIÓN DEL PODER

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Abstract: X, formerly known as Twitter, is a fundamental tool in political actors' current communication strategy due to due to its ability to enable a two-way dialogue between social actors. This research identifies how Ibero-American political women «of change» interact on this digital platform, as well as evaluating their mentions of political responsibility attributions (i.e., posts that contain another person's username). These actors are activists who employ X to access institutional politics as spokespeople for social transformation. This study's methodology is based on the technique of content analysis that combines both quantitative and qualitative dimensions, focused on critical discourse analysis. The results confirm the predominance of two communicative strategies among the political women under study. On the one hand, the use of mentions is oriented towards criticizing adversaries while, on the other, it is focused on the monitoring and control of political power.

Keywords: X/Twitter; social media; political communication; political women; interaction; political responsibility

Resumen: X/Twitter es una de las herramientas fundamentales en la estrategia comunicativa de los actores políticos en la actualidad debido a las posibilidades que permite para la generación de un diálogo bidireccional entre actores sociales. El objetivo de esta investigación es conocer cómo se producen este tipo de interacciones en esta plataforma digital por parte las mujeres políticas iberoamericanas «del cambio», así como evaluar las menciones por atribuciones de responsabilidad política realizadas. Estas actoras emergen del activismo y acceden a la política institucional como portavoces de la transformación social. La metodología se basa en la aplicación de la técnica del análisis de contenido que combina una dimensión cuantitativa junto a otra de naturaleza cualitativa, focalizada en el análisis crítico del discurso. Los resultados demuestran el predominio de dos usos en las estrategias comunicativas de las mujeres política estudiadas en relación con la interactividad dialógica. Por un lado, el uso de menciones se orienta hacia la crítica al adversario mientras que, por otro, se focaliza hacia la monitorización y fiscalización del poder político.

Palabras clave: X/Twitter; medios sociales; comunicación política; mujeres políticas; interacción; responsabilidad política.

1. Introduction

In the context of digital political communication, the advantages of X, formerly known as Twitter, as a tool for bidirectional dialogue, are that it allows its users not only to interact directly but also to participate in public affairs. This platform has thus become a new medium for deliberating on key political issues and democratic processes that affect society (Chadwick, 2017; Marcos-García *et al.,* 2021). Political actors can both be producers of their own content (Jungherr *et al*., 2020) and engage with other users, including citizens (Casero-Ripollés, 2018).

This ability of citizens to express their political views at any time makes X a fundamental space for questioning political elites while simultaneously expressing their own opinions, whether individual or collective, with minimal intermediaries or censorship (Sampedro-Blanco & de la Fuente, 2010; Muro-Ampuero & Bach, 2019). By promoting citizen participation and influence (González Baquero & Amores, 2024), this digital platform can help improve relationships and democracy through dialogue (Pineda-Martínez & Castañeda Zumeta, 2014).

Previous research has demonstrated the potential of social media in political communication, promoting bidirectionality, which enables rapid and effective interaction between political parties, their leaders, and citizens (Rodríguez-Andrés & Ureña Uceda, 2011; Zugasti-Azagra & Pérez-González, 2015). Others, however, have argued that these platforms are being used merely as a means of disseminating information, without taking advantage of their interactive tools (Pineda-Martínez & Castañeda Zumeta, 2014; Alonso-Muñoz *et al.*, 2016; Gamir-Ríos *et al.,* 2022; De Sola Pueyo & Pascual Santisteve, 2024; Liberia-Vaya *et al.,* 2024), or even fostering homophilic relationships (Israel-Turim *et al*., 2022).

This study's objective is to examine the dialogic practices employed by female politicians in the Ibero-American context, highlighting figures such as Ada Colau, the first female mayor of Barcelona, and Camila Vallejo, a student leader and current Minister of Government in Chile, who have made social transformation the core of their political agenda. First, the study will explore which social actors these political figures interact with on X, aiming to understand their interest in direct dialogue through this platform. Additionally, it will analyze the use of dialogic interactivity for their attribution of political responsibility through mentions (i.e., posts that contain another person's username). In doing so, the research seeks to identify new communication strategies in the digital environment.

1.1. Dialogic Interaction and Political Communication on X

The transformation of political communication in recent years is closely linked to the emergence and growing prominence of digital technologies and social media. Changes have occurred not only in the ways actors interact, enabling more direct engagement with public issues and creating direct channels of communication and interaction with political actors but also in the role of traditional media (Zugasti Azagra & Pérez González, 2015).

