

Twitter as a Mnemonic Medium from an Ecological Perspective

Ayotzinapa and the Memory of Tlatelolco in Mexico

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This article examines how the link between two tragic events in Mexican history—the 2014 attack on students from the Ayotzinapa Teachers’ College and the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre—has been represented and performed on Twitter, pursuing two interlinked objectives. The first goal is to explore the memorialization of the Tlatelolco massacre in relation to the Ayotzinapa case within a corpus of 16,706 tweets, showing how this memorialization has brought about a retemporalization of the history of violent acts committed by the state in Mexico. The second goal is to examine the role of Twitter as a mnemonic medium, considering it from both an ecological media perspective and an interdisciplinary research perspective that explores interconnections between media studies and memory studies.

Keywords: Twitter; memory; media; Ayotzinapa; Tlatelolco; Mexico; state crime

On the night of September 26, 2014, a group of students from the Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers’ College were attacked by local police acting in collusion with criminal organizations in the town of Iguala, in the Guerrero state of southwestern Mexico. Numerous other branches of the Mexican security apparatus were also involved in the assault, including state and federal police forces and the military. Six people were murdered—including three students—an additional forty were wounded, and forty-three students were forcibly disappeared (known as “los 43,” “the 43”). The

total number of direct and indirect victims is calculated to be over seven hundred.¹ In an attempt to close the case, the Mexican state constructed a fraudulent narrative— *Verdad histórica* (Historical truth) in the words of Murillo Karam, the then head of the Mexican Attorney General's Office—according to which the students were assassinated by the cartel known as Guerreros Unidos and then incinerated in the Cocula landfill (around thirteen miles from Iguala). The case rapidly gained international publicity due to numerous protests, which were particularly notable within the digital sphere.

In this article we will examine the intense social reaction in the wake of the Ayotzinapa case by focusing on the way it has contributed to the memorialization of Mexico's violent past, in particular the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre, which, together with the 1968 student movement, is considered by historians of Mexico as "one of the most important events of the twentieth century, second only to the Mexican Revolution."² This massacre occurred on October 2, 1968, in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas in the Tlatelolco section of Mexico City, some days before the inauguration of Mexico's first Olympic Games. The Mexican armed forces fired at thousands of unarmed students who were demonstrating against police repression, for the release of political prisoners and, more generally, against the government of President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI, Institutional Revolutionary Party). Even today there are no definite figures for the casualties, but it is estimated that between 150 and 200 people were murdered and, according to the head of the Federal Directorate of Security, 1,345 people were arrested.³ At the time, the official account claimed that the protesters had provoked the response of the soldiers by shooting at them in the first place, but government documents made public since 2000 suggest that snipers posted by the military fired on fellow troops, giving the army an excuse to shoot at the students.

Before analyzing the link between these two attacks against students (Ayotzinapa and Tlatelolco) in an abundant corpus of tweets, we will offer some historical and methodological insights and also develop a theoretical reflection on Twitter as a mnemonic medium. This conceptual framework will not only form the basis of our analysis but also offer a model that could be applied more broadly to activism and memory in Twitter.

In the past few years, activism has become a new source of debate in the field of European and North American memory studies. Ann Rigney proposes that the link between memory and activism can be discerned in “how actors struggle to produce cultural memory and to steer future remembrance ... how earlier struggles for a better world are culturally recollected ... and how cultural memory of earlier struggles informs new movements in the present.”⁴ Other recent studies have also investigated this link between memory and activism.⁵ In the specific context of Mexico in the aftermath of Ayotzinapa, Martín Zícari has suggested that activists, through the use of traditional repertoires of human rights protests in Latin America, have successfully placed Mexico’s violent present in line with the history of military dictatorships in the Southern Cone.⁶

Alongside the current concern with the role of activism in the formation of memory, several academic disciplines are dealing with the effects of the irruption of digital platforms in our daily life. This article is particularly interested in how the study of social movements has been affected by key scholarly debates assessing the significant transformations brought about by digitalization.⁷ In the case of Mexican activism around the disappeared students, various studies have emphasized the crucial role of social media and especially Twitter in the production of an unprecedented social movement in Mexico. Some have examined the emergence and evolution of the movement by focusing on the succession of different hashtags over time or on the impact and uses of a specific hashtag, in order to account for the viralization of the protest and to elucidate how Twitter can be used to perform contentious politics beyond the digital sphere and against mainstream media.⁸ They have also illuminated connections with previous social networks.⁹ Twitter communication networks and social media have been shown to be instrumental in the international spread of the Ayotzinapa movement and in creating both national and global awareness of the 43 disappeared students. For this reason, our core focal point and source of analysis will be digital participation on Twitter, considering it within a global ecology of media. Handling a database of more than 2.4 million tweets, we combine quantitative and qualitative analysis. We will briefly comment on the methodological challenges and requirements of this corpus before entering into our analysis.

Concretely, this analysis will consist of an exploration of the relationship between Ayotzinapa and the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre as it appeared

on Twitter in concert with other digital media. With this study, we pursue two main objectives. We first want to show the memorializing role of digital activism in shaping a new genealogy of Mexican violence. Second, we aim to propose a novel framework for assessing memory in the digital ecology and, more precisely, for understanding Twitter as a mnemonic medium. Hence, by distinguishing between four theoretical perspectives on Twitter's implications for memory, we seek to better articulate our hypothesis that the activist movement around the Ayotzinapa case on Twitter has brought about a retemporalization of the long-term history of state violence.

Such a hypothesis implies that although the disappearance of the 43 students from Ayotzinapa is exemplary of the disappearances of the "War on Drugs" period initiated in 2006 by then President Felipe Calderón—in that it illustrates the collusion between the state and organized crime, the plurality of motives, and structural impunity—the activism around the case does not seem to address the current situation of disappearances more generally. Instead, it situates Ayotzinapa as a peak in a long genealogy of state repression that goes back to the "counterinsurgency period"—the Mexican state's counterinsurgency response in the 1960s and 1970s, which has also been defined as a "dirty war"¹⁰—and includes more recent cases of state violence such as the repression of civil unrest in San Salvador Atenco (Mexico state) by state and federal police in 2006 and a number of massacres: in Aguas Blancas in Guerrero state, where on June 28, 1995, seventeen farmers were killed and twenty-one injured, according to the official version; in Acteal, Chiapas, where on December 22, 1997, forty-five Tzotzil indigenous people were massacred by a group of paramilitaries while praying in their chapel; and in Tlatlaya (Mexico state), where soldiers killed twenty-two people on June 30, 2014.¹¹

Twitter as a mnemonic medium enables a reinterpretation of Mexico's current human rights crisis stemming from the War on Drugs, reopening past wounds and placing them on a continuum with present events. As shown by the National Poll on Organized Violence (ENVO), which was conducted in October and November 2013, many Mexicans perceived the context of violence—the "War on Drugs"—as a consequence of criminal activities. Some 39.8 percent of those polled answered that drug cartels were mainly responsible for the violence in Mexico, compared to only 15 percent who named the Mexican state as the responsible party.

When the state's participation in human rights violations was proven, this was attributed to a few corrupt individual officials.¹² One year after the ENVO poll, following the disappearance of the Ayotzinapa students in 2014, a new structural reading of violence in Mexico emerged, in which the Mexican state was considered as ultimately responsible. We argue that the remembrance of the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre has been central in this retemporalization.

Since the Ayotzinapa crisis, activists and journalists have connected the Ayotzinapa case to a series of previous violent acts committed in Mexico, of which the Tlatelolco massacre has become, beyond Twitter, the most referenced. This relation has emerged from the simple fact that the Ayotzinapa students were attacked when they were organizing their participation in the protests for the anniversary of Tlatelolco 1968. Moreover, several scholars, such as Sergio Aguayo and Roberto González Villarreal, have analyzed the links between the two traumatic events.¹³ Renowned Mexican writers like Elena Poniatowska have also stressed the connection.¹⁴ These writers, alongside critical voices in the press, have cemented the association between these violent events, which has since become inalienable.¹⁵ Several artistic and cultural initiatives have also made this link, including the ten-part miniseries *Desaparecer en Mexico* (Disappearing in Mexico) produced by the international human rights NGO Article 19 and broadcast online in October–November 2018, which starts in 1968 and finishes with Ayotzinapa, and the exhibition *Lecciones del 68: ¿Por qué no se olvida el 2 de octubre?* (Lessons of 1968: Why is October 2 not forgotten?), held in 2015 at the Museo Memoria y Tolerancia in the center of Mexico City (2015), which also relates the two tragic repressions of students.¹⁶

This article will expand upon this link, focusing specifically on the (re)configurations and (re)mediations of the memories of the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre as they appear on Twitter after Ayotzinapa. We build upon Eugenia Allier-Montaño's study of the ways in which the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre has been memorialized, investigating whether the previous memories of the massacre match those that appear on Twitter after Ayotzinapa.¹⁷ Indeed, each of the memories commented upon by Allier-Montaño appears in our data set, but the digital platform also reveals a new memory that is specific to the post-Ayotzinapa context.

