

# #AbortoLegalYa [Legal Abortion Now] — Digital activism for legal abortion in Argentina, 2018-2020

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Received: 30/03/2021

Accepted: 13/05/2021

## ABSTRACT

For the first time in Argentine history, a Bill on the Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy was introduced in the National Congress (parliament) in 2018. The debate marked a turning point in the political agenda of Feminism at both the national and regional level. Hitherto, most Feminist movements had focused their political action on street protests/camp-outs/occupations, training youth, sparking public debates, and packing the political platforms of parties to advocate the legalisation of abortion. Although the Senate finally rejected the Bill in 2018, in 2020 Alberto Fernández introduced a new Bill on the 17th of November 2020, which was passed by the Senate on the 30th of December. This paper first briefly summarises Argentina's Feminist movement's struggle to legalise abortion. To this end, we analyse the records and collaborative coverage by the media and civil society organisations in Argentina between 2018 and 2020. We focus on: how digital, social and political territories were 'occupied'; what Feminist practices were used to make the long-standing #AbortoLegalYa [Legalise Abortion Now] movement visible from different perspectives and tracks; what discourse and media strategies were used to put the issue in the limelight and to span the demands made by broad sectors of society. Finally, we focus on the digital activism carried out to cover the debate in social networks and various digital platforms, with special stress on real-time updates in the Spanish language Wikipedia entry between 2018 and 2020.

**Keywords:** Feminism; Digital Activism; Wikipedia; Legal abortion; Social Movements.

## SUMMARY

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**Suggested citation:** Alvarez, V., and Ferrante, L. (2023). #AbortoLegalYa [Legal Abortion Now] — Digital activism for legal abortion in Argentina, 2018-2020. *Debats. Journal on Culture, Power and Society*, 8, 119-133. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.28939/iam.debats-137-2.1>

## INTRODUCTION

The Argentine National Congress [parliament] first discussed the Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy Bill in 2018. Although the Bill was passed by the Chamber of Deputies (Lower House), it was narrowly defeated in the Senate. This reverse was followed by a major campaign under the *#AbortoLegalYa* [Legalise Abortion Now] hashtag, Feminists' participation in various TV programmes (Laudano, 2018), nationwide demonstrations in support of legal abortion, and mass demonstrations on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March during The Second International Women's Strike. Information sessions and debates were held in both legislative chambers between April and August 2018.

Discussion of the Bill in the Argentine National Congress in 2018 marked a watershed in Feminism's political agenda at the national and regional levels.

During those months, Feminists together with social sectors also wishing to legalise abortion gave rise to what became known as 'The Green Wave'. Decades of Feminist activism for this right (Bellucci, 2014) "converged in an inter-generational movement (Elizalde and Matteo, 2018; Sutton, 2020), activating discursive memories and co-ordinating actions from a unique chorus of voices" (Laudano; Kratje; Aracri and Balbuena, 2020:5). Most social movements shifted their political and territorial agenda to occupy the streets, create public debate forums, and flood political party platforms with a clear call to decriminalise abortion.

Two years later, in 2020, in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic, the President of Argentina, Alberto Fernández, brought a Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy Bill to parliament, as he had promised

in his first opening speech. This Bill was debated in December 2020 and passed on the 30<sup>th</sup> of December in what had been a politically, economically, and socially challenging year both for the country and the world as a whole.

This paper gives an historical account of the struggle for the right to abortion, identifying the Feminist movement in Argentina, and addressing the social and political impact of the 2018 debate within the inter-generational Feminist movement. Furthermore, we will reflect on the role played by social movements in sustaining the demand until the Bill's final approval in 2020.

We see digital activism as the many uses social actors make of ICT to foster and shape new kinds of collective action and resistance in today's contemporary struggles. This contrasts with the vision of ICT as merely a set of techno-revolutionary tools. Our vision is thus one of ICT as a means by which social actors draw up new kinds of collective action and resistance within the framework of contemporary social struggles. Likewise, we start from the idea that the public space is redefined through endless interaction between what happens on the streets and on digital platforms (Treré, 2016). We therefore analyse media and civil society data and records covering events in Argentina between 2018 and 2020, focusing on digital activism and debate on social media platforms. Here, we shall put the spotlight on the article *Aborto en Argentina* [Abortion in Argentina] on the Spanish version of Wikipedia, its real-time updates, and the peaks in visits and content edits it received during the 2018-2020 period, alongside the debate on the streets, in classrooms, and women's assemblies (Rubin and Zanotti, 2019).

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## FEMINIST STRANDS IN ARGENTINA AND THE RIGHT TO ABORTION

The history of Feminism in Argentina dates back to the 19th century. As the modern nation formed,

a legal framework was established for trade and family matters, which enshrined separate rights for men and women. In particular, The Civil Code of 1869 established the legal inferiority of women, linked to the notion of “marital power,” which implied that husbands wielded certain powers over women and their property, exercising sole parental authority over children and the family's legal domicile.