The digital communication landscape is far more competitive than it was in previous decades, characterized by the emergence of new forms of participation in democratic processes (Chadwick, 2017). Nowadays, any actor can take on a more active role in the political communication process (Marcos-García *et al.*, 2017). This redefines the asymmetrical relationship between different actors, giving way to multidirectional exchange (Castells, 2013) and leading to a qualitative change that can affect power relations (Subirats, 2011; Cáceres-Zapatero *et al.*, 2015), foster spectacularization (Ferré-Pavia & Codina, 2022), and encourage personalization (Álvarez-Monsiváis, 2023).

The use of X in political communication enables an automatic and instantaneous exchange of messages (Campos-Domínguez, 2017). This aspect represents one of the platform's major advantages, as it offers the possibility of establishing dialogue with citizens, fostering conversation through direct, technology-mediated contact (Alonso-Muñoz *et al.,* 2016).
The characteristics of this social media platform, including its immediacy and speed in sending and receiving messages, facilitate interaction among users. X enables bidirectional communication between institutions, politicians, and citizens, fostering fluid exchanges in political conversations and debates (Marín Dueñas *et al.,* 2019). In this way, it functions as a system that enhances human networks—an interconnected web of individuals that promotes interconnection as a social value (Van Dijck, 2016). Thus, this digital platform strengthens connectivity among individuals and interactivity, enabling active and dynamic participation while fostering political and social dialogue. This has made X one of the most prominent social media platforms for political use.

However, it has been found that political actors' use of this digital platform is conservative. Previous research has shown that representatives are more interested in disseminating information and promoting their agendas (Ribalko & Seltzer, 2010; Alonso-Muñoz *et al.,* 2016; Guerrero-Solé & Mas-Manchón, 2017; Marín Dueñas *et al.,* 2019) than in generating dialogue with other social actors (Alonso-Muñoz *et al.,* 2016; García-Ortega & Zugasti-Azagra, 2018; Stromer-Galley, 2019; Martínez Juan & Marqués-Pascual, 2020;

De Sola Pueyo & Pascual Santisteve, 2024; Liberia-Vaya *et al.,* 2024). These results shows that the interactivity promoted by political actors in X has been more potential than real (Gamir-Ríos *et al.*, 2022; López-Meri & López-Rabadán, 2024).

1.2. Monitoring and Attribution of Political Responsibility on X
Participation in political conversation on X allows social actors to make previously unaddressed topics or issues visible (Campos-Domínguez, 2017). By informing, debating, and participating freely (Jenkins, 2006; Ceccarini, 2015), the range of previously invisible topics, such as those related to corruption, social issues, or inequalities (Jiang, 2014; Casero-Ripollés, 2015), potentially expands, as well as matters concerning the attribution of political responsibility. Now, not only the media, but also parties, politicians, and citizens, can make their value judgments known and/or message about political and social responsibility in the digital context. This can foster citizen engagement by addressing demands for political participation while providing new tools for government oversight that are accessible to everyone (Sandoval *et al.,* 2023).

Within the process of digital political communication, the production, distribution, and consumption of information also impacts democracy (Casero-Ripollés & López-Meri, 2015). This enables mechanisms for scrutinizing the actions of public institutions and opens the possibility of questioning the behavior of high-ranking political actors. This represents the emergence of new ways to examine power that go beyond institutionally established mechanisms and connect with new forms of extrarepresentative political participation (Schudson, 1998). Citizens are no longer just spectators; they now have tools to monitor and hold politicians accountable, effectively becoming 'inspectors' as well (Pérez Soberón, 2023). This strengthens the concept of monitorial democracy (Feenstra *et al.*, 2017; Keane, 2009), as citizens gain the ability to act as a counterpower capable of exposing malpractice and abuses of power, thereby demanding accountability.

In this way, a counterbalance is created to influence the political system, shape its behavior, actions, and even decisions (Castells, 2013). The technological tools and abundance of information derived from the digital environment enable citizens to address issues related to political responsibility within the democratic system, such as transparency, accountability, participation, and collaboration between political and economic power.

Political responsibility lies with the representatives of citizens within democratic bodies, particularly those holding the highest offices. It is the

obligation of those who hold public office to be accountable. When an individual or institution is identified as responsible, it is asserted that they have performed -or failed to perform- certain actions, for which they must take responsibility and be politically accountable.

Responsibility is also considered essential in electoral control over governments (Lago Peñas & Lago Peñas, 2013). Therefore, the evaluation of responsibility is a crucial factor for the sustainability and consolidation of contemporary democracies.

2. Methodology

2.1. Objectives

Our aim is to comparatively analyze the connective interactions and generation of dialogue that Ibero-American women politicians «of change» engage in on X with other social actors, such as media, politicians, institutions, and citizens.