In brief, our perspective aims to address the following questions: To what extent is the link between Ayotzinapa and the Tlatelolco mas-

sacre visible on Twitter and what forms does it take? How and to what extent did Twitter take part in the (re)activation of such a memory? If, as we argue, Ayotzinapa has generated a retemporalization of Mexican state violence, what has been the role of digital activism on Twitter in this retemporalization? We will first outline the methodology for our data collection, and then present the theoretical underpinning of our analysis of the role of digital media in activism and especially in the reconfiguration of the memories of Tlatelolco.

DATA COLLECTION AND PROCESSING

We acquired our corpus of tweets by querying Twitter's Full-Archive Search API (Application Programming Interface).¹⁸ Our data collection strategy yielded a corpus containing more than 2.4 million tweets, encompassing:

- All tweets published between September 25 and December 25, 2014, containing the character sequence "ayotzinapa" somewhere in the tweet's text (including "ayotzinapa" as a whole word, part of another word, hashtag or in other forms).
- All tweets published between September 25 and December 25, 2014, by any of the following authors—the first two represent the voice of official (political or judicial) Mexican authority while the others are some of the most important actors in the field of human rights in Mexico: @EPN (Enrique Peña Nieto, Mexican president in 2012–18), @murillokram (Jesús Murillo Karam, who was the Mexican Attorney General in 2014); @Tlachinollan (Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña Tlachinollan, a human rights center located in Guerrero, legal representatives of the family members of the 43); @CentroProdh (Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez, a human rights center, also legal representatives of the family members of the 43); @SerapazMexico (Servicios y Asesoría para la Paz, a national NGO); @CMDPDH (Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos, a Mexican human rights institution); @article19mex (the international human rights NGO Article 19, which is closely following the case); @AIMexico (Amnesty International Mexico) and @hrw_espanol (Human Rights Watch). The selection process was not exhaustive, and these authors were selected to give

us a broader perspective on the online conversation among actors in both the Mexican state and civil society.

- All tweets with the character sequence “ayotzinapa” published between September 12 and October 10 in the years 2015–18 (i.e., two weeks before and after the first four anniversaries of the Ayotzinapa case).

It is virtually impossible to read all the tweets that compose this corpus due to its size. Therefore, we conducted a topic analysis in this collection, with the aim of achieving a high-level understanding of the discussions therein.

To provide some insight into this type of analysis, topic modeling is generally defined in the fields of Machine Learning and Natural Language Processing as a statistical approach for uncovering the underlying semantic structure of document collections.¹⁹ A topic model is commonly represented as a set of topics that describes the document collection and, in turn, a topic is a collection of words with some degree of similarity.

Due to the design of the Twitter platform, tweets are characteristically brief, each having few words and consequently providing little room for debating multiple topics. In the case of our corpus, each tweet has an average of approximately fifteen words. Therefore, we used the Biterm Topic Model (BTM), an algorithm specifically designed to model topics in collections of short texts.²⁰ BTM transforms each tweet of the corpus into a reduced version of it as follows:

Tweet	Processed tweet
Paran escuelas del DF por Iguala	paran escuela iguala

Fig. 1. Example of tweet processed by Biterm Topic Modeling: “Schools from Mexico DF on strike for Iguala” is reduced to “school strike Iguala.”

After processing each tweet, the algorithm combines all the processed tweets and clusters similar topics together, looking at similar words and occurrences. Although topics look like a sequence of words, this sequence is only indicative of underlying conversation themes and of the probability of finding those words together in a tweet.

Figure 2 shows the collection of topics that emerged from this analysis. Among these, topic number 25 (highlighted) refers to the connection between Ayotzinapa and Tlatelolco, quantitatively corroborating that this link was highly relevant in the Twitter conversation during the first week after the events.²¹

WORDS (ordered by relevance)
normalista, padre, desaparecido, acompañados, marchan, gobierno, normal, alumno, dan, hijo
desaparecido, normalista, guerrero, gobierno, informar, busca, iniciar, local, fiscalia, estudiante
normalista, desaparecido, listo, normal, comite, estudiantil, senalar, reducen, alumno, aparecen
normal, rural, burgos, isidro, raul, guerrero, escuela, estudiante, dar, prensa
estudiante, masacrar, vivos, presenciar, desaparecido, ejercito, normal, querer, vivo, llevar
normalista, desaparecido, normalistas, muerto, iguala, urgente, mexico, guerrero, estudiante, solidaridad
busqueda, normalista, fuerzas, federales, intensificar, morelos, extienden, chilpancingo, aguilar, septiemb
estudiante, guerrero, normalista, iguala, mexico, haber, desaparecido, mas, gobierno, epn
hecho, urge, evitar, aureoles, camara, presidente, mesa, directiva, diputados, urgir
partido, revolucion, democratica, estudiante, asesinato, justicia, guerrero, exigir, haber, presentacion
normalista, iguala, policia, estudiante, guerrero, tres, ataque, municipal, futbolista, matan
mexico, guerrero, estudiantes, mundo, imagenes, fuertes, asesinados, sepa, fotos, ciudad
iguala, policia, asesinar, haber, alumno, 300, dos, arraigar, estudiante, normal
instituto, nacional, politecnico, impunidad, megamarcha, tlatlaya, terror, odio, incapacidad, caos
autoridades, normal, policia, normalista, desaparecido, agresion, acusar, localizan, reportar, personal
cuerpo, normalista, desollar, identifican, guerrero, redaccion, atentar, normal, equipar, rural
normalistas, congreso, guerrero, realizar, destrozo, vandalizan, chilpancingo, vidrio, estudiantes, leo
iguala, guerrero, normalista, estudiante, justicia, policia, procuraduria, general, forzar, alcalde
caso, tlatlaya, derechos, humanos, interamericana, comision, esclarecer, confia, mexico, ciudad
iguala, normalista, jornada, muerto, balear, policas, matanza, tras, estudiante, masacrar
humanos, derechos, comision, normalista, casar, interamericana, aparecen, acudirian, estatal, ramon
muerte, familiares, normalista, justicia, exigir, victima, homenaje, amigo, rinden, jul
estudiante, vida, normal, hallan, desaparecido, companero, presentacion, exigir, aparicion, demandar
chilpancingo, marchar, normalista, normalistas, guerrero, estudiante, estudiantes, exigir, alumno, apoyar
politecnico, nacional, instituto, tlatlaya, 2deoctubre, no se olvida, estudiante, todossomospolitecnico, olvidar, tlatelolco, octubre

Fig. 2. Topic Analysis. Translation of the highlighted topic: Polytechnic, national, institute, Tlatlaya, 2OctoberIsNotForgotten, student, WeAreAllPolytechnic, forget, Tlatelolco, October.

Upon corroborating the quantitative importance of the Tlatelolco-Ayotzinapa connection on Twitter, we created a new data set by selecting all the tweets mentioning “Ayotzinapa” and either “68” or “Tlatelolco,” resulting in a subset of 16,706 tweets. This data set allows a deeper and more detailed examination of the ways in which activists around Ayotzinapa have talked about Tlatelolco. From this data set we have pinpointed the most shared links and media and the most used words, and created word clouds for visualization purposes.²² This subset of our main data set is the primary source of the qualitative analysis, which entails a close reading of hundreds of tweets. In quantitative terms, this subset does not indicate a broad discussion on Twitter (only 0.69 percent of our global corpus). However, our perspective is ecological; we are interested in how the mnemonic revision of the connection between Tlatelolco and Ayotzinapa—a connection that has been spread far beyond Twitter—is represented *qualitatively* on this platform.

