

Gender and Far-Right Women Political Representatives: A Twitter Discourse Network Analysis

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Messages related to gender concepts as found in the Twitter (now X) accounts of Far-Right politicians Rocío Monasterio (Spain), Giorgia Meloni (Italy), and Marjorie Taylor Greene (the United States) are analyzed through a discourse network analysis case study to disclose the main thematic concepts and the level of recurrence and agreement among them. In a context in which Far-Right parties internationally have made gender and sexuality issues an integral component of their political agenda, this article investigates if it is possible to see the traces of a "political ecosystem" in which agreement on central issues related to gender are the focus of political discourses by these three leaders and if symbiotic relationships are displayed. The case study results show that their institutional positions heavily condition their messages. Meloni's responsibility as prime minister shapes and restricts her communication profile; Monasterio and Taylor Greene concur in their condemnation of radical feminism, abortion, trans identity, and gender diversity to defend the hetero-patriarchal family and the purity of the country. The impact of these messages on international political agendas requires further study.

Keywords: gender, Far-Right politics, Twitter, Monasterio, Meloni, Taylor Greene, discourse network analysis

This article analyzes the discourses related to gender found in the Twitter (now X) accounts of Far-Right politicians Rocío Monasterio (Spain), Giorgia Meloni (Italy), and Marjorie Taylor Greene (the United States) in 2022 and 2023. The main concepts and their level of recurrence and agreement are identified through a discourse network analysis. This study also examines the influence of such discourses in contemporary political campaigns and agendas.

In the last five years, there has been a noticeable rise in academic publications that pay attention to the relevance of gender and sexuality issues for Far-Right political parties globally. As Dietze and Roth

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(2020) note, gender in various contexts may be seen in all modern right-wing parties as an essential component; among recurring beliefs, the following are mentioned: The heteronormative nuclear family is invoked as the ideal social organization; sex education is disputed; and disapproval of a purported “gender ideology” and same-sex unions is manifested, along with an effort deployed to reinstate biologically based binary gender differences. Dietze and Roth (2020) state that gender has rarely been discussed in canonical research; however, it is noteworthy that the landscape has recently changed, and many publications delve into the connections of gender with right-wing political parties. Pando-Canteli and Rodríguez (2022) reviewed 25 publications centered on the Spanish political party VOX in a meta-analysis comprising works between 2019 and 2022. In addition, various studies are found in books and journals that address the topic at a global level (e.g. Dietze & Roth, 2020; Kováts & Põim, 2015; Spierings, Zaslove, Mügge, & de Lange, 2015), while, in others, particular countries are targeted (see, among others, Colella, 2021, and De Giorgi, Cavalieri, & Feo, 2023, for Italy; Bernardez-Rodal, Requeijo, & Franco, 2022, and Pando-Canteli & Rodríguez, 2022, for Spain; McRae, 2018, and Schreiber, 2008, 2018, for the United States).

Gender as an Integral Component in a Transnational Political Agenda of Far-Right Parties

The literature review leads to the conclusion that Far-Right parties internationally have made gender and sexuality issues an integral component of their political agenda, which revolves around the traditional family, the exclusionary definition of nation and citizenship, and the reversal of secularization (Cabezas & Vega, 2022). Despite their geographic and sociopolitical particularities, it is possible to underscore “a transnational phenomenon that expands and circulates across different geographies, with similar rhetoric and practices” (Cabezas & Vega, 2022, p. 12). When referring to “gender issues” in the discourses of Far-Right political parties, it is necessary to do so from an intersectional perspective since discourses connected to gender and sexuality are intertwined with a nativist conception of the nation, which is interpreted as the need to protect the interests of native-born or established inhabitants against those of immigrants (Betz, 2017). The idea that a pernicious “gender ideology” is currently threatening the lives of citizens is frequently addressed along nativist stereotypes that claim that “our nation” is threatened by minorities (Kuhar & Pajnik, 2020, p. 167).