Additionally, two specific objectives are proposed. The first is to examine how these politicians use mentions on X to engage in dialogue with other social actors. The second is to explore how these political figures attribute political responsibility on X through the use of mentions.

2.2. Research Technique and Sample

To address the proposed objectives, this research bases its methodology on the application of the content analysis technique. This technique combines a quantitative and qualitative dimension, focused on critical discourse analysis (van Dijk, 1993, 2006; Fairclough, 2010).

The sample's posts were obtained using the Twitonomy Premium tool. The content of messages published by the selected X profiles was analyzed, with each publication assessed manually rather than through automated means. The analytical period covers the whole of 2020. The sample was drawn from alternate weeks, starting with the first week of January, the second week of February, and so on, until the year ended in December. This approach ensures a routine period, avoiding significant political events, such as election campaigns, which could introduce biases into the sample. A total of 1,559 posts were analyzed.

This study is based on the X profiles of politicians referred to as women «of change» in the Ibero-American context. The concept «of change» refers to a new way of conceptualizing and practicing politics, understood as a space of counterpower where social and political transformations are conveyed, supported, and challenged, allowing for a reconceptualization of citizenship and democracy (Castells, 2013). This approach seeks to question traditional

political structures and promote a more inclusive and participatory politics. In this context, female politicians «of change» are those who are discursively constructed as representatives of a renewing political force, tasked not only with monitoring existing structures but also actively transforming them. These women, originating from citizen movements, platforms, and new political parties, are seen as key agents of change within Ibero-American societies (Pepe-Oliva & Casero-Ripollés, 2023).

The sample for this research includes 10 female politicians from eight different countries: Myriam Bregman (Argentina); Vilma Ripoll (Argentina); Camila Vallejo (Chile); Ana Erazo (Colombia); Ada Colau (Spain); Teresa Rodríguez (Spain); Martha Tagle (Mexico); Veronika Mendoza (Peru); Marisa Matías (Portugal); and Verónica Mato (Uruguay). Their selection is motivated, on the one hand, by their self-identification as critics of traditional political practices and advocates for causes related to social change. Additionally, it incorporates broad geographic diversity by including representatives from eight Ibero-American countries. Furthermore, they occupy different positions in the government-opposition political spectrum. Finally, their selection is based on historical and political criteria, as all of them come from countries where military dictatorships or authoritarian regimes have profoundly shaped the political culture, creating fertile ground for the emergence of critical leadership committed to change and social justice. These criteria ensure that the sample is representative for conducting a comparative analysis and obtaining meaningful results.

2.3. Analytical Model

The analytical model consists of three variables to address the first objective (see Tables 1 and 2), which aims, as said, to study and compare how Ibero-American women politicians «of change» use mentions on X not only to establish bidirectional dialogue with other actors but also to identify the type of interactions and their recipients.

Table 1. *Mention and type*

Do the posts contain mentions? (If the answer is affirmative, the table is completed accordingly)	NO		
	YES		
Type of Mention	**Indirect**	**Direct**	**Mixed**

Source: Made by authors.

Table 2. *Actors Mentioned in the Posts*

	Mentions of ...
1	Politicians in Governing Roles
2	Their Party, Party Members, or Allied Party
3	The King, Crown, Royal Household, or its members
4	Opposition Politicians
5	Citizenship
6	NGOs, Organizations, or Social or Cultural Movements
7	Journalists or Media Outlets
8	Figures from Sports, Culture, or Entertainment
9	Large Corporations
10	International Organizations: e.g., the IMF, World Bank, FAO, Council of Europe, UN, WHO, etc.
11	Security Forces and Agencies: e.g., Military, Police, and Firefighters, etc.
12	Judicial Institutions, or their members
13	Victims or affected individuals
14	Universities or Academic Institutions
15	Unions or Union Members
16	Healthcare Institutions: Doctors, Nurses, and Healthcare Personnel
17	State Agencies: State Public Employment Service, National Hydrocarbons Agency, National Women's Council, Ombudsman of the Nation, etc.
18	Others

Source: own elaboration.

To address the second objective, the analytical model seeks to delve into the content of the posts to determine whether mentions are intended to attribute political responsibility. For this purpose, the variables consider whether the mention involves attributing political responsibility, whom it references, and the topic of the mention (Table 3).