In the following section, we present our analysis of Twitter as a mnemonic medium by combining different perspectives as we comment on symptomatic tweets and remediated material from the corpus. Alongside the study of memory discourses and forms, our aim is to carve out a new vocabulary that is usually hidden in the interdisciplinary conundrum.

PERSPECTIVES FOR ANALYZING TWITTER AS A MNEMONIC MEDIUM

Twitter is primarily described in terms of its instantaneity and immediacy, as “a medium which constantly focuses users on the very latest news and events.”²³ For José Van Dijck, “what is new in microblogging is that the tweet flow, in contrast to the programmed television flow, is conceptualized as a *live stream of uninhibited, unedited, instant, short, and short-lived reactions*—a stream that supposedly taps a real-time undercurrent of opinions and gut feelings.”²⁴ Consequently, most studies on Twitter are concerned with news discussion or with its uses by social movements and activist communities. Twitter is indeed employed to broadcast or exchange information and as an organizational tool for internal coordination, but it is also utilized to construct “an emotional sense of togetherness among dispersed participants.”²⁵

Among the recent investigations studying the impact of new digital technologies and the Internet on the process of commemorating the past, very few pay specific attention to Twitter, much less so than to Facebook, for example.²⁶ When it is associated with memory, Twitter is often approached in terms of manipulation and deformation.²⁷ More interesting for our study is the perspective opened up by Lorenzo Zamponi who analyzes how a particular hashtag (*#ioricordo*) has become a framework for different commemorations on Twitter and proposes a typology of digital memory practices.²⁸ If we are inspired by this focus on memory practices through social media, it is also our ambition to regard Twitter as a “medial framework” of remembering, that is, as a medium that mediates and *remediates* memory based on specific formal characteristics.²⁹ Such a perspective implies developing a research line that delves into interpenetrations between media studies and memory studies.

First of all, it is important to insist upon the fact that on Twitter, as with any medium, immediacy depends on an apparently contradictory logic of hypermediacy. With these terms we refer to Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin’s theory of remediation, based on the following definition of “medium”: “a medium is that which remediates. It is that which appropriates the techniques, forms, and social significance of other media and attempts to rival or refashion them in the name of the real.”³⁰ The process of remediation is characterized by this dialectic between immediacy and hypermediacy. In the field of memory studies, Astrid Erll and

Ann Rigney have already highlighted the importance of the concept of remediation for understanding the dynamics of cultural memory, stating that “while ‘immediacy’ creates the experience of the presence of the past, ‘hypermediacy,’ which reminds the viewer of the medium, points to the potential self-reflexivity of all memorial media.”³¹

These logics of remediation and, more broadly, intermediality involve memory in different ways. We understand intermediality in general terms, in Klaus Bruhn Jensen’s words as “the interconnectedness of modern media of communication” and use it as an “umbrella term” covering different approaches, in the vein of Sébastien Fevry and Irina Rajewsky.³² Fevry connects four conceptions of intermediality with four different perspectives on the relationships between media and memory.³³ Inspired by these distinctions and connections, in what follows we explore how Twitter (and specifically our database) becomes a mnemonic medium. This exploration will then be conducted through the lens of four complementary processes of intermediality, which in turn are built around four respective concepts: (1) environment: the global ecology of relations between media as material means of interaction; (2) transfer: intermediality as intertextuality considered from a diachronic perspective; (3) copresence: intermediality as multi- or transmediality, from a synchronic point of view; and (4) emergence: remediation between old and new media.

1. Twitter as part of a media memory environment: The ecological perspective

First of all, intermediality may be used to describe the dynamics of the global media environment in the context of a culture of convergence between old and new media that “has provided a multimedia landscape of differentiation, randomness, spontaneity and variation.”³⁴ The morphability, multimodality and connectivity of digital networks—reinforcing the interconnectedness already endemic to traditional media—creates a media environment that affects not only memory contents or discourses but memory forms and practices. It is an environment that blends cultural public forms of memory and personal processes of remembering and increasingly intertwines the functions of memory, communication and identity formation.³⁵ What Andrew Hoskins calls “digital network memory” is defined by “the dynamics of mediated memory as something created when needed, driven by the connectivities of digital technologies

and media, and inextricably forged through and constitutive of digital social networks.” Twitter is part of this environment and tweets may be understood as sociotechnical practices and “communications [which] in themselves dynamically add to, alter, and erase, a kind of living archival memory.”³⁶

The notion of environment emphasizes for us the importance of not isolating Twitter from the “digital media ecology” in which it is integrated.³⁷ From the perspective of social movements studies, this ecological outlook is also essential in order to account for the complexity and the hybridity of the media/movement dynamics, as well as for “the political and critical nature of media ecologies.”³⁸ We consider the online and offline spheres of collective action as equally constitutive of social movements. Offline activist performances and protests are themselves media and, furthermore, as summarized by Joanne Garde-Hansen, Andrew Hoskins and Anna Reading, “media are biomediations of the human and are affective,” they “continually remediate the human body.”³⁹ From these premises, we can see that what Twitter remediates are fundamentally performative acts of memory and protest, which aim to stimulate offline bodily actions or process information (about the past) in a very affective way so as to create an emotionally felt connection between the older past (the 1960s) and the very recent past or the present. In our analysis, we will examine how this performative remediation is based on a principle of repetition, a principle that Twitter adopts from other memory media practices.

In this global intermedial convergence culture, we will now examine how in our Twitter database Tlatelolco is referred to in relation to the Ayotzinapa case, from three complementary points of view, corresponding to three paradigms of intermediality: transfer of memory discourses, copresence of different media forms, and remediation or reemergence of media memory practices.

2. Transfer: How Twitter repurposes previous versions of memories of '68

The intermedial processes that until now have attracted the most attention in the field of memory studies are operations of transfer or adaptation.⁴⁰ The transfer paradigm focuses on how a memory-content is adapted and reconfigured through different media from a diachronic perspective. Considering this approach as a starting point in our analysis, we will

now look at how our corpus repurposes, recycles and adapts the already stabilized memory discourses of Tlatelolco 1968 as they were studied by Allier-Montaño.

According to Allier-Montaño, there exist two major memories of 1968: the “memory of denunciation” and the “memory of praise.” The first one focuses on the repression unleashed against students and civilians and identifies October 2 as a condensation of the student movement and a “crystallization of government repression.” The second, the memory of praise, celebrates the student movement because it sought to pave the way for the country’s democratization. This memory suggests that the student movement was behind some of the most important political changes of the last decades and that it was a “milestone” or a “watershed” in the country’s recent history.⁴¹

Along with other scholars, Allier-Montaño has shown how, within ten years, this fatidic event has been incorporated into the PRI’s political vocabulary as a watershed in the democratic progress of Mexico, exalting the role of the students in the achievement of a “better,” “more democratic” Mexico.⁴² The discussion in the Senate and the subsequent passing of the 1976 Amnesty Law, granting amnesty to the “political crimes” committed during the 1968 events, was the juridical correlate of the PRI’s ability to adapt and to sustain the democratic fantasy.⁴³ Apart from this first Amnesty Law, then President Luis Echeverría Álvarez also passed a political reform law that helped cement the idea that Mexico was becoming more democratic, allowing banned political parties to legally exist, among other electoral developments. Two years later, in 1978, José López Portillo y Pacheco, the new PRI elected president, presented the draft of a new Amnesty Law which intended to “increase the opportunities for greater institutional participation by diverse ideological currents,” incorporating into the Mexican political system “those who have taken part in radical dissidence groups.” The stated aim of the law was “to consolidate peace and conviviality ... in this particular time in which the country is making advances in democracy, to ultimately achieve better conditions for social and political development.”⁴⁴ These developments constitute the political underpinnings of the memory of praise described by Allier-Montaño, which are fundamental when presenting the new memory of Tlatelolco that is emerging as a result of its association with Ayotzinapa.