In such terms, this article investigates if it is possible to observe the traces of a “political ecosystem” (Holmes, 2019) in which agreement on issues related to gender is the focus of political discourses by leaders of right-wing parties internationally and if symbiotic relationships among the three political figures are displayed. Cabezas and Vega (2022) argue the existence of an ecosystem in which gender “operates as an instrument which catalyzes anxieties on multiple fronts, contesting the social order precisely in the realm of sex, gender, and sexuality” (p. 12). Far-Right parties highlight gender-related issues not only because they appeal to convictions about what is suitable by sizable segments of the population who believe their lives have been “progressively contaminated by public discourse” but also because they can be used to establish alliances (Dietze & Roth, 2020, p. 14). Gender functions as a “symbolic glue” of policies that undermine advances toward equality at the transnational level, connect different actors, and permeate political discourses (Pető, 2015). The massive appeal of these anti-gender movements shows that if we wish to understand this new major political trend, we must analyze this emerging political discourse (Pető, 2015). Examining the concepts employed by the political leaders and their level of convergence in their postulates may help to minimize their impact. The aim is to observe whether debates on gender issues are addressed

differently at the national level and whether there is a level of transnationalization in the concepts or agreement in the statements.

In some European countries and the United States, Far-Right parties replace traditional or moderate right-wing parties, monopolize the media agenda, and inundate social platforms with their anti-gender discourses. Although there is a tendency to interpret this phenomenon as a reaction against feminism, its proactive dimension should be emphasized; it “revolves around the traditional family and the definition of nation and citizenship in an exclusionary manner” (Cabezas & Vega, 2022, p. 12). To a large extent, the expression of such views on gender issues takes place “mainly in the digital and social media spheres, illustrating the new mediatized logic of value contestation” (Wallaschek et al., 2022, p. 146). Wallaschek et al. (2022) examine debates about gender equality on Twitter in Germany, Italy, and Poland and justify their choice of Twitter as the platform best suited for public engagement in political debates. Right-wing actors are active on social media platforms, which they use “to communicate to their sympathizers directly, circumventing the legacy media and establishing transnational links among right-wing organizations across Europe” (Wallaschek et al., 2022, p. 148). Likewise, Schleusener (2020), referring to Donald Trump’s messages, observes that Twitter followers are addressed in such a way as to get the impression of being directly connected with *their* president, so they feel a sense of “authenticity” quite paradoxical in this case, notes the author.

This article focuses on Twitter to offer an international comparison of relevant figures from three different political systems and historical developments. Monasterio is the president of VOX—founded in 2013—in Madrid, Spain. The party entered the Spanish parliament for the first time in the April 2019 general election and became the country’s third-largest political force after the November 2019 Spanish general election. Giorgia Meloni has been Italy’s prime minister since 2022 and the president of Fratelli d’Italia since 2014. Marjorie Taylor Greene is the U.S. representative for Georgia’s 14th congressional district since 2021. A member of the Republican Party, she was elected to Congress in 2020 and reelected in 2022.

According to the literature review, these women portray in their political discourses what Cabezas (2022) terms a “parasitic-opportunistic” appropriation of feminism: “*parasitic* because it aims to damage feminism by appropriating its legitimacy, *opportunistic* because this appropriation was used to counterattack feminism at times of rising support and legitimacy” (p. 335). In the case of Meloni, Colella (2021) defines a similar strategy employed by the leader as the “intersection of gender and sexuality issues with the co-option of selected aspects of the feminist project” (p. 269). The Fratelli d’Italia displays what Colella (2021) calls “femonationalist discourses” (p. 269), which reinforce gendered and racialized power structures within patriarchal and heteronormative values and appropriate and reshape gender-equality issues, distorting feminist demands. No similar studies focus on Taylor Greene, but she presents herself as a strong figure of feminism based on her opposition to abortion and transsexual options.

Gender Equality in Italy, Spain, and the United States

While this section does not provide a broad contextualization of the historical trajectories of the three countries regarding gender equality, a brief account of the national context is provided to account for national differences. In Europe, the gender equality index is measured according to the following indicators: Access to work, money, knowledge, time, power, and health. In the Gender Equality Index (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2022), Spain occupies the sixth position (with a 74.6 index), whereas Italy is in the 14th position