Table 3. *Is the Mention in the Post related to a Political Responsibility Issue?1*

Is the mention in the post related to a political responsibility issue? (If the answer is affirmative, the table is completed accordingly)	NO	YES
Who is being referenced?	Her or Her Team	
	Her Party	
	Government	
	Opposition	
	National Institutions (Judicial, Union, Police, Universities, Healthcare, etc.)	
	International Organizations or Institutions	
	Others	
Causes or Reasons for the Mention	**Description**	
Do not give public explanations	Publications in which the political actor reproaches other politicians, the government or the opposition, for not responding or explaining their decisions in parliament.	
Accountability	Publications in which the political actor refers to practices of economic transparency, oversight of public accounts or financial transparency.	
Threat to the deterioration of democracy	Publications in which the political actor denounces and calls for the fight against corruption. The influence of clientelism and the abuse of power are denounced. Publications denouncing or criticizing laws or decrees that are detrimental to the population.	
Lack of preparation for his or her position, or 'illegal' positions	Publications in which the political actor denounces the appointment of public officials who lack the qualifications and skills for the role for which they were elected, mainly due to their lack of competence to assume that role, or for not having the merits and experience appropriate to the tasks to be performed.	
Not making decisions in time	Publications in which the political actor criticizes or denounces political responsibility for not making decisions in time or as quickly as the problem required, as well as speeding up	

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[1] Posts in which political actors were mentioned indirectly or in a mixed manner (as detailed above) were also counted. That is, those where their last or full name was mentioned.

	processes that required more time for their execution.
Thematic issues of public policy	Publications that address public policy issues related to political responsibility, such as human rights, ecology, social issues, education, the economy, health problems (e.g., Covid-19), etc.
Actions by the Security Forces and Corps	Publications in which political actors demand accountability for the actions or functions of the Security Forces and Corps.
Others	Publications that do not correspond to any of the above questions.

Source: own elaboration.

3. Results

3.1. New Technologies, Old Dynamics: Interactions with Other Social Actors

All the political actors under study made extensive use of mentions, employing this interactive resource in more than 67% of their messages. According to the analyzed data (Table 4), mentions within posts are used frequently and in significant numbers. Above the average (57.25%) are: Erazo (67.58%), Vallejo (61.21%), Matias (61.02%), and Colau (57.82%). While the remaining actors do not exceed the average, it is worth highlighting the high percentages present across all profiles. This demonstrates a widespread use of this functionality as part of their communication strategy on X.

Table 4. *Is there Interaction on the Post?*

Politician	Yes	No
Colau	57.82%	42.18%
Rodríguez	57.14%	42.86%
Matias	61.02%	38.98%
Bregman	56.05%	43.95%
Ripoll	56.62%	43.38%
Vallejo	61.21%	38.79%
Mato	52.31%	47.69%
Mendoza	53.85%	46.15%
Erazo	67.58%	32.42%
Tagle	48.94%	51.06%
Mean	57.25%	42.75%

Source: own elaboration.

What differs in each of the politicians' communication strategies is the way in which interaction takes place. As observed, three types of interaction have been identified: direct, indirect, or mixed (Table 5). Regarding this, it is noteworthy that there is very little difference between the average use of direct (41.30%) and indirect mentions (47.25%), with the latter having a slight predominance. However, the use of mixed mentions is significantly lower (11.45%).

Table 5. *Type of Mentions*

Politician	Indirect	Direct	Mixed
Colau	47.06%	51.76%	1.18%
Rodríguez	48.00%	42.00%	10.00%
Matias	61.11%	22.22%	16.67%
Bregman	45.26%	30.53%	24.21%
Ripoll	48.05%	44.16%	7.79%
Vallejo	66.41%	27.48%	6.11%
Mato	52.94%	32.35%	14.71%
Mendoza	37.14%	48.57%	14.29%
Erazo	11.49%	77.70%	10.81%
Tagle	55.07%	36.23%	8.70%
Mean	47.25%	41.30%	11.45%

Source: own elaboration.

Direct interaction occurs when an actor is cited in a message using the mention feature (@user) specific to X. Erazo (77.70%) has most frequently used this method, with significant percentages also observed in Colau (57.76%) and Mendoza (48.57%). This type of resource makes the actor's political communication more dialogic, open, and participatory. By employing this method visibility and interaction is sought, by generating questions, answers, and/or comments from the mentioned actors. Since mentioning them with their username within the network sends a notification to their mentions, they can respond if they choose to do so.

Indirect mentions refer to citing an actor without using the mention feature (@user), and instead identifying them by their name and/or surname, position, or role. This type of practice is predominantly used by Vallejo (66.41%),

Matias (61.11%), Tagle (55.07%), Mato (52.94%), Rodríguez (48.00%), Vila Ripoll (48.05%), and Bregman (45.26%).