Alongside the memories of denunciation and praise—which, as Allier-Montaña highlights, are not conflicting but “rather mutually complementary memories”—a third one, developed during the student movement in the 1960s and later during the initial years following Tlatelolco but today practically nonexistent, depicts students as part of an antigovernmental communist conspiracy (with foreign overtones): a “conspiracy memory.”⁴⁵

In the tweets insisting on a special link between Tlatelolco and Ayotzinapa, we can discern the effect of a mythologizing memory that presents the events as “watershed” movements in history. Many tweets spread the idea of Ayotzinapa as a sinister repetition of Tlatelolco, a repetition that wakes a dormant memory and reveals a previous lack of memory or a guilty social forgetfulness:

Only in Mexico do we tolerate history repeating itself twice, Tlatelolco 68 and #Ayotzinapa 14, We are a people without memory @PrometeoNuclear BASTA. (October 10, 2014)

There will be no forgetting because the wound will never close ... Ayotzinapa is a blow to our memory, when we believed that '68 would not be repeated. (October 12, 2014)

The #Ayotzinapa case is the new 68!!! Students are considered criminals and criminals run the country!!! (October 26, 2014)

Ayotzinapa marks, as 68, a before and after in the future of the Nation. The aggravating factor of cruelty further hurts our conscience. (October 26, 2014)

These tweets emphasizing the special connection between Ayotzinapa and Tlatelolco express much greater insistence on the memory of denunciation (of PRI repression, of impunity, but also of social apathy) than on positive aspects of the past social movement—that is, the memory of praise.

Here are some examples of tweets denouncing repression by the PRI, establishing parallels between the 1960s PRI President Díaz Ordaz and President Enrique Peña Nieto (EPN), whose presidency marked a return of the same party after twelve years out of power, but also claiming the overall corruption of Mexican political parties, including the left-of-center PRD (Partido de la Revolución Democrática), which was governing the State of Guerrero at the time of the night of Iguala:

The 1968 movement is alive as never before, and as then, abuse and authoritarianism too. #Ayotzinapa. (September 29, 2014)

PRI 1968 Tlatelolco, PRD 2014 #Ayotzinapa. The corruption of parties led them to death. #LutoNacional. (October 5, 2014)

2DeOctoberNoSeOlvida The same method that Díaz Ordaz applied in 68 follows @EPNdeath of young students and total impunity #Ayotzinapa. (October 2, 2015)

Ayotzinapa: after 68, the worst crisis of internal politics and communication that the Mexican government has ever experienced. (September 30, 2014)

Other examples denounce, rather, a lack of reaction, social apathy and lack of memory:

The only difference between Tlatelolco and Ayotzinapa is the time; and what is exactly the same is social apathy in the face of injustice. (October 26, 2014)

And ayotzinapa will remain as a tlatelolco plus a bad memory and one more commemoration! (November 11, 2014)

Some of the denunciatory tweets manifest the affective dimension of this memory, which takes the form of merging the two eras, involving solidarity and identification with the '68 students:

Every student must understand that he could have died in '68, that he could have been disappeared as in Ayotzinapa. They were us. (October 30, 2014)

<http://t.co/5PUiyBtbyX> We were all Tlatelolco, we are all Ayotzinapa. (October 30, 2014)

We were 68, then 43. It is incredible how injustice and impunity continue in our country. And no one does justice. #Ayotzinapa. (September 26, 2017)

By contrast, what Allier-Montañó identified as a memory of praise that recuperates from the past a revolutionary force and a democratization

movement is much less present in our corpus. When the idea of revolution appears as a link between past and present, it is more in the form of a hope than as a fact:

68 was the seed of democracy that has not yet grown; let's hope Ayotzinapa will make it more visible. (October 25, 2014)

Ayotzinapa and Tlatlaya, examples of the demands of '68 still in force
#Video - Three Point Zero Revolution <http://t.co/GSR8mSsS7Y>.
(March 10, 2014)

It is interesting to observe that the third memory identified by Allier-Montaño—the conspiracy memory—which was present in the first years after Tlatelolco but, according to Allier-Montaño, was no longer visible in the 2000s, has reappeared in some tweets about Ayotzinapa.⁴⁶ For instance:

Just as the CIA ordered in Tlatelolco, Ayotzinapa is very similar. Che's, Lenin's left does them a lot of damage. (November 9, 2014)

Disappearance of # 43 of #Ayotzinapa, SMELLS that the CIA is behind, just as it was in '68. #BigBrother #sadly. (September 22, 2015)

These tweets are not numerous, but some of them refer to a YouTube video that accused the CIA of killing the 43 disappeared students and which received 363,939 views:⁴⁷

The CIA PERPETRATED THE MASSACRE in Tlatelolco, DIRTY WAR in Guerrero and EXTERMINATED the 43 of Ayotzinapa ... <https://t.co/19C3MJS0ZB>. (September 26, 2016)

So, although not well represented on Twitter, this memory of Tlatelolco as a conspiracy (directed by the left or on the contrary by the CIA) has circulated on other platforms.

Apart from the memories described above, we see how a new memory of Tlatelolco is emerging on Twitter, one that binds together the exceptionality of the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre with that of Ayotzinapa, marking both as moments in which state-sponsored violence reached a peak. At a discursive level, the response to the Ayotzinapa case has reappropriated the interpretation of Tlatelolco '68 as a historic event and transferred it to its own memorialization process. Nevertheless, this does not imply that

the “uniqueness” or “exceptionality” of Tlatelolco is diminished; rather, because there has been no justice regarding the most memorialized Mexican massacre of the twentieth century, it is condemned to be repeated. In linking both events, this memory is characterized by a tension between repetition—the return of a repressed, traumatic past—and forgetting—a forgetting that is at once political, judicial, and social.

3. The copresence of various (mnemonic) media in Twitter

The logic of transfer is only one part (the discursive one) of the broader processes of remediation and intermediality. With the concept of copresence, we will consider the expressive means and the material visibility of the novel mediated memories of 1968 that appear in our database.

On Twitter, the transfer and consequent resemantization of events from the past involves the remediation of other media. Numerous tweets consist basically in presenting another medium (a short video taken from a cell phone, a photo, a poster calling for a protest march) or posting links to other more elaborated online media content—written articles with photos from diverse journals, YouTube videos or Facebook posts, and so on. Hence, we distinguish another paradigm of intermediality: that of copresence, through which diverse media transmitting memory materials may coexist synchronically in a single tweet. For example, the tweets in figures 3–5 combine contemporary digital photographs of President Enrique Peña Nieto or of protests with archival images from the 1960s or with texts alluding to historical events (names, places, dates).

These images achieve a blending that is clarified by the text: Díaz Ordaz as equivalent to EPN, “Fue el Estado” (It was the State) as uniting archival images from 1968 with contemporary protest footage, and, finally, the use of hashtags, which insert the various media in a bigger conversation and constitute hybrid signs. Hashtags are “both text and metatext, information and tag, pragmatic and metapragmatic speech.”⁴⁸ At the same time, in these examples the images illustrate the idea expressed by the verbal message in a redundant way: their interest or value lies less in the information they may supply than in the effects of visibilization and of the work of archives. The truth status of old images as authentic documents from the past gives more credibility and more affective power to the conceptual parallel with the present.

Gustavo Díaz Ordaz #Tlatelolco 2 de octubre de 1968 / @epn #Iguala
#Ayotzinapa 26 de septiembre de 2014 #Justicia #MX



Fig. 3. "Gustavo Díaz Ordaz #Tlatelolco October 2, 1968 / @epn #Iguala
#Ayotzinapa 26 September 2014 #Justice #MX" (October 2, 2015)

@PedroFerriz @qtf lo de Ayotzinapa similitud con el
68 ¿estoy hasta la madre de lo que pasa en nuestro
MÉXICO



Fig. 4. "@PedroFerriz @qtf Ayotzinapa similar to 68? I'm fed up with what is happening in our MEXICO. 'One repressed and killed students in Tlatelolco, the other one repressed and killed peasants in Atenco, don't forget, Peña Nieto is and represents the same old PRI.'" Slogans in the images: "My commitment is to you and to all of Mexico" (Peña Nieto); "My commitment is to you and a successful Mexico" (Díaz Ordaz). (November 8, 2014)

Desde Tlatelolco 1968 hasta Ayotzinapa 2014 fue el estado priista fascista, corrupto, asesino. En México ser estudiante es un peligro



7:38 PM · Oct 2, 2016 from San Luis Acatlán, Guerrero · Twitter for Android

Fig. 5. “From Tlatelolco 1968 until Ayotzinapa 2014, it was the State—the *priista* [of the PRI party], fascist, corrupt, killer State. In Mexico to be a student is dangerous.” (October 2, 2016)

Many images posted on Twitter are themselves remediations of other mnemonic hybrid objects, like photographs of a Tlatelolco memorial from the MUAC (Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo) (figure 6) or a banner displaying political cartoons and a slogan, “Ni perdón ni olvido” (No forgiving, no forgetting) that evokes other previous memory struggles in Latin America (figure 7).