These hegemonic gender constructs confined women to the domestic sphere and were at odds with the needs of poorer women, who had to find work outside their homes. Many of them, as wage-labourers, took part in collective protests and joined the Anarchists' or Socialists' ranks in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Others formed early Feminist groups (Barrancos, 2010). Women's suffrage – a principle advocated by various Feminist, Anarchist, Socialist, and Liberal movements and, in the 1940s, Peronist groups — was debated in Parliament from the 1920s onwards and was finally passed in 1947.

After The Second World War, the worldwide expansion of secondary education extended to Argentine women. In the 1960s, many of them entered universities, and middle-class women began joining the labour market, where they played a growing role in trade unions and politics. Socio-economic changes in the mid-20th Century, based on the nuclear family, fewer children, intense emotions, and a split between the woman as homemaker and the man as breadwinner began to undermine the old ‘domestic paradigm’.

1960s and 70s Feminism (known as ‘Second Wave Feminism’) sought to politicise everyday life, highlighting the grave injustices stemming from abuses of power in the so-called ‘private’ sphere. The right to free sex not bound to child-bearing quickly emerged as a demand that was crucial to women's freedom. “My body is mine” was the slogan, while demands for the right to abortion were voiced in the streets.

In 1974, a body was set up in Argentina to hold a congress in 1975, which was announced as The International Year of Women. In this context, Argentine Feminists also gathered to present their demands. When these demands got a cold reception, they formed The Women's Struggle Front, which, among other things, advocated repeal of the Decree that banned the sale and use of contraceptives for both sexes, and forbade abortion.

During these years of political radicalisation, although Feminist groups had fewer members than political or political-military groups, they were clandestinely active when the *coup d'état* began in 1976 (Veiga, 2010). Some of them embarked on academic research within universities and, later on, in private research centres, both within Argentina and in exile.

Many social organisations were founded after the restoration of democracy in 1983, including Feminist ones. This raised awareness of women's issues, and several legal reforms made the 1980s a crucial decade in the history of Argentine Feminism (Tarducci and Rifkin, 2010). The calmer atmosphere in Argentina that followed the end of the country's brutal military dictatorship helped make Feminism more visible. With the restoration of democracy, many women joined Feminist movements (Nari, 1995 and 1996). In Mónica Tarducci's words:

“The post-dictatorship period in Argentina soon became fertile ground for women to present their demands, greatly expanding the democratic rights then being restored. Thus, not only divorce and parental authority were discussed but also the right to full sexuality and legal abortion.” (Tarducci, 2018: 426)

During this period, Argentine Feminists held meetings and exchanges with Feminists from other parts of Latin America and the rest of the world, with the Feminist Meetings of Latin America and The Caribbean being a key forum for sharing and planning collective actions (Pita, 2007). Both these meetings and the International Women's Confer-

ence, held by The United Nations in Nairobi in 1985, were precursors of the National Women's Meeting (ENM), which has been held since 1986. The ENM wields a great deal of influence today, attracting massive turn-outs in cities across the country. Its meetings take place over a three-day spell every year and bring together thousands of participants (Tarducci and Rifkin, 2010; Alma and Lorenzo, 2009).

In 1987, the Commission for the Right to Abortion was created in Argentina, gathering signatures at a table in front of the National Congress, holding talks and debates on abortion and contraception, publishing materials with information on abortion, supporting women who wanted to undergo tubal ligation, helping in the drafting of three Bills, and drafting one of their own, among other activities. This commission used the slogan “Contraceptives to avoid abortion, legal abortion to save lives.”

As Mónica Tarducci (2018) has shown, the 1990s were busy years for those fighting clandestine abortions in Argentina, with many groups and networks joining the struggle for the right to abortion. Neighbourhood assemblies were set up in the next decade, especially after the events of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> December 2001. Many Feminists, including those linked to the Right to Abortion Board, took part. It was against this background that the Assembly for the Right to Abortion was set up in 2002.

A workshop on strategies for getting the Abortion Bill passed at an ENM event in 2005 led to the launch of The Campaign for Legal, Safe, Free Abortion. The Campaign was a Federal alliance that had been working since 2005 on legislation to make contraception legal. The Campaign was broad-based. Among those involved were: Feminist and women's groups; social organisations; Human Rights organisations; scientific communities; healthcare professionals; trade unions; social and cultural movements; rural and educational networks; associations for the unemployed; factory occupation

groups; student associations; journalists; LGBTQ+ organisations. “Their fight for abortion legalisation is framed within a concept of democracy as a system that must ensure social justice and human rights, promote access to healthcare for all citizens, and provide the necessary support to those who decide to terminate their pregnancies” (Laudano, Kratje, Aracri & Balbuena: 7).