(65.0). In both cases, a notable advance toward gender equality is apparent in the last 10 years; since 2010, Spain's score has increased by 8.2 points, and its ranking has improved by one place, and Italy's score has increased by 11.7 points, raising its ranking by seven places. This is one of the most significant long-term advances compared with other member states. In Italy, violence against women and the right to abortion became crucial issues in the "Non Una di Meno" movement and the celebrations linked to International Women's Day. In Spain, the March 8 (8M) movement held two feminist strikes, in 2018 and 2019, which were attended by multitudes and opened up traditional feminist vindications to the broader public. In both cases, the fight for gender equality was confronted by anti-feminist resistance. As Flood, Dragiewicz, and Pease (2020) state, "Resistance is an inevitable, although undesirable, response to efforts at progressive social change. Backlash and Resistance to gender equality take common forms, including denial of the problem, disavowal of responsibility, inaction, appeasement, co-option, and repression" (p. 1). Both Fratelli d'Italia and VOX are emerging political parties in Italy and Spain, respectively (the former was created in 2012 and the latter in 2013), and their electoral votes increased exponentially in the last elections. Both parties have incorporated resistance against advances to equality as a major component in their campaigns.

In 2022, the World Economic Forum (2022) ranked the United States 27th in gender equality of 146 countries with a score of 0.769. In this report, Spain occupies the 17th position (0.788), and Italy stands in the 63rd position (0.720). Regarding Taylor Greene, a congresswoman and member of the Republican Party, she strongly supports former U.S. president Donald Trump and is a prominent voice in the Make America Great Again movement. In this time of high polarization in U.S. politics, Spruill (2017) reveals how the battle between feminists and their conservative opponents has divided the nation as Democrats continue to support women's rights and Republicans project themselves as the party of family values.

The broader political context of Far-Right politics differs significantly in Europe and the United States. While most European nations have histories and current formations of progressive politics and broad acceptance of gender equality, the United States has a large politically conservative population segment, and "acceptance of gender equality is uneven across the country" (Blee, 2016, p. 199). Issues of race have been predominant in the American Far Right (Blee, 2016); in contrast, in Europe, such debates mainly focus on the nation's defense and the rejection of immigrants, but the racial component is not openly mentioned. Blee (2016) perceives a commonality in Europe and the United States since Far-Right leaders of both sides attack "religious communities they oppose by proclaiming that they are protecting women's rights by doing so" (p. 196). Blee (2016) points to another similarity in the heterosexual nature of the Far-Right movements, along with the open rejection of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and other (LGBTQI+) persons. Blee's conclusions confirm the validity of the concepts, as shown in Table 1.

Methodology and Case Study

Discourse network methodology (Leifeld, 2017) has been selected as an adequate methodological model for this study. Political discourses are verbal interactions among political actors in which they "make public claims about what policy instruments they deem useful and which other measures they reject. Actors participate in policy debates to signal their policy platform to voters or potential allies, convince other actors to adopt their ideal points" (Leifeld, 2017, p. 302).

Political discourse is a network phenomenon because the statements actors contribute to the discourse depend on each other (Leifeld, 2017). Less regulated than traditional media, social media like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are powerful ecosystems that enhance the wide spread of political messages, allowing engagement in political debates and outlining political agendas. Of these three, Twitter is the platform that contributes the most to political debate, especially in those parties or groups that disseminate illiberal claims or show dissatisfaction with democratic principles (Wallaschek et al., 2022). While Instagram is mostly used by youngsters and shows the most human and familiar profile of political representatives, Twitter constitutes a political arena where contestation and mobilization take place through the use of hashtags and communities and by engaging all political actors, namely journalists, politicians, and citizens (Capetti, 2022; Wallaschek et al., 2022).

This study gathers Twitter messages and metadata (e.g., date, time, type of tweet, and type of media attached to the tweet) from the politicians' Twitter profiles. The periods selected were one month in 2022 and one month in 2023. For the 2022 sample, the period was selected based on its relevance for each politician as it coincided with an active political moment. In the case of Taylor Greene, the period roughly coincided with the public debate on the Supreme Court decision to override abortion rights, from May 1 to May 30, 2022. In the case of Meloni, it corresponded to the period before the general elections, from September 1 to October 1, 2022, and, in the case of Monasterio, her activity was particularly prominent weeks before the International Women's Day, from February 17 to March 17, 2022. In 2023, tweets were captured for all three politicians around International Women's Day. Both segments are jointly analyzed to offer a consistent account of results.