On the other hand, some of the archival materials recuperated by the memory presented and processed in Twitter are interestingly inaccurate pieces or “false archives,” selected for their affective value, as in the tweet in figure 8. This collage emphasizes the corporality of mourning and motherhood through suffering, the experience of loss and violence; here, the historical causes of the massacres are less important than their affective consequences. The juxtaposed photos became somehow viral, with more than 450 retweets, and more than 150 likes. It was later pointed out by a Twitter user that the first image was used as a model by Mexican muralist Siqueiros for his 1958–63 mural painting at Jorge Negrete Theater, several



Fig. 6. “#UrbanView #Aytozinapa #Tlatelolco Two sides of the same tragedy #memorial in @muac” (written in the image: “43, ALIVE YOU TOOK THEM”). (November 26, 2014)



Fig. 7. “NO FORGIVING, NO FORGETTING. Tlatelolco 1968, Ayotzinapa 2014. Against repression and criminalization, justice for Ayotzinapa, we want them back alive!” (October 2, 2015)

years before the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre. The use of this inexact archive reveals what matters for Twitter memory work: the recycling of images able to produce an “archive effect,” that is, a perception of truth based less on historical accuracy than on affective experience.⁴⁹ In this case, the

#2deOctubreNoSeOlvida de Tlatelolco a Ayotzinapa ninguna madre debería enterrar a sus hijos asesinados



Fig. 8. “#2ofOctoberWeDontForget, from Tlatelolco to Ayotzinapa, no mother should bury her murdered children.” (October 10, 2014)

collage clearly shows the crystallization of certain archetypal images of suffering associated with motherhood and state-sponsored violence after 1968 and how they resurface after 2014 to mirror the affective experience of the present.

In figures 6 and 7 images and texts are more complementary, but the dominant principle organizing the relationship between images and texts on Twitter, as well as the selection and collage of images themselves, is a certain redundancy of information. We argue that Twitter highlights the need to consider a multiplicity of media in order to fully understand the mnemonic dimensions of an event, encompassing at once conscious and unconscious affective processes.⁵⁰ Twitter displays a fragmentary, multimodal, interactive, citational and hypermediated memory made of hybridized verbal messages structured by repeated citations (hashtags), quotes and hyperlinks referring to other media sources.

We have seen that at a discursive level, the significance of Tlatelolco '68 as a milestone has been reinterpreted and transferred to the memorialization of the Ayotzinapa case. Through the parallel with the Tlatelolco massacre, Ayotzinapa has become a new watershed in Twitter's digital activism—a *repeated* watershed. This superimposition is formally achieved by means of a copresence of diverse media sources and data.

4. Reemergence of media memory practices in Twitter: Performative rituals of repetition

Both intertextual transfer and multimedial copresence are ways of making references to mainstream media material, one of the digital memory practices identified by Zamponi.⁵¹ But it is by looking at the notions of remediation and (re)emergence that we will now shift the focus from discourses and forms to media memory practices.

A fourth complementary approach of intermediality consists of considering the relationships between old and new (memory) media forms, that is, the dynamics of remediation as described by Bolter and Grusin. Peter Wikström has examined Twitter from this point of view. For Wikström, Bolter and Grusin's theory offers "an overarching framework for conceiving of Twitter as hybridizing—recalling and reconfiguring—speech and writing."⁵² He has analyzed how Twitter remediates, first, SMS text messaging, "aspects of instant messaging, as well as the public or semi-public journaling aspect of blogs and Facebook," and as such may be described as "the mutant offspring of the public notice board and the personal telegram."⁵³ More fundamentally, he argues that "talk-like tweeting remediates presence and embodiment, forgoing the abstraction of alphabetic print writing for nonverbal expressivity and an embodied written surface."⁵⁴ Beyond the question of oral language, embodiment may appear as a model for a certain experience of memory that Twitter remediates. This observation highlights that Twitter is not a mere support or vehicle of memory content but can also be regarded as an agent contributing to the (re)shaping and circulation of certain memory forms and structures that are connected with social practices.⁵⁵

Apart from spontaneous conversation (following Wikström's analysis), it seems to us that the tweets that trace a genealogy of other massacres (including Tlatelolco) from Ayotzinapa are remediating a memory practice consisting of a ritual based on repetition. Here are some examples of these repetitions, taken from the first days after the "night of Iguala":

And we will say Do not forget. That forgetting is not an option. 68, 71, Acteal, Aguas Blancas, Atenco, Ayotzinapa, Tlatlaya. Let us not allow ourselves to be forgotten. (September 30, 2014)

Voices of our original peoples smelling of blood. #Tlatelolco #Acteal #Yaquis #Tlatlaya #Atenco #Ayotzinapa And the massacre continues in Mx. (October 2, 2014)

You hurt me Mexico you hurt me Acteal you hurt me 68 you hurt me #Ayotzinapa How much pain you have to endure # RenunciaPeña #RenunciaAguirre. (October 5, 2014)

Every day #Ayotzinapa #Tlatlaya #Tlatelolco #GuarderiaABC #Acteal #Atenco #MexicoTieneMemoria #DuelosMexico. (September 10, 2014)

These tweets are characterized by various kinds of repetition: both a syntactic repetitive structure within a single tweet—the series of events/ places, the enumeration—and semantic repetitions of slogans and hashtags from tweet to tweet. In this way, they allow us to recognize the extent to which repetition is a key feature of Twitter’s communication logics, with the hashtag—a citation made to be repeated—as one of its structural bases.

In the mottos and slogans as well as in the hashtags of these tweets, we observe an insistence on memory and grief. This insistence is not accidental. The repetition of similar series of places and dates through many tweets evokes commemorative and grieving rituals such as the *pase de lista*, when an assembly of activists counts until 43 or recites the names of the 43 disappeared to make the scope and the collective dimension of the injury palpable. These litany-based rituals are combined with rituals of interpersonal communication mediated by social media, which, according to Stefania Milan, are “constitutive of the symbolic and cultural dimensions of collective action, as well as of the construction and reproduction of the collective ‘we’ that stands for collective action.”⁵⁶ If, according to Milan, interaction rituals on Twitter (and in social media in general) are “continuously re-enacting the protest as well as shared emotions and beliefs,” these particular tweets apply that spirit of protest to the grief ritual.⁵⁷ The repetition of the same enumerative pattern from tweet to tweet throughout the four years following the disappearance (2014–18) makes clear that the objective of such rituals, far from participating in a work of mourning, is a memory struggle against the forgetting of the disappeared students as well as the previous connected state crimes. The impossible mourning of the 43 disappeared students, the need to keep alive their memory and the

attempt to find them again in the present time become related to the need not to forget the older past and other previous state crimes.

In this sense, it is interesting to remark how the repetition serves to construct a new genealogy of violence in Mexico and how it converges with mnemonic discourses from other media, especially videos posted on YouTube.⁵⁸ Taken from our database, the word cloud in figure 9 shows the most used words in our subset of tweets, which is a snapshot of the consequences of the aforementioned ritual repetition. The combination of thousands of individual tweets is paving a new way to access the memory of violence in Mexico.

The massacres and violent events that are referenced were all clearly state sponsored, and the word “narco” (drug trafficker or drug dealer) is used less than seventy times in our corpus, showing a clear shift of attention in Twitter’s conversation. Events referenced include the already mentioned massacres of Aguas Blancas (1995), Acteal (1997) and Atenco (2006), all three clearly committed by the Mexican army or by armed groups supported by it. These are followed by the massacre of seventy-two migrants in San Fernando, the femicides in the city of Ciudad Juarez (which have their own genealogy and are a long-standing catastrophe), the Movimiento por la Paz con Justicia y Dignidad (Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity)—a social movement lead by Javier Sicilia from 2011, which acted as an umbrella for hundreds of local and regional human rights organizations for mobilizing against violence—and, finally, the Tlatlaya massacre, which occurred only a few months before Ayotzinapa and was also perpetrated by the Mexican army and police with allegations by the state that the victims were part of a narcotics gang. As previously stated, the human rights movement around Ayotzinapa has substantially reframed the discourses surrounding these traumatic events.