This form of interaction does not have a dialogic or confrontational intention but rather aims to deliver slogans to be heard by their followers or to serve as a channel for criticism. The name of the mentioned actor is secondary within the message, as the goal is not to generate dialogue but rather to express criticism, provide counterarguments, or demonstrate a different perspective from that expressed by the cited actor. As the results show, the female politicians who maintain a highly critical narrative toward their governments or opposition assume a significant role in this category.

Finally, mixed interaction, where more than one actor is cited, but in some cases, the mention feature (@user) is used and in others, they are cited indirectly, is the least utilized resource by the politicians under study. Bregman uses this resource the most (24.21%), while Colau employs it the least (1.18%).

Regarding the number of mentions, a single mention per message predominates (Table 6). In this case, Mato employs this strategy the most (with 82.35% of the total). In contrast, the profiles of Bregman and Erazo use the resource of multiple mentions within the same message, where a post contains two or more mentions, accounting for over 47% of their posts. In a secondary position in the use of multiple mentions are Vallejo and Matias, with more than 33%, and Rodríguez, Tagle, and Ripoll, with more than 28% of the total.

By not predominantly using the direct mention resource, the impact of numerous appeals to actors becomes diluted within the content of the posts. It is worth noting that Erazo is one of the analyzed politicians who, in addition to frequently resorting to multiple mentions, uses direct mentions more often. We can deduce that, through this, she not only seeks to establish dialogue with other actors but also aims to gain visibility or amplify the issues or debates she raises in her posts.

Table 6. *Number of Mentions in the Posts of the Leaders*

Politician	1	2	3	4	5 or more
Colau	75.29%	11.76%	10.59%	2.35%	
Rodríguez	68.00%	23.00%	6.00%	3.00%	
Matias	66.67%	19.44%	11.11%	2.78%	
Bregman	52.63%	30.53%	12.63%	4.21%	
Ripoll	71.43%	20.78%	6.49%		1.30%

Vallejo	66.41%	26.72%	6.11%	0.76%	
Mato	82.35%	11.76%	5.88%		
Mendoza	77.14%	11.43%	8.57%	2.86%	
Erazo	52.03%	25.00%	8.78%	6.08%	8.11%
Tagle	69.57%	24.64%	4.35%	1.45%	

Source: own elaboration.

Although the politicians under study mention a wide variety of actors of different types (Table 7), most focus their digital political communication on five main categories of actors: a) politicians in government; b) their own party or allied parties; c) opposition parties; d) journalists and media outlets; and e) to a lesser extent, social or nonprofit organizations. This demonstrates that, despite the great dialogic potential offered by X, across all the studied politicians, interaction with citizens is significantly lower compared to interaction with other actors. This reveals the limited attention given to citizens by the female politicians. It reflects a continuation of a more conventional strategy typical of traditional communication and its actors, in which politicians interact with other politicians, personalities, and/or journalists or media outlets, leaving citizens aside. Colau, while having a majority percentage of mentions falling into these categories, records the highest number of mentions directed at citizens in her posts, reaching 10.85% of the total (Table 7). The remaining female politicians fall below that percentage.

Table 7. *Main Mentioned Actors*

Politician	Politicians	Her Party or Allied Parties	Journalists or Media	Opposition	Social Organizations	Citizens	Others
Colau	14.73%	20.16%	0.78%	8.53%	10.85%	10.85%	34.11%
Rodríguez	20.14%	36.11%	9.03%	11.11%		2.78%	20.83%
Matias	2.00%	30.00%	8.00%	6.00%	8.00%	6.00%	40.00%
Bregman	17.81%	6.56%	28.12%	9.38%	1.88%	0.94%	35.31%
Ripoll	33.33%	19.44%	10.19%	6.48%	0.93%	2.78%	26.85%
Vallejo	50.80%	7.49%	4.28%	6.95%	2.67%	4.28%	23.53%
Mato	22.73%	50.00%	4.55%		2.27%	2.27%	18.18%
Mendoza	20.41%	22.45%		6.12%	2.04%	6.12%	42.86%
Erazo	43.14%	12.04%	9.03%	2.68%	4.68%	3.01%	25.42%

Tagle	44.21%	6.32%	8.42%	14.74%	9.47%	2.11%	14.74%
Mean	26.93%	21.06%	8.24%	7.20%	4.28%	4.11%	28.18%

Source: own elaboration

Analyzing comparatively across the profiles of the studied political actors, as previously noted, the main mentioned actors, with the highest average (26.93%), are politicians in government. Vallejo (50.80%), Erazo (43.14%), and Tagle (44.21%) stand out in this regard, dedicating a significant percentage of their mentions to these figures. These actors focus their communication strategy on mentioning government officials as a form of criticism of their political opponents rather than to build dialogue or interaction. The tone of these messages is always negative, alerting, or threatening, as they cast doubt or challenge those being mentioned.