The objective is to examine how concepts are linked in the three Twitter accounts and whether there are any discursive patterns across the different national contexts. A two-mode network structure is used following the coding scheme proposed by Leifeld (2017). This consists of (a) actors, defined as "the person or organization who speaks" (Leifeld, 2017, p. 306)—Monasterio, Meloni, and Taylor Greene; (b) concepts, understood as "an abstract representation of the contents that are discussed" (Leifeld, 2017, p. 306); and (c) the agreement relation, which captures the positive or negative sentiment of the statement (Leifeld, 2017, p. 307). There are several reasons for analyzing the tweets published by these three political representatives. First, they are well-known representatives of the political party they belong to. Second, their institutional affiliation produces higher numbers of Twitter interactions and more attention than those of regular citizens, as Wallaschek et al. (2022) note. Third, it is relevant to examine the preeminence of specific concepts and analyze how Far-Right leaders appropriate the feminist agenda.

Furthermore, it is worth observing female leaders in parties highly masculinized to determine whether there are significant differences in their discourses as opposed to those of male leaders. Far-Right female leaders often use womanhood and motherhood to get close to both female and male voters by softening their image and distancing themselves from feminist political leaders whom they attack as radical and far removed from the concerns of *real* women.

Based on the meta-analysis carried out by Pando-Canteli and Rodríguez (2022), the recurring concepts were contrasted with the results of other similar publications at the international level (Dietze &

Roth, 2020; Kováts & Põim, 2015; Paternotte & Kuhar, 2018; Spierings et al., 2015; Verloo & Paternotte, 2018) and synthesized in the following six concepts:

Table 1. Concepts Related to Gender.

Concept	Definition	Agreement
1 Attacks to feminism	Discrediting of gender ideology and attacks on feminism, gender policies, and representatives of left-wing parties that defend feminist policies. Defenders of "real" women's rights against feminists.	Yes: Feminists and left-wing parties and their representatives are enemies of men and women and do not defend real women. Gender ideology is a pernicious and false ideology.
2 Masculinities and femininities	Articulation of traditional masculinities and femininities adapted to contemporary realities.	Yes: Biological distinction of women and men and different roles of women and men in domestic and job spheres.
3 Patriarchal family	Defense of the heteronormative patriarchal family and rejection of other family models.	Yes: A family is formed by a man and a woman. The traditional family must be protected, and natality should be encouraged, while abortion and other types of families should be rejected. Need to educate children in traditional values.
4 Gender-based violence	Use of the concept of domestic violence instead of gender-based violence. Denial of gender-based violence.	Yes: Gender-based violence does not exist. Violence is universal and not specific to men.
5 Intersectionality: Nation, anti-immigration, and/or religion	Nationalist concerns about racial, religious, and cultural identity. The purity of the national body and the nation's reproduction and future.	Yes: Immigration is a threat. The nation needs to be saved, and religion and national language must be protected. Mixed marriages should be avoided.
6 Rejection of LGBTQI+ people	Defense of heterosexuality and biological sex classification.	Yes: Opposition to trans people and trans policies and to LGBTQI+ people and LGBTQI+ policies. Need to defend children against sexual education.

Note. The elaborations have been provided by the authors of this study.

In this context, this article asks two main research questions:

RQ1: *What are the main concepts that emerge in reviewing the three Twitter accounts in the selected corpus of analysis?*

RQ2: To what extent are the debates about gender equality on Twitter similar in the three accounts based on the agreement shown in the three accounts?

To answer RQ1, the study defines these main gender-related concepts (Table 1) and then identifies them across the three cases. Regarding RQ2, agreement or disagreement around the main concepts is studied. Finally, conclusions are drawn regarding the potential impact of gender issues on the campaigns led by these three political leaders.

Results and Discussion

In total, 897 messages were collected from Twitter; 383 from Taylor Greene, 306 from Monasterio, and 208 from Meloni. The publication date and time were also gathered for each of these tweets, along with the type of tweet (i.e., reply, retweet, quote tweet, or regular tweet). Publications in Italian by Meloni and in Spanish by Monasterio were automatically translated into English.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of the number of tweets posted by each politician over time: During 2022 on the left-hand side chart and during 2023 to the right. The trajectories are very different: Meloni is the most regular but shows the lowest number of tweets without noticeable peaks during the two periods. Taylor Greene has the highest peaks, especially in the 2022 period, with 31 tweets on May 7, 22 on May 10, and 22 on May 25. Monasterio has lower and more homogeneous numbers in 2022, but these increase significantly in March 2023, especially around March 8, with a peak of 20 tweets on March 10 and another, with 19 tweets on March 31.