The new memory that situates Tlatelolco 1968 at the beginning of a long list of state-sponsored crimes proposes a structural explanation of the violence in Mexico’s history, reshaping past-present temporality. The culpability of the state is set on a continuous line from the late 1960s to the present. The aforementioned shift of attention toward the state gives rise to an emergent history of enforced disappearance and state violence, confronting and reactivating memories of the past that seemed settled.

The following repetitive tweets show how the common denominator of all these massacres is the Mexican state. They refer to its “omission and



Fig. 9. Word cloud from the sub-data base. Translation of the main words (names of massacres in italics): massacre / government / Tlatlaya / normal-school students / I am tired / truth / Atenco / killing / Aguayo / abc / Tlatelolco 68 / movement / impunity / case / 2 October is not forgotten / Mexico / disappeared / Acteal / Mexican / forget / it was the state / Iguala / Ayotzinapa / justice / EPN / students / parents / Guerrero / history / PRI / Tlatelolco / today / army / protest / Aguas Blancas / 1968.

oblivion,” “the same old PRI” (as embodying the corruption of democracy), and “only one murderer,” among other refrains:

as old as TLATELOLCO, as corrupt as ACTEAL, as miserable as ATENCO, as despicable as AYOTZINAPA? Only the #PRI always. (October 29, 2014)

The massacres in Tlatelolco, Aguas Blancas, Tlatlaya, Ayotzinapa, Allende, and more were carried out by the army. (October 6, 2015)

Wounds that do not close: Tlatelolco Acteal Aguas Blancas Ayotzinapa Apatzingan Tanhuato Tlatlaya Nochixtlán PRI MURDERER!! (October 8, 2017)

In sum, the enforced disappearance of the 43 students of Ayotzinapa has allowed for a new genealogy of Mexican violence to emerge, a narrative that undermines the government’s claim about democratic progress and holds the PRI responsible for a series of massacres that span from 1968 onwards. Beyond the PRI, it is the very structure of the state that is denounced as corrupt and guilty.

CONCLUSIONS

In this article, we have analyzed the memorialization of the Tlatelolco massacre in relation to the Ayotzinapa case within a corpus of 16,706 tweets, showing how this memorialization has led, or at least contributed, to a retemporalization of the history of violent acts committed by the state in Mexico. At the same time, we have sought to consider Twitter as a mnemonic medium and to characterize it in terms of different kinds of intermedial operations, all of which imply memory. The overlapping of these objectives is reflected in the structure of our analysis: we have examined the question of memory (of both Tlatelolco and Ayotzinapa) as conveyed on Twitter from four complementary perspectives on the links between media and memory.

We have found that in the digital memorialization of Tlatelolco as it is remediated through our database the phenomenon of repetition is central. At a discursive level, we have examined the transfer of discourses from Tlatelolco to Ayotzinapa, and discovered that the latter appears in many tweets as a repetition of the former; a repetition that is related not only to the repressive mechanisms of the state but also to a traumatic lack of memory in Mexican society. Our database shows that the exceptional position Tlatelolco held in Mexican history and sociopolitical memory is either qualified or completely negated by the principle of repetition. On the one hand, if a mythologizing trend is manifest in the mnemonic discourse that draws an analogy between the Tlatelolco massacre and the Ayotzinapa case, the gesture of transferring the uniqueness of the first event to the second leads to certain differences between this and earlier commemorations (greater stress is put on denunciation than on praise, and the old idea of conspiracy that seemed to be buried resurfaces) and also introduces the competing notion of repetition, reshaping Tlatelolco as a specter that haunts Mexican history and reappears in the present—in the Ayotzinapa case. On the other hand, when Tlatelolco and Ayotzinapa are integrated into a series of state-sponsored crimes, the idea of exceptionality is replaced by a new awareness of a long historical process marked by violence, repression and silence—a history that the Ayotzinapa case has brought to the surface.

At a more formal level, the principle of repetition seems to shape the logics of communication in our database, in relation to various formal

features of Twitter. When looking at the copresence of different media in a single tweet, we have noted that the relationship between these media (for instance, texts with hashtags, still images, short videos, hyperlinks) is characterized by a certain redundancy. Repetition also applies to the circulation of the same ideas from tweet to tweet, as well as to the structure of enumeration in a single tweet—the very functioning of the hashtag depends upon systematic repetition.

Moreover, the formal repetitions and the mnemonic discourse about repetition linking Ayotzinapa to Tlatelolco may be related to social or collective commemorative ritual practices centered on repetition (such as series of names or numbers of victims). This suggests that the digital memories of Tlatelolco are remediating not only other discourses and media forms but also social practices of grief and remembrance. Our analysis, furthermore, has insisted upon the importance of considering Twitter as part of a global media ecology, based on a broad definition of “media” that includes offline performative acts of memory and protest.

Repetition can also be considered in relation to trauma, as a symptom of a memory that has been repressed or hidden in the unconscious. We would like to propose that the idea applies to both Mexican social or collective memory and Twitter as a mnemonic media. Indeed, our analysis suggests a connection between Twitter’s technological unconscious (invisible chains of algorithms governing structural processes and the visible operations, trends, topics, etc.) and a social unconscious inhabited by traumas (such as the series of previous crimes that have gone under-recognized at a collective level). Memory, trauma and the technological unconscious of social media thus become intertwined, turning Twitter into a revealing mnemonic environment.

NOTES

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1. Grupo Interdisciplinario de Expertos Independientes, *Informe Ayotzinapa: Investigación y primeras conclusiones de las desapariciones y homicidios de los normalistas de Ayotzinapa* (Mexico: Grupo Interdisciplinario de Expertos Independientes, 2015), 311–13.

2. Eugenia Allier-Montaño, “From Conspiracy to Struggle for Democracy: A Historicization of the Political Memories of the Mexican ‘68,” in Eugenia Allier-Montaño and Emilio Crenzel, eds., *The Struggle for Memory in Latin America: Recent History and Political Violence* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 129.

3. Eugenia Allier-Montaño, “Memory and History of Mexico ‘68,” *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, no. 102 (2016): 8.

4. Ann Rigney, “Remembering Hope: Transnational Activism beyond the Traumatic,” *Memory Studies* 11, no. 3 (2018): 372.

5. See, among others, Red Chidgey, *Feminist Afterlives: Assemblage Memory in Activist Times* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Ron Eyerman, “Social Movements and Memory,” in Anna Lisa Tota and Hagen Trever, eds., *Routledge International Handbook of Memory Studies* (London: Routledge, 2016), 77–83; Lorenzo Zamponi, *Social Movements, Memory and Media: Narrative in Action in the Italian and Spanish Student Movements* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); and Lorenzo Zamponi, “#ioricordo, beyond the Genoa G8: Social Practices of Memory Work and the Digital Remembrance of Contentious Pasts in Italy,” in Samuel Merrill, Emily Keightley and Priska Daphi, eds., *Social Movements, Cultural Memory and Digital Media: Mobilising Mediated Remembrance* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 141–71.

6. Martín Zícari, “Silhouettes: Choreographies of Remembrance against Enforced Disappearance,” *alter/nativas*, no. 9 (Autumn 2018/Spring 2019): 1–22.

7. Lance W. Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg, *The Logic of Connective Action: Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Mary Joyce, ed., *Digital Activism Decoded: The New Mechanics of Change* (New York: International Debate Education Association, 2010); Emiliano Treré, *Hybrid Media Activism: Ecologies, Imaginaries, Algorithms* (London: Routledge, 2018).