Starting in 2015, the year of the collective cry *Ni Una Menos*<sup>1</sup> [Literally ‘Not One Less’, in the sense of ‘No more deaths from backstreet abortions’], some researchers point to the beginning of a new wave of Feminism, referred to as ‘The Fourth Wave.’ In addition to its large following, this wave is characterised by the use of digital technologies and platforms, as well as new forms of digital and territorial activism.

During 2018, various Feminist and women's movements gathered over 100,000 signatures, which they delivered to the National Congress with the slogan “Sexual education to decide, contraceptives to avoid abortion, legal abortion to save lives.” Gradually, more and more women began proudly wearing a green handkerchief to show their support for the National Campaign for Legal, Safe, Free Abortion. These handkerchiefs were tied to backpacks, purses, wrists, and round women's necks. Green handkerchiefs were also seen hanging in windows and balconies in major cities across the country. This phenomenon became known as “The Green Wave”.

In this context, there was a flood of interventions leading up to the parliamentary debates on the Bill in 2018 and 2020. In this paper, we are particularly interested in focusing on the digital activism used

to cover the debates on social media and digital platforms, with stress on the experience of the article on ‘Abortion in Argentina’ in the Spanish language Wikipedia, its real-time updates, and the peaks in visits and content edits to it between 2018 and 2020.

### DIGITAL ACTIVISM FOR THE ABORTION LEGALISATION CAMPAIGN

We delve into the social, political, and territorial facets of Argentina's 2018-2020 debate on legalising abortion through its reflection in the writing and real-time updating of an article on the subject in the Spanish language Wikipedia. This was written and edited even while the Feminist movement was taking to the nation's streets. Here, we see Wikipedia as a digitally contested territory, which was part of the collective actions that fall under the concept of ‘total communication’, as defined by Treré (2016). In particular, we look at the relationship between digital media and social movements in the context of the strategies drawn up by social organisations and Feminist movements to keep the debate on legalising abortion in the public eye (Rinke and Röder, 2011). We shall analyse the social struggles that were set in motion during the period 2018-2020 (especially 2020) through the prisms of digital activism, the dynamics of hybridisation, and feedback between online and offline actions and participation in contemporary struggles (Candón Mena and Benítez-Eyzaguirre, 2016; De Sousa Santos, 2020). To this end, we held seven in-depth interviews with digital activists, members of social organisations, and grassroots educators in Argentina. Furthermore, we analysed information provided by the Wikipedia site to examine the construction, revision, and updating of the Wikipedia article on abortion in Argentina.

The process studied here occurred in a context of mass media coverage and voices that were present in mainstream media as well as in neighbourhood-based, self-managed media during the two years of

<sup>1</sup> *Ni una menos* [Not One Less!] is the slogan of a movement that sprang up in Argentina in 2015, and that later greatly expanded to various other countries. The movement is a protest group that denounces violence against women, which often ends with murder. A march, also termed *Ni una menos* was held for the first time on the 3rd of June 2015 in eighty towns and cities throughout the country.

the debate in the National Congress. In this regard, it is worth revisiting the testimony of Ana Clara Nicola — a digital activist, and communicator at *Periódicas*, a Feminist and digital media outlet in Santa Fe Province — on the role that communication played during the debates:

“Digital spaces were much more heavily occupied than we thought, attaining the reach and power they have today. Social networks gave us access, the power to take the lead in communication instead of waiting for others to speak for us. We had new tools to hand, and [scope for] building a perspective and knowledge that are now reflected in all our networks.” (Nicola, 2021).

The media’s role, and with it, the greater presence of feminist voices and associations in digital spaces were key aspects of the online campaign to legalise abortion. Various digital platforms played a big role in organising, managing, and promoting collective action in this struggle. They included: Facebook; Twitter; Instagram; WhatsApp; Signal; Telegram; YouTube; Wikipedia. Argentina’s ‘Green Wave’ was a skilful blend of social media, demonstrations, assemblies, and vigils (Acosta, 2018). Where social media and digital platforms were embraced as key allies by the Feminist movement, public demonstrations took on a digital dimension and amplified voices calling for the right to abortion. This sparked public debate in cyberspace too. Just a few of the many hashtags that rose to prominence were:

#NiUnaMenos [Not One Less]; #VivasNosQueremos [We Want Them to Live]; #AbortoLegalYa [Legalise Abortion Now]; #QueSealey [Pass The Bill]; #EstamosHaciendoHistoria [We’re Making History]; #8ASeraLey [It’ll be Law on Aug. 8<sup>th</sup>]; #8A [8<sup>th</sup> August]; #ElMundoGritaAbortoLegal [The World Demands Legal Abortion]; #Pañuelazo [Hankerchief]; #MartesVerdes [Green Tuesdays]