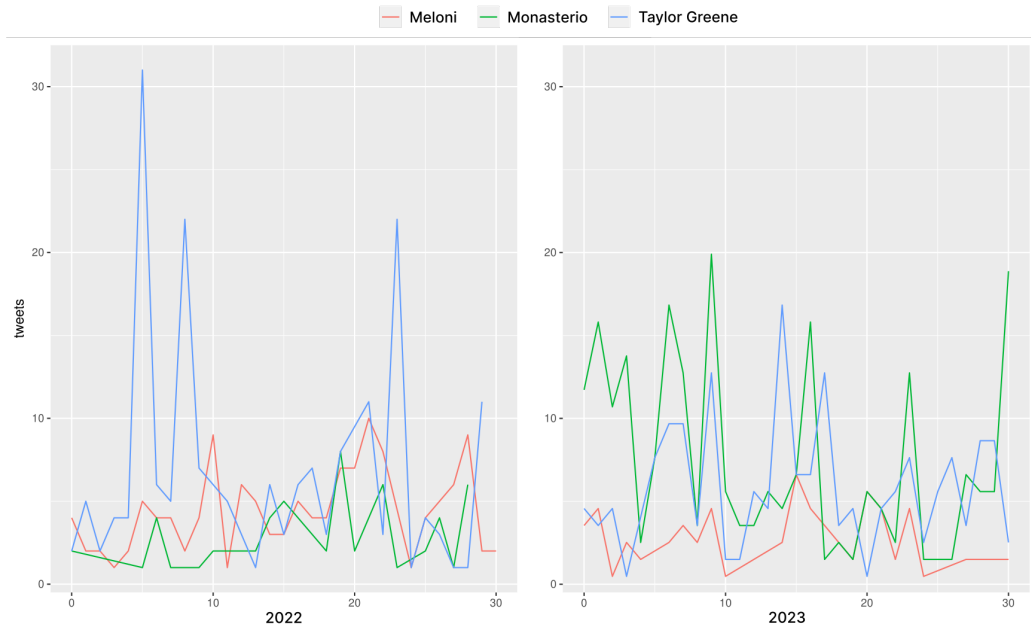


Figure 1. Total number of tweets over time, per user. Elaborated by the authors.

In addition to the volume of tweets, the kind of engagement of these politicians with their audiences is also relevant. Bossetta, Dutceac Segesten, and Trenz (2017) “categorize four degrees of political engagement: making, commenting, diffusing, and listening” (p. 59). Listening is the most passive form of engagement; thus, it is not covered in this analysis. In the specific context of Twitter, making or creating new content is done through regular tweets; commenting implies responding to content created by others and can be measured through replies. Diffusing occurs when preexisting content is disseminated “to show personal commitment or as a means of creating awareness” (Bossetta et al., 2017, p. 59) through retweets and quotes. Quote tweets can be considered a hybrid *commenting-diffusing* type of post because they disseminate while they also comment on content created by others.