8. See, for instance, Rocío Abascal-Mena, “Comunicación política en 140 caracteres: El caso #Ayotzinapa,” *Razón y Palabra* 92 (2016), http://www.razonypalabra.org.mx/N/N92/Varia/10_Abascal_V92.pdf (accessed December 15, 2020); Luis César Torres Nabel, “Social Networks and Cognitive Frameworks: The Case #YaMeCansé and the Conflict of Ayotzinapa, México 2014,” *International and Multidisciplinary Journal of Social Sciences* 4, no. 2 (2015): 175–93; Rocío Araceli Galarza Molina, “Contentious Politics and Social Media: A Study of the Networked Publics in the Ayotzinapa Twitter Protests #Pasedelista1al43” (PhD

diss., University of Missouri-Columbia, 2018); Bernardo Gutiérrez, “#Ayotzinapa: La expansión global de una causa,” *Horizontal* 25 (September 2015), <https://horizontal.mx/ayotzinapa-la-expansion-global-de-una-causa> (accessed December 19, 2020). For the difference between social media and mainstream media in their coverage of protests in the Ayotzinapa case, see Summer Harlow, Ramón Salaverría, Danielle K. Kilgo, and Víctor García-Perdomo, “Protest Paradigm in Multimedia: Social Media Sharing of Coverage about the Crime of Ayotzinapa, Mexico,” *Journal of Communication* 67, no. 3 (2017): 328–49.

9. Gutiérrez, “#Ayotzinapa,” reveals that “Zapatista networks and diverse Mexican popular struggles as well as #YoSoy132 networks actively participated in the protest ecosystem of Ayotzinapa, in an unprecedentedly synchronized manner.” (Unless otherwise indicated translations from Spanish are those of the authors.)

10. See, for example, Carlos Montemayor, *La violencia de estado en México: Antes y después de 1968* (Mexico: Random House Mondadori, 2010); Laura Castellanos, *México armado* (Mexico: Ediciones Era, 2013); Raúl Álvarez Garín, *La estela de Tlatelolco: Una reconstrucción histórica del movimiento estudiantil del 68* (Mexico: Editorial Ítaca, 2002); Fernando Calderón and Adela Cedillo, eds., *Challenging Authoritarianism in Mexico Revolutionary Struggles and the Dirty War, 1964–1982* (New York: Routledge, 2011); and Alfonso Díaz Tovar, “Prácticas de conmemoración de la Guerra Sucia en México,” *Athenea Digital* 15, no. 4 (2015): 197–221. Cf. María De Vecchi Gerli, “¡Vivxs Lxs Queremos! The Battles for Memory around the Disappeared in Mexico” (PhD diss., University College London, 2018), and Camilo Vicente Ovalle, *Tiempo suspendido: Una historia de La desaparición forzada en México, 1940–1980* (Mexico: Bonilla Artigas Editores, 2019), who dispute the use of the term.

11. According to a report by the National Human Rights Commission, at Atenco 207 people were victims of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, 145 were arbitrarily arrested, 26 women suffered sexual assault and 5 foreigners were illegally expelled from the country. See *Informe preliminar de las acciones realizadas en el caso de los hechos de violencia suscitados en los municipios de Texcoco y San Salvador Atenco, Estado de México*, published on May 22, 2006 on the website of the Mexican National Human Rights Commission, https://web.archive.org/web/20120513152723/http://cndh.org.mx/sites/all/fuentes/documentos/informes/especiales/2006_texcoco.pdf). The case is now in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Initially the massacre at Aguas Blancas was reported by the police as a response to the aggression of an armed group; however, a video released showed that the peasants were unarmed and were attacked by the police without resisting. In 2020 the government of Mexico recognized the responsibility of the Mexican state for the Acteal massacre. The Mexican government first depicted the Tlatlaya massacre as a confrontation, then as an isolated incident. However,

forensic analyses showed that many of the victims were executed, corroborating eyewitness testimony. A report published by Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human Rights Center (Centro Prodh), *Informe Tlatlaya: La orden fue abatir* (Mexico: Centro Prodh, 2015), documented that the Mexican military had orders to “take out criminals” in the area, in complete disregard for their human rights and due process.

12. The *Encuesta Nacional de Violencia Organizada* (ENVO) was conducted in the framework of the research project “Bullets and Votes: Violence, Politics and Citizenship in Mexico,” funded by the National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT) and the National Electoral Institute (IFE). See Andreas Schedler, *Ciudadanía y violencia organizada: Informe final del proyecto CONACYT-IFE: “Balas y votos: Violencia, política y ciudadanía en México,” Tomo II* (Ciudad de México: CIDE, 2014).

13. Roberto González Villarreal, *Ayotzinapa, La Rabia y La Esperanza* (México: Editorial Terracota, 2015), and Sergio Aguayo, *De Tlatelolco a Ayotzinapa: Las violencias del estado* (Mexico: Editorial Ink, 2015). A short video in which Aguayo explains the “similarities, differences and consequences” of the Tlatelolco and Ayotzinapa massacres was posted on YouTube on October 17, 2014 (20,000 views) and has been broadly shared through Twitter (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qs1u4m9ny_o).

14. Elena Poniatowska, quoted in Ulises Gutiérrez Ruelas, “Es más peligroso ser estudiante hoy que en 1968: Poniatowska,” *La Jornada*, November 10, 2014, <https://www.jornada.com.mx/2014/10/11/politica/010n2pol> (accessed December 15, 2020).

15. See, for instance, Santiago A. Canton, “De Ayotzinapa a Tlatelolco,” *El País*, September 7, 2015, https://elpais.com/internacional/2015/09/07/actualidad/1441644219_401224.html; Laura Castellanos, “El camino del 68 a Ayotzinapa,” *Aristegui Noticias*, October 2, 2018, <https://aristeginoticias.com/0210/mexico/el-camino-del-68-a-ayotzinapa/>; Sylvia Colombo, “Tlatelolco, 1968—Ayotzinapa, 2014,” November 9, 2014, Folha de S. Paulo website, <https://sylviacolombo.blogfolha.uol.com.br/2014/11/09/tlatelolco-1968-ayotzinapa-2014/> (all accessed December 16, 2020).

16. For the miniseries, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bsyVLajdULA>; and Article 19’s website, <https://articulo19.org/desaparecer-en-mexico/> (accessed 13, April 2021).

17. Allier-Montaño, “From Conspiracy to Struggle for Democracy,” 129–46.

18. In response to the ethical concerns arising from digital methodologies, we have sought to obtain explicit informed consent from the users of the tweets quoted in this article and have obtained such consent for 40 percent of the quoted tweets. Nevertheless, since during an analysis of aggregate data it is virtually impossible to

acquire informed consent for each unit, there is agreement in the literature that this type of analysis can be conducted by anonymizing the data instead. We have therefore removed all the users' names of the quoted tweets and opted for translating all the tweets, which makes it more difficult to identify the participants; for those tweets for which we did not obtain informed consent, our translation followed Annette Markham's principle of "fabrication" of data, that is, "a bricolage-style reconfiguration of original data that represents the intended meaning of interactions." See Annette Markham, "Fabrication as Ethical Practice: Qualitative Inquiry in Ambiguous Internet Contexts," *Information, Communication & Society* 15, no. 3 (2012): 334–53; and Matthew L. Williams, Pete Burnap and Luke Sloan, "Towards an Ethical Framework for Publishing Twitter Data in Social Research: Taking into Account Users' Views, Online Context and Algorithmic Estimation," *Sociology* 51, no. 6 (2017): 14.

19. David M. Blei and John D. Lafferty, "Topic Models," in Ashok N. Srivastava and Mehran Sahami, eds., *Text Mining: Classification, Clustering, and Applications* (Boca Raton, FL: Chapman and Hall/CRC, 2009), 71–89.

20. See Xiaohui Yan, Jiafeng Guo, Yanyan Lan and Xueqi Cheng, "A Bitern Topic Model for Short Texts," in *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on World Wide Web, WWW '13* (Rio de Janeiro: Association for Computing Machinery, 2013), 1445–56. We evaluated the quality of our topic models automatically, using the Cv coherence score, an index employed in computational language processing to score texts according to their interpretability, which is correlated to human judgments of readability. See Michael Röder, Andreas Both and Alexander Hinneburg, "Exploring the Space of Topic Coherence Measures," in *Proceedings of the Eighth ACM International Conference on Web Search and Data Mining, WSDM '15* (Shanghai: Association for Computing Machinery, 2015), 399–408. All topics reported in this work have a Cv score between 0.55 and 0.7 (range 0–1), which is the most coherent range. The higher the score, the more difficult it is to make sense of the sequence of words in a topic.