In the words of Anitza Toytoyndjian, a sociologist, educator, and Feminist activist in Villa 31:

“In my view, 2018 and part of 2020 were turning points in the visibility and popularisation of the struggle for the right to abortion. If we backtrack a bit, Feminist organisations had been growing, and it seems to me that it did the groundwork needed to challenge meanings and incorporate new actors. Actresses and media people were key in giving the campaign greater reach. For instance, Dolores Fonzi [an Argentine actress] pushed for implementation of comprehensive sexual education (ESI)<sup>2</sup> and demanded abortion on demand through her Instagram account and in interviews. This was a key alliance in challenging and putting the issue in the media limelight” (Toytoyndjian, 2021).

It was a long saga whose high points were the two parliamentary debates (2018 and 2020). Yet it was the culmination of the long struggle of the Feminist movement set out in the preceding section. This movement gradually strengthened through street demonstrations, assemblies, and the impact of the National Women’s Meetings and Feminist mobilisation in forging inter-generational links (Di Marco, 2011). In the words of Clarisa Gamberra, Secretary of Gender and Equal Opportunities of the Buenos Aires branch of the Argentine Workers’ Central Union [*Central de Trabajadores Argentinos* — CTA]:

“Perseverance was a vital part of the political strategy because it made legal abortion possible in Argentina (...). It was an approach we learnt at the National Women’s Meetings, in which everything was discussed in order to draw up common agendas and advance specific collective demands, thus creating power relations (...). Here, the *Ni Una Menos* movement in 2015 gave the struggle a big boost (...) we met up in the streets and it became part

2 This refers to the *Ley de Educación Sexual Integral* (ESI) [Comprehensive Sexual Education Act], which was passed in 2006. The Act’s goals are to ensure that all children and teenagers in schools (both State-run and private) receive sex education. Nevertheless, there are some schools that fail to teach the subjects stipulated under the Act. That is why many student groups demand strict enforcement of the ESI.

of young women's agenda. It also revitalised the movement through inter-generational encounters between historical leaders and young women, who found common ground in the radical ideas they held. That is because Feminist strands of thought are 'disruptive' and challenge the status quo, uniting various generations." (Gamberra, 2021).

The popular Feminism spawned by the campaign laid the foundations for thinking about the right to abortion. These achievements became milestones on the Argentine Feminist movement's common path to its goals. In the words of Anaclara Frosio, a prominent leader of the Villa 31-31BIS Feminist Assembly:

"Winning the right to abortion in Argentina is part of the long tradition of the National Campaign on this issue. It was marked by the waving of green handkerchiefs at mass demos, and gatherings on street corners with old leaders to collect signatures. It is a common thread among the diverse sectors making up popular Feminism in Argentina. During the pandemic, there was a big shift to the online world. We creatively made inroads there. This dimension merged ever more strongly with street actions, which continued, albeit in combination with a variety of other strategies. In 2018, we were able to socially decriminalise abortion. Another political high point came in 2020, when we held debates in many forums. Young boys and girls played a key part in pressing for comprehensive sex education (ESI), this was a generation that posed different questions and that had its own concerns." (Frosio, 2021).

In this same vein, weaving these expressions of popular Feminism into a common fabric of collective actions, the photographer and communicator Carolina Robaina shares her experience from her work at the *Periódicas* digital media outlet in the City of Santa Fe:

"I believe that the photographic and audio-visual record of each *pañuelazo* (demos with

protesters waving green handkerchiefs) or event held by the campaign helped make the struggle visible by showing protesters on the streets, their demands, their voices (...). In 2020, some in-person actions took place, which following pandemic safety measures. Documenting those moments for the *Periódicas*' networks traces our own history of activism. The same happened when we went to the Senate vote in December. We were walking towards the National Congress, which we couldn't even see given the people packing the streets — something we also recorded with our cameras. We felt that we were also making history. The hugs, tears of joy, songs... capturing that all was one of the greatest moments I experienced as a communicator and Feminist activist." (Robaina, 2021).

Tackling digital activism means looking at the various repertoires of collective actions for demands. Our analysis suggests that one cannot consider digital activism without acknowledging the collective experiences and decisions used to fight each battle (Collado, 2016). In this context, digital activism — whether on platforms or social media — assumes various dimensions and serves as political strategies to amplify demands. The fight for Legal Abortion in Argentina, starting in 2015 (the first massive *Ni Una Menos* nationwide mobilisation), could not be envisioned without a # (hashtag) preceding it (Caro Castaño, 2015). Social political associations' campaign strategies had to think about how to use these digital spaces, which also opened up areas of dispute in engaging directly with street demonstrations and assembly spaces (Laudano, 2018; Acosta, 2020).