Secondly, mentions of members of their affiliated party are significant, with a lower average (21.06%) and a much less critical intention. These types of mentions aim to provide visibility, support, or highlight the work being done, or proposed projects. Additionally, the messages are accompanied by a more emphatic, positive, and encouraging tone. The female politicians analyzed who exceed the average in mentions of their affiliated party are Mato (50%), Rodríguez (36.11%), Matias (30%), and Mendoza (22.45%).

Bregman has a different approach from the rest, as she stands out as the leading actor in mentions of journalists and media outlets (28.12%). In this way, she gives visibility to articles, publications, or debates within the press that is generally aligned with her party or parliamentary group.

3.2. Mentions for Political Responsibility Issues

The studied political actors use X to make mentions that attribute political responsibilities in 44.25% of the total cases, with some reaching up to 67.65% of their messages (Table 8). The primary target is the government. It is also notable that they frequently hold others accountable for public policy issues, particularly regarding COVID-19 management and protocols, while the percentage of mentions attributing responsibility to themselves is low. This may be related to a limited level of self-criticism in the communication strategy of most of the analyzed politicians.

Table 8. *Is the Mention in the Post related to a Political Responsibility Issue?*

Politician	Yes	No
Colau	20.00%	80.00%
Rodríguez	37.00%	63.00%
Matias	30.56%	69.44%
Bregman	37.89%	62.11%
Ripoll	55.84%	44.16%
Vallejo	62.60%	37.40%
Mato	23.53%	76.47%
Mendoza	67.65%	32.35%
Erazo	52.38%	47.62%
Tagle	55.07%	44.93%
Mean	44.25%	55.75%

Source: own elaboration.

Comparing the different profiles, Mendoza (67.65%) is the politician who most frequently uses mentions to attribute political responsibility (Table 7). Like many of the analyzed actors, the national government (43.48%) is the primary target of her criticisms, particularly the President of the Government, Martín Vizcarra, or the National Congress.

Vallejo, with 62.60% of mentions related to political responsibility, employs a strategy similar to Mendoza, focusing her discourse primarily on holding the government accountable (68.29%) (Table 9). This includes Chilean President Sebastián Piñera, the Senate or National Congress, as well as ministers. Similarly, Ripoll (with 55.84% of mentions related to political responsibility) points to the government (38.89%) as the main responsible party, represented by the leader of the Buenos Aires Province, Alex Kicillof, and the head of the government of CABA, Horacio Larreta. Regarding mentions of self-responsibility, this profile presents the lowest rate (2.33%). Another leader who builds her strategy on a significant use of mentions for political responsibility is Erazo (52.38%). The main actor she references as responsible is the government (67.53%) (Table 9), primarily that led by Iván Duque, but she also mentions the regional government of Cali, where she works.

Tagle also demonstrates a notable level of mentions related to political responsibility, accounting for 55.07% of the total. Although her posts primarily target the Mexican government (44.74%), especially President López Obrador, she stands out for self-referential mentions, which comprises 21.05% of the total. However, rather than focusing on self-criticism, these mentions are aimed

at justifying or explaining her political or legal initiatives. This strategy, similar to that used by Vallejo or Rodríguez, is oriented more toward self-justification than accountability.

Table 9. *Actors to Whom Political Responsibility is Attributed*

Politician	Government	Opposition	Institutions	Own	International Organizations	Others
Colau	41.18%	29.41%	5.88%	11.76%	11.76%	
Rodríguez	48.65%	21.62%	18.92%	10.81%		
Matias	9.09%				81.82%	9.09%
Bregman	38.89%	25.00%	29.17%	5.56%	1.39%	
Ripoll	62.79%	6.98%	18.60%	2.33%	4.65%	4.65%
Vallejo	68.29%	6.10%	12.20%	13.41%		
Mato	75.00%			25.00%		
Mendoza	43.48%	13.04%	34.78%	8.70%		
Erazo	67.53%	7.79%	11.69%	11.69%		1.30%
Tagle	44.74%	15.79%	18.42%	21.05%		
Mean	49.96%	12.57%	14.97%	11.03%	9.96%	1.50%

Source: own elaboration.