21. In this topic, the words "Polytechnic," "national," "institute," "WeAreAll-Polytechnic" and "student" refer to the National Polytechnic Institute (IPN), which is one of the largest public universities in Mexico. In the days before the Ayotzinapa events, in September 2014, the IPN students organized massive protests to reject the IPN's new bylaw and educational plans. On October 2, students from the Ayotzinapa Teachers' College and the IPN (among others) marched in the annual protest in commemoration of Tlatelolco 1968, in a coalition that represented various student demands.

22. We used a Python script to count word occurrences. Before counting, we lower-cased the texts and removed URLs and punctuation. For generating the

word clouds, we used the word_cloud Python library (https://github.com/amueller/word_cloud).

23. Paolo Gerbaudo, *Tweets and the Streets: Social Media and Contemporary Activism* (London: Pluto Press, 2012), 166.

24. José Van Dijck, *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 78 (our emphasis).

25. Gerbaudo, *Tweets and the Streets*, 162.

26. For the question of time and memory on Facebook, see, for instance, Anne Kaun and Fredrik Stiernstedt, "Facebook time: Technological and Institutional Affordances for Media Memories," *New Media & Society* 16, no. 7, 1154–68, and various chapters in Andrea Hajek, Christine Lohmeier and Christian Pentzold, eds., *Memory in a Mediated World: Remembrance and Reconstruction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

27. Cf., for instance, Nicholas R. Griffin et al. who investigate "how false information from Twitter may lead to memory distortion." Nicholas R. Griffin, Cory R. Fleck, Mitchell G. Uitvlugt, Susan M. Ravizza and Kimberly M. Fenn, "The Tweeter Matters: Factors That Affect False Memory from Twitter," *Computers in Human Behavior* 77 (2017): 65.

28. Zamponi, "#ioricordo, beyond the Genoa G8."

29. Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney, "Introduction: Cultural Memory and Its Dynamics," in Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney, eds., *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 2.

30. Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 98.

31. Erll and Rigney, "Introduction," 4.

32. Klaus Bruhn Jensen, "Intermediality," in Wolfgang Donsbach, ed., *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*, vol. 6 (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 2385; Sébastien Fevry, "Le geste intermédiaire dans une cartographie des études mémorielles," *Intermédialités/Intermediality*, no. 30–31 (2017–2018), <https://www.erudit.org/fr/revues/im/2017-n30-31-im03868/1049948ar/> (accessed December 10, 2020); and Irina O. Rajewsky, "Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation: A Literary Perspective on Intermediality," *ibid.*, no. 6 (2005): 43–64, <https://www.erudit.org/fr/revues/im/2005-n6-im1814727/1005505ar/> (accessed December 13, 2020).

33. Fevry, "Le geste intermédiaire," refers to Rémy Besson, who distinguishes between various implicit definitions of intermediality, relying on different conceptions of "media": as singular cultural products, as cultural series that are sufficiently stable, specific and legitimate or as means allowing for a mediation in a given environment. Rémy Besson, "Prolégomènes pour une définition de l'intermédialité à l'époque contemporaine," *HAL Archives-ouvertes* (2014): 5,

<https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal01012325v2/document> (accessed December 17, 2020).

34. Joanne Garde-Hansen, Andrew Hoskins and Anna Reading, eds., *Save As... Digital Memories* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 9.

35. José Van Dijck, *Mediated Memories in the Digital Age* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 176.

36. Andrew Hoskins, "Digital Network Memory," in Erll and Rigney, eds., *Mediation, Remediation*, 92.

37. Sy Taffel, *Digital Media Ecologies: Entanglements of Content, Code and Hardware* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2019).

38. Treré, *Hybrid Media Activism*, 18.

39. Garde-Hansen, Hoskins and Reading, eds., *Save As...*, 12.

40. Erll, and Rigney, eds., *Mediation, Remediation*.

41. Allier-Montaño, "From Conspiracy to Struggle for Democracy," 133, 134.

42. Allier-Montaño, "Memory and History of Mexico '68."

43. See Ley de Amnistía. 1ra Reforma. Iniciativa, 1976; Ley de Amnistía. Dictamen 1ra Lectura, 1976.

44. Ley de Amnistía. Nueva Ley. Iniciativa, 1978, 24–25.

45. Allier-Montaño, "From Conspiracy to Struggle for Democracy," 142, 132.

46. Although the conspiracy memory initially referred to a communist conspiracy, later a different version was advanced, especially by the Socialist People's Party (Partido Popular Socialista, PPS), according to which the conspiracy was orchestrated by the CIA and American imperialism. See Eugenia Allier-Montaño, "De la conjura a la lucha por la democracia: Una historización de las memorias políticas del 68 mexicano," in Eugenia Allier-Montaño and Emilio Crenzel, eds., *Las luchas por la memoria en América Latina: Historia reciente y violencia política* (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México/Bonilla Artigas Editores, 2015), 197.

47. "La verdad NO contada de Ayotzinapa: La CIA exterminó a los 43 de Ayotzinapa" [The truth NOT told about Ayotzinapa: The CIA exterminated the Ayotzinapa 43], directed by Hugo Sadh and posted on April 17, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6MV_JuMSsnk (accessed December 15, 2020).

48. Nathan Rambukkana, *Hashtag Publics: The Power and Politics of Discursive Networks* (New York: Peter Lang, 2016), 30.

49. In *The Archive Effect: Found Footage and the Audiovisual Experience of History* (London: Routledge, 2014), Jaimie Baron defines the archive according to the experience of reception, that is, as an *effect*: "archival documents exist as 'archival' only insofar as the viewer of a given film perceives certain documents within that film as coming from another, previous—and primary—context of use

or intended use" (7). This definition remains valid in other media environments, such as Twitter.

50. This multiplicity of media entailed by the copresence paradigm accords with the logic of Twitter's hypermediacy as described by Bolter and Grusin, a logic characterized by formal heterogeneity. The multiplicity of heterogeneous media in a new one involves a certain epistemological opacity, meaning that "the viewer acknowledges that (s)he is in the presence of a medium and learns through acts of mediation or indeed learns about mediation itself" (*Remediation*, 70–71). Such opacity of the medium appears in tension with the transparency and spontaneity that social media explicitly emulate and which are among the most common cyber-libertarian myths applied to digital media. See Treré, *Hybrid Media Activism*.

51. Zamponi, "#ioricordo, beyond the Genoa G8."

52. Peter Wikström, "I Tweet Like I Talk: Aspects of Speech and Writing on Twitter" (PhD diss., Karlstads University, 2017), 7.

53. *Ibid.*, 21.

54. *Ibid.*, i.

55. For a definition of "media memory practices" in relation to Facebook, see Kaun and Stiernstedt, "Facebook Time," 199.

56. Stefania Milan, "Mobilizing in Times of Social Media: From a Politics of Identity to a Politics of Visibility," in Lina Dencik and Oliver Leistert, eds., *Critical Perspectives on Social Media and Protest: Between Control and Emancipation* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 66. Milan is drawing on Randall Collins's interaction ritual theory, *Interaction Ritual Chains* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

57. Milan, "Mobilizing in Times of Social Media," 61.

58. Diverse short videos posted on YouTube and shared through Twitter have contributed to spreading this genealogy. Among them, we can mention: "La gota que derramó el vaso: Ya no tenemos miedo" [The straw that broke the camel's back: We are no longer afraid], video released on November 7, 2014 (366,000 views), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bKWgSvcGgm4&has_verified=1 (accessed December 18, 2020); videoclip of protest song "Fuerte," by Saúl Hernández, which renowned journalist Aristegui presents as "a song for Ayotzinapa, Acteal, Guardería ABC...," <https://aristeguinoicias.com/2711/kiosko/video-fuerte-de-saul-hernandez-sobre-impunidad-en-mexico/>. The clip was posted on YouTube on November 20, 2014 (731,000 views), cf. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4aBYoznz0lA> (accessed December 17, 2020); video directly posted on Twitter on October 2, 2017 by the Organización Nacional Anticorrupción (ONEA): "#Video: Hoy se cumplen 49 años de la masacre estudiantil de #Tlatelolco y los hechos siguen sin esclarecerse. #2deOctubreNoSeOlvida" [Today marks 49 years of the student massacre of #Tlatelolco and the facts remain unclarified.

#2OctoberIsNotForgotten] (39,700 views, 757 retweets), cf. <https://twitter.com/oneamexico/status/914881966851411969/video/1> (accessed December 17, 2020).

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