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## WIKIPEDIA AND THE ABORTION LEGALISATION DEBATE

Wikipedia was created on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2001 and for the last 20 years, it has consistently ranked among the top ten most visited websites on the internet. It is the first source of reference when it

comes to content. Wikipedia sprang to life within the Open-Source software movement in the US, and has expanded into linguistic communities around the world (Lorente, 2020; Benkler, 2020). It was set up as a collaborative project that challenges the conventional players in the information space. Within the *Wiki*<sup>3</sup> universe, anyone who creates a user profile on the platform and provides references (both primary and secondary sources) can write an article on any given subject. This writing process involves interactions with other users who share the same language. No single individual has the authority to declare that a Wikipedia topic is closed or finalised. These definitions give rise to virtual debates within the Wikipedia community, which has separate spaces for review, protection, and decision-making (Thorndike-Breeze, Musselman, and Carleton, 2020).

We can also define Wikipedia from a counter-hegemonic perspective. First and foremost, it is a digital, collaborative encyclopaedia that gathers knowledge on each topic in its articles. Understanding who manages it and how the platform works from a user's perspective lets us explore other aspects of digital technologies, the Internet, and its governance as an experience in itself. It also invites us to explore alternative forms of engagement in digital settings (which projects like Wikipedia strive to maintain), and see the platform as a political arena (Denardis, 2014).

Wikipedia is also a free encyclopaedia: with open access, free content, and with no sponsors and thus nobody dictating an editorial line. Anyone can contribute to Wikipedia by changing or adding information, and all its content is available under licenses that allow open dissemination. This is possible because Wikipedia is an online community, and the community regulates what happens (Reagle and Koerner, 2020).

In Wikipedia, it is common to find diverse interpretations of specific historical events and political developments. Writing history on Wikipedia in real-time can be considered a counter-hegemonic practice, as it often publishes perspectives and points of view (verifiable in primary and secondary sources) that many official media outlets choose not to make public or simply leave out (Lorente, 2020).

In a context of omissions at the global level within information and communication corporations, as well as at the State and governmental levels, Wikipedia has positioned itself as a digital territory for activism. It evolved from being just an encyclopaedia for fact-checking in school and university essays to playing a much more powerful role in writing stories that many other platforms either neglect or censor. Topics such as the global women's and gender-diverse movements, human rights activism in many regions of the world, strongly repressed protests in Latin America, and even the blocking of Wikipedia in Turkish by the Turkish State (Hurtado, 2020; Wikimedia Foundation, 2020), are all grist to the mill. This is why contemporary digital activism sees Wikipedia as a digital platform ally for building and accessing information in their own lands and spheres.

Álvarez Azcárraga (2018) concurs that Wikipedia is a digital territory where social activism finds spaces and ways to express itself. Wikipedia lets one enter a universe whose rules are defined by the community itself, and in which memories and stories are built in real-time, where the platform takes on meaning as a socio-political digital medium. Nevertheless, one needs to recover this analysis of the way things get written on Wikipedia and how the debate progresses. One of the key features of Wikipedia is the requirement to “stick to a neutral point of view”. This way of narrating events, conflicts, biographies poses a challenge to the how social and politically activists usually put over their views and experiences in other digital forums and social networks (Rubin and Zanotti, 2019; Ferrante, Guastavino, and Latorre, 2020).

<sup>3</sup> *Wiki* means ‘swift’ in Hawaiian and is used to define action by a virtual community in a free, open platform whose entries are directly edited by users on the same interface. Content is collectively created, edited, and moderated (Maggio, 2012).