Finally, as a distinctive case regarding the use of mentions for political responsibility, Matías stands out. This actor uses 81.82% of such mentions to refer to international organizations and only 9.09% to address the government (Table 9). The fact that she is a member of the European Parliament clearly explains this communication strategy, which is notably different from the other analyzed female politicians.

Regarding the reasons for attributing political responsibility, two issues stand out above the rest (Table 10). Firstly, aspects related to public policy topics, which is the category with the highest average (64.74%). Secondly, references to issues that could threaten or undermine the democratic process (19.64%). At a much lower level, with a smaller percentage, are mentions of actions by law enforcement and security forces (5.55%). This category is predominantly used in the messages of female Latin American politicians. Finally, lower references are observed in other matters, such as accountability (4.02%), failure to make timely decisions (2.47%), failure to provide public explanations (2.25%), lack of preparation for a position (1.14%), and other aspects (0.27%).

Table 10. *Average Causes or Reasons for Appealing to Political Responsibility*

Causes or Reasons	Mean
Thematic issues of public policy	64.74%
Threat to the deterioration of democracy	19.64%
Actions by the Security Forces and Corps	5.55%
Accountability	4.02%
Not making decisions in time	2.47%
Not giving public explanations	2.25%
Lack of preparation for his or her position or 'illegal' positions	1.14%
Others	0.27%

Source: own elaboration.

The data analysis reveals that the theme of public policy issues stands out (Table 10) with the highest average (64.74%) in terms of attributing political responsibility to third parties. Three key topics are repeatedly addressed across most of the profiles.

Firstly, the health crisis caused by COVID-19 and its protocols, economic aid, or budget cuts to public health appear in all the profiles without exception. Secondly, environmental issues, ecology, and care of the natural environment are frequently mentioned. Finally, issues related to immigration or refugees also stand out. However, problems related to education, gender, human rights, housing, and unemployment are also highlighted.

Analysis of the reasons for the 'political responsibility mentions' attributed by the politicians under study shows that Mato, Ripoll, and Matias most frequently reference public policy issues, with percentages above 72% (Table 11).

Attribution of political responsibility related to the deterioration of democracy is the second category that generates the most messages, with an average of 19.64% (Table 10). Tagle and Mendoza have the highest percentages, exceeding 34%, on issues related to the deterioration of democracy (Table 11). The former addresses, among other issues, deterioration of the Mexican justice system and entrenched corruption in the country's politics. Mendoza, for her part, focuses her messages on the need for a "transparent" Peruvian justice system to avoid corruption.

Finally, some political actors attribute responsibility to parties and opposition figures as threats to democracy. Another aspect included in the political responsibility mentions related to these threats is the issue of dictatorships. Thus, Vallejo denounces the Chilean government and demands transparency in the investigation of Chile's dictatorial past. Another issue present in her

messages is the selection of certain executive members with a past linked to the Pinochet dictatorship.

Table 11. *Causes or Reasons for Attribution of Responsibility by Political Actor*

Causes or Reasons	Colau	Rodríguez	Matias	Bregman	Ripoll	Vallejo	Mato	Mendoza	Erazo	Tagle
Do not give public explanations		8.11%		2.78%		1.22%			7.79%	2.63%
Accountability		10.81%	18.18%	1.39%		1.22%			8.57%	
Threat to the deterioration of democracy	23.53%	24.32%	9.09%	19.44%	2.33%	23.17%	12.50%	34.78%	10.39%	36.84%
Lack of preparation for his or her position or 'illegal positions'		2.70%			2.33%	2.44%			1.30%	2.63%
Not making decisions on time	5.88%			1.39%		6.10%		8.70%	2.60%	
Thematic issues of public policy	70.59%	51.35%	72.73%	58.33%	79.07%	65.85%	87.50%	52.17%	57.14%	52.63%
Actions by the Security Forces and Corps				16.67%	16.28%			4.35%	12.99%	5.26%
Others		2.70%								

Source: own elaboration.

4. Conclusions and Discussion

This research has led to six novel findings regarding the use of X, formerly Twitter, as a mechanism for dialogue and bidirectional interaction with other actors by the Latin American women politicians «of change» movement.

Our first finding relates to the detection of three types of mentions: direct, indirect, and mixed. The use of indirect mentions stands out. This type of interaction does not aim to establish a dialogue or confrontation but rather seeks to broadcast messages for their followers or criticize third parties who are mentioned. This suggests that the politicians under study use interactions on X not to generate connectivity and dialogue with other social actors but to disseminate their ideas and political proposals, and especially to enhance criticism of their adversaries. This aspect introduces an innovation compared to previous studies (Ribalko & Seltzer, 2010; Alonso-Muñoz, *et al.*, 2016; Guerrero-Solé & Mas-Manchón, 2017; Marín Dueñas *et al*., 2019), as it identifies a new communicative strategy focused on negativity that transforms dialogue into a unidirectional formula for attacking third parties.