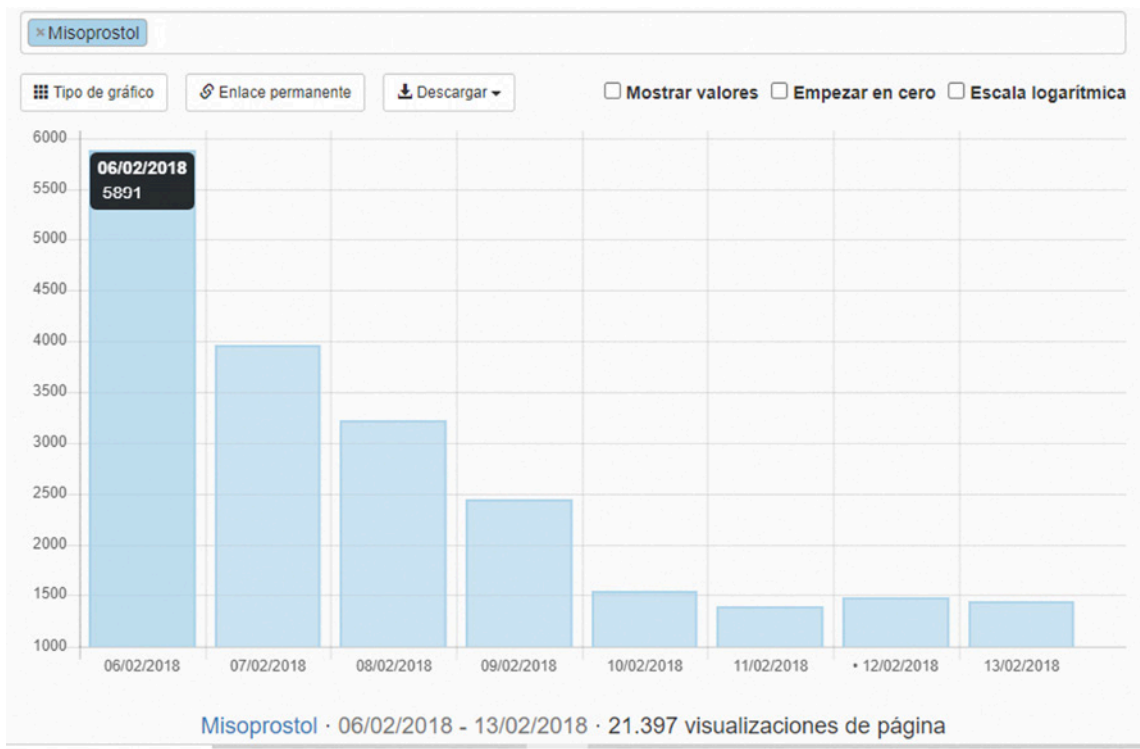


The social and parliamentary debate on legalising abortion in Argentina between 2018 and 2020 had a direct impact on the Spanish Wikipedia. One of the first public calls to search for information on this topic was made by *Señorita Bimbo*, a social influencer (in real life, the larger-than-life María Virginia Godoy) on the TV programme *Intrusos* on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2018. In this mid-afternoon programme on América (a national TV channel), *Señorita Bimbo* encouraged the audience to Google the meaning of "Misoprostol" (Laudano, 2018; Anfibia, 2018). As Luli Sánchez points out:

"Misoprostol ceased to be an odd tongue-twister when *Señorita Bimbo* mentioned it on *Intrusos*. Twitter and Wikipedia exploded with information searches and comments about the pill that offers a safe, private way to end pregnancies." (Sánchez, 2018).

In the week following the live explanations given by *Señorita Bimbo* on the *Intrusos* TV programme, the Spanish Wikipedia page on Misoprostol received over 21,000 visits, with a daily average of 2,600. The highest number of visits was on the 6th February (the day of the influencer's interview), with 5,891 visits, as seen in Figure 1.

**Figure 1** Wikipedia tool showing the number of visits and general stats. This query shows the number of visits to the "Misoprostol" article on Spanish Wikipedia between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of February 2018.

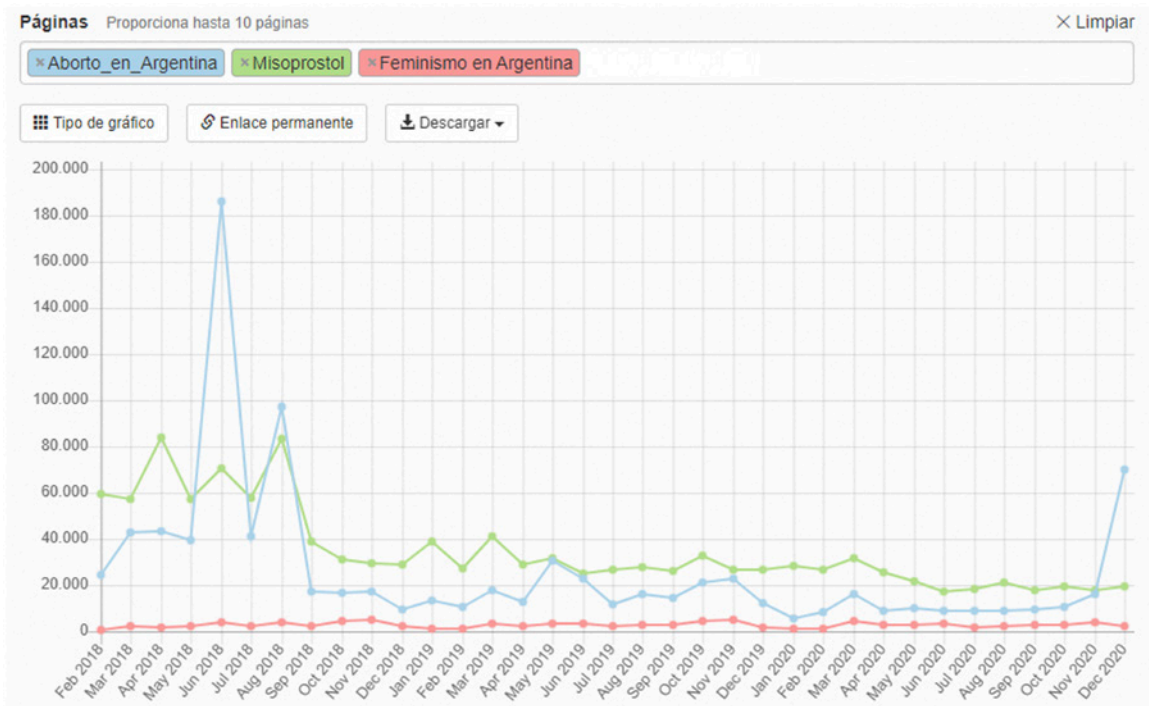


From then on, the articles on the Spanish version of Wikipedia covering Feminism in Argentina, Abortion in Argentina, and Misoprostol began to see growing traffic. Between February 2018 and December 2020, these three articles received over 2,249,753 visits, with the Misoprostol and abortion in Argentina articles being the most visited (Figure 2). The article on Misoprostol received 1,224,708 visits during the February 2018 to De-

ember 2020 period, with 31 active users contributing to its updates and edits<sup>4</sup>.

4 Information taken from Wikipedia stats on visitors to and editions of articles on abortion in Argentina and Misoprostol. URL: [https://pageviews.toolforge.org/?project=es.wikipedia.org&platform=all-access&agent=user&redirects=0&start=2018-02&end=2020-12&pages=Aborto\\_en\\_Argentina|Misoprostol|Feminismo\\_en\\_Argentina](https://pageviews.toolforge.org/?project=es.wikipedia.org&platform=all-access&agent=user&redirects=0&start=2018-02&end=2020-12&pages=Aborto_en_Argentina|Misoprostol|Feminismo_en_Argentina)

**Figure 2.** Wikipedia Tool for showing the number of visits and general stats. This query shows the number of visits to the "Misoprostol", "Abortion in Argentina", and "Feminism in Argentina" Spanish-language articles in Wikipedia between February 2018 and December 2020.



The article on abortion in Argentina reflects the key moments of the parliamentary debate and gives the main points of the public discourse on the issue in Argentina, as shown in its index<sup>5</sup>. This

article was created on Spanish Wikipedia on the 9th of April 2009. Between 2018 and 2020, not only did the number of visits to the article rise but the growth of the article was also reflected in the number of edits and active editors involved. It had 237 active editors contributing to its development and 71 editors watching over article edits. Figure 3 shows the number of edits the article received

5 Index of an article on Wikipedia in Spanish on the subject of abortion in Argentina consulted 17th April 2021: [https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aborto\\_en\\_Argentina](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aborto_en_Argentina)

annually, from its creation up to 2021, with 2018 being the year with the most edits.

These statistics let us delve into the free encyclopaedia’s value in social contexts where political

debates permeate every conceivable sphere. Wikipedia serves as yet another platform for debating how to organise information, how to narrate from a neutral standpoint, and how to reflect changing stances on abortion in Argentina.

**Figure 3. Historical statistics on the Spanish-language Wikipedia article on Abortion in Argentina, showing the number of edits per year.**

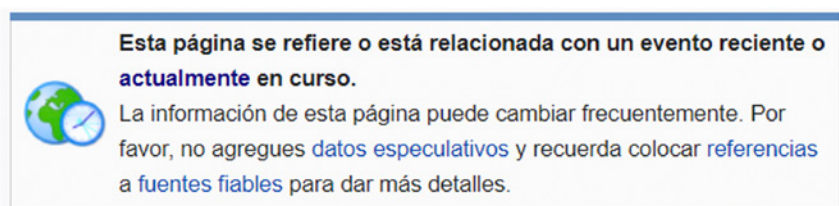
Edits per year			
Year	edits	Minor edits	(%)
2009	27	12	44.4
2010	36	18	50.0
2011	96	33	34.4
2012	70	24	34.3
2013	57	9	15.8
2014	49	12	24.5
2015	42	7	16.7
2016	18	5	27.8
2017	31	12	38.7
2018	1277	122	9.6
2019	134	35	26.1
2020	104	41	39.4
2021	148	19	12.8

Wikipedia’s style manual<sup>6</sup> seeks to recognise the social relevance of a topic and acknowledge the various positions and conflicts of interest that may arise in writing an article on it (Rubin and Zanotti,

2019). Therefore, during parliamentary debates between 2018 and 2020, the Wikipedia article on Abortion in Argentina bore a notice stating that it covered an ongoing or recent event, alerting users and readers that the content of the article could change, expand, or be frequently reorganised due to a high level of engagement in editing and content revision.