In this context, a second finding reveals that most of the Latin American women politicians «of change» focus their interaction on X on three main types of actors: government politicians, their affiliated parties, and the opposition. Journalists and media come further down the list in terms of focus. Despite the dialogic possibilities offered by X, in the profiles of the analyzed politicians, citizen engagement is minimal or nonexistent. Consequently, these female politicians use this social network's potential to a limited extent as a tool for fostering direct communication with citizens. This result aligns with previous research (Coleman & Blumler, 2009; Cioni & Marinelli, 2010; Jackson & Lilleker, 2011; Bentivegna, 2012; Alonso-Muñoz *et al*., 2016; Grussel & Nord, 2012) and reinforces this trend of limited interaction with citizens.

A third finding establishes that female Latin American politicians «of change» use X intensively to make mentions that assign political responsibility to other social actors. Again, this communicative strategy is not aimed at confronting or dialoguing with the 'mentionee', but seeks visibility through criticism of the adversary or negative personalization. Previous literature identified similar behavior among political parties during electoral campaigns (López-Meri *et al.*, 2017; Marcos-García *et al.,* 2021). However, this study demonstrates that this dynamic is also used by activists during routine political periods.

A fourth finding determines that, although there is a strong presence of mentions associated with political responsibility directed at third parties, the questioning and rethinking of their own practices or those of their group or

party are very low among the analyzed female politicians. Therefore, the level of self-criticism in the X communication strategy of the female Latin American politicians «of change» is almost nonexistent. Reinforcing this, political responsibility seems to be placed outside of their own actions and only concerns and affects «others». This reveals that the use of this digital platform is oriented more towards reaffirming their stances, self-justification, and signaling rivals than towards debate, conversation, and/or fostering self-accountability for their own behavior (Iranzo-Cabrera & Casero-Ripollés, 2023).

Fifth, our results show that the government-opposition axis influences the use of mentions by assigning political responsibility. The analyzed female politicians who are closer to institutional power and the government use this resource the least. Being directly responsible for the adopted measures, their attribution of political responsibility to others is very low. The most paradigmatic case is Ada Colau, who did not dedicate many publications to holding others accountable, as she held the position of Mayor of Barcelona during the period under study. On the contrary, the further away the female politicians are from the institutional decision-making sphere or governmental power, the stronger the demand for political responsibility through mentions on their X profiles. Ripoll, Mendoza, and Vallejo are good examples in this regard.

A sixth finding is that the use of mentions for assigning political responsibility on X by female Latin American politicians «of change» has a civic monitoring component (Feenstra *et al.*, 2017). That is, this resource is used to supervise, control, and oversee the political actions of the government and public institutions. Evidence supporting this claim includes, on the one hand, that most mentions attributing responsibility are directed at the government and state institutions. On the other, the preferred topics for these types of interactions in the studied politicians' profiles are public policy issues and aspects related to democratic decay. Both the focus on these topics and the government reveal this monitoring dimension, which highlights the use of X in terms of holding political power accountable. Consequently, these political actors add this type of mention on this platform as a new tool to the civic monitoring repertoire (Feenstra *et al.,* 2017).

Despite the novelty and relevance of the obtained results, this research has several limitations. First, despite its representativeness, the sample of female politicians could be expanded in future studies. Second, this work focuses on the content produced by the studied actors, leaving the study of their impact on the audience, through interviews, surveys, or focus groups, for future research. Third, this approach focuses on a single digital platform, which could be

complemented by studying the activity of these female politicians on other social media to broaden the scope of the results. Finally, as a future line, this research could be expanded with a comparative analysis between the interaction strategies employed by female politicians «of change» and those of males.

In conclusion, the analysis of the dialogic interactions of female Latin American «of change» politicians on X reveals the emergence of new strategies in the use of this platform in digital political communication. The focus on criticizing the adversary, on the one hand, and monitoring and overseeing political power, on the other, emerge as new uses that expand those detected in previous research. These functions reveal that the use of digital media, such as X, responds to an ambivalent dynamic that simultaneously allows for the combination of negative aspects, such as attacking third parties, with positive aspects, such as defending democracy.

Ethics and Transparency

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Conceptualization	X	X		
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Formal Analysis	X			
Funding acquisition		X		

Investigation	X			
Methodology	X	X		
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