<sup>6</sup> The Wikipedia Style Guide tells authors how articles should be written, organised and indexed. URL: [https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Manual\\_de\\_estilo](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Manual_de_estilo)

**Figure 4. Notice template placed in Wikipedia articles dealing with current topics or ongoing social conflicts. Retrieved from: [https://es.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Aborto\\_en\\_Argentina&oldid=132057088](https://es.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Aborto_en_Argentina&oldid=132057088)**



Maintaining a neutral point of view in an article relates to both the way the information is written — avoiding self-promotion, adjectives, and copying and pasting from primary and secondary sources — and to the quantity, diversity, and type of external references used to verify the article's content (Ferrante, Guastavino, and Latorre, 2020). The article "Abortion in Argentina" now has 224 references from; national, local, and international newspapers; human rights reports from civil society organisations at the local, regional, and international levels; popular science books on the subject; academic articles; Ph.D theses; digital news portals; national laws and regulations; government reports; legal documents, among others, all of which validate its content. The references given seek to present a range of publicly-documented perspectives, currents, and views on the topic<sup>7</sup>. While the "Abortion in Argentina" article was not created during the parliamentary debates that took place between 2018 and 2020, its length, content quality, information diversity, and added sources soared during the debate and after the Bill was passed. Moreover, due to Wikipedia's collaborative editing process, it reflects collective and networked input by all contributing editors taking part in the information and documentation-gathering, reflecting the twists and turns in parliamentary debates. We therefore argue that Wikipedia played a crucial role as a free, open digital platform reflecting real-time collective knowledge-building that was shaped by political and social debates. Its entries did a great deal to provide free access to information, data, sources, images, and written documents.

Last but not least, every Wikipedia article includes a "talk" tab to the right of the article tab. Users can use the "talk tab" if they wish to take part in writing content. The article's discussion page gives lists of items that users have debated, agreements and

disagreements, as well as voting to reach consensus. Some of the debated topics include: "Iconic cases; Regarding pregnant women; the need to avoid making value-judgements when changing data: waiting for votes; non-admissible content (whether illegal or not); Balancing the article; Broken links; Update proposals and article separation." On each point, users' viewpoints and stances in the debate can be expanded upon and read. This forum reveals the opinions, public positions, votes on drafting rules, and ways to reflect the debate, showing why the content took one form and not another (Rubin and Zanotti, 2019)<sup>8</sup>

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## CONCLUSIONS

The growing strength of Argentina's pro-abortion movement over recent years is deeply rooted in the women's movement, which, as we have seen, supports current struggles. In this context, digital spaces play a crucial role in letting Feminist activism use its networks to give new forms to demands for extending and disseminating rights. Thus, in recent years, digital spaces have become a key tool for building meanings that broaden women's emancipatory horizons.

As Alessandro Portelli points out, one of the main features that sets oral sources apart from other kinds is that they tell us about the meanings that past events had and continue to have for those who experienced them: "They tell us not only about the facts but also about what these events meant for those who lived through them and narrate them; not only about what people did but about what they wanted to do and what they believed they were doing" (Portelli, 2016: 23). In this sense, based on the analysed interviews, we reflect on how social organisations, community spaces, and digital

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7 References cited in the Wikipedia article on Aborto en Argentina [Abortion in Argentina], consulted 17<sup>th</sup> April 2021. URL: [https://es.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Aborto\\_en\\_Argentina&oldid=132057088](https://es.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Aborto_en_Argentina&oldid=132057088)

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8 Information published in Discusión del artículo Aborto en Argentina [discussion forum on an article, Abortion in Argentina], consulted 17<sup>th</sup> April 2021. URL: [https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discusi%C3%B3n:Aborto\\_en\\_Argentina](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discusi%C3%B3n:Aborto_en_Argentina)

activism groups have understood and continue to understand their practices. They decided to bring their political and territorial agenda to the streets so as to create instances of public debate with a clear stance in favour of decriminalising abortion, and, at the same time, to fight the battle on social networks and digital spaces.

The analysis of Wikipedia articles bearing on abortion also reflects the social and political meaning of the debate on legalising the practice in Argentina, especially in the period from 2018 to 2020. Furthermore, it illustrates other ways of engaging in digital

activism and how free and open platforms can help make information socially visible, democratising it at critical moments. This information was created, debated, reviewed, and protected by many users at the same time the debate in society was taking place. It can be said that there was not only a vigil in the streets, in the organisation's tents, and in the neighbourhood assemblies throughout the country, but also in digital spaces. The real-time editing of the Wikipedia article represents one more practice of digital activism in the pursuit of access and the creation of free knowledge at a key moment for Argentinian society.

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**Acknowledgments:** We are grateful to our fellow women who took part in the interviews and shared their testimonies. Thank you for allowing us to reconstruct a part of our stories of struggle on the streets, in neighbourhoods, on digital platforms, in classrooms, and in town squares.

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