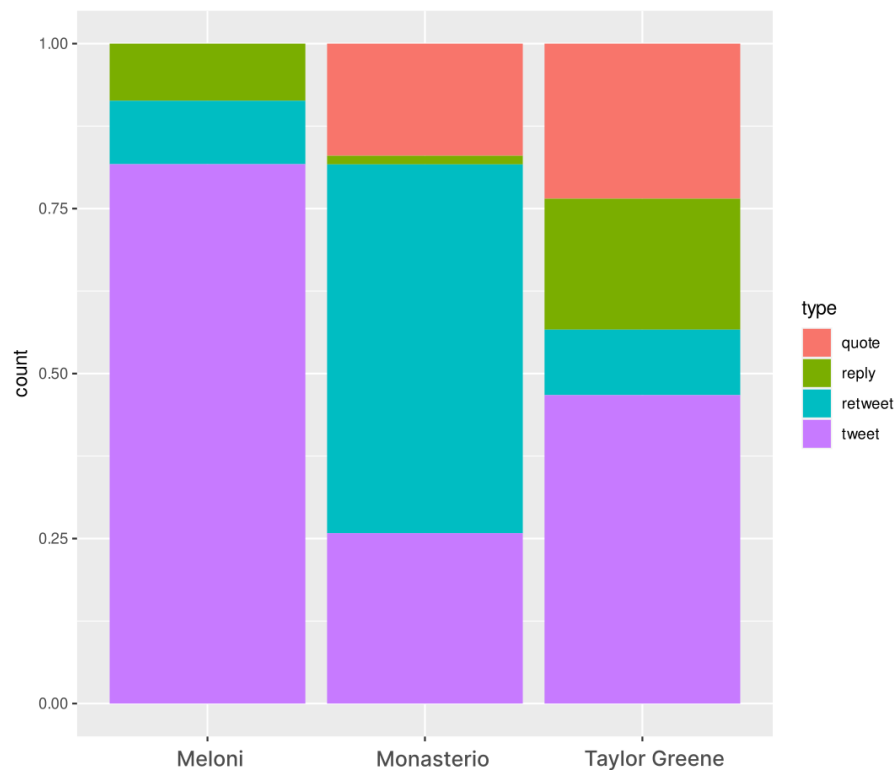


Figure 2. Types of tweets, per user. Elaborated by the authors.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of tweets published by the analyzed politicians. Monasterio shows the most engagement tweets overall, and most of her publications are retweets; while she posts a considerable number of quotes, her profile contains the least number of replies. Taylor Greene has slightly more engagement tweets than regular ones and has the most significant number of replies to other users and quote posts. On the other hand, Meloni engages with other users in less than one-quarter of her Twitter posts.

A closer look at these trends indicates how their institutional responsibilities and political positions condition their response to Twitter communication. While Meloni is prime minister, Taylor Greene is a

congresswoman representing a federal state at the U.S. Congress, and Monasterio represents her party (VOX) in Madrid's local (autonomous/provincial) parliament.

Meloni's responsibility as prime minister shapes her communication profile on Twitter and reduces it to an institutional presence. She refrains from getting into controversial discussions about topics that, as opposition leader not long ago, had been central to her agenda (Colella, 2021; De Giorgi et al., 2023). The very few messages that Meloni posts are institutional messages related to institutional celebrations like International Women's Day (March 8). That day, Meloni limits herself to disseminating a recorded video with an institutional declaration (Meloni, 2023). Although the institutional role of Meloni has inevitably conditioned her political messages, in this case, it is relevant to consider her digital communication ecosystem and how she addresses her messages on the platforms by reproducing gender stereotypes. Suffice it to mention her controversial video published on the same day of the elections on September 25, 2022, in which she appeared holding two melons at chest height, winking at the camera with a sign that read: "Ho detto tutto" (I have said it all). The candidate relies on a visual message that enhances her feminine identity and avoids any verbal political message by privileging her physical appearance, in a new advantageous use of her condition as a woman to promote the vote.

On the contrary, Taylor Greene's activity on Twitter is conditioned by her capacity as state representative from Georgia in the Congress of the United States of America, and, as such, she creates discourse and engages in bidirectional communication with community users by setting the informative agenda and engaging in an ongoing discussion. A closer look at her tweets shows that, for instance, she uses quotes created on other media, whether to confront or support their postulates, but she always intervenes. An example of this is her engagement in the abortion debate. To a tweet posted denouncing proabortion actions against antiabortion headquarters, she elaborately replies,

The left always sends their mob to fight their political wars.
And they fund them.
Protecting abortion in order to continue sacrificing babies by slaughtering them in the
womb is everything to the violent and godless left.
This will get worse, and we will not be intimidated. (Taylor Greene, 2022a)

Unlike Taylor Greene, Monasterio is a paradigmatic example of partisan activism and commitment. She seldom creates tweets, but she works as a resonance box by retweeting texts posted by institutional party accounts or her party leader, Santiago Abascal, in an attempt to reinforce an argument that is consistent and homogenous. This is apparent in tweets generated by VOX's official accounts at the national and local levels (Madrid), where Monasterio occupies a prominent position. Her activity as a retweeter is much more intense than as a generator of her own texts. While Taylor Greene usually comments on others' posts, Monasterio simply forwards them. The posts that she generates mainly underline institutional messages. In the case of gender-related original tweets, she often speaks from the perspective of an experienced woman/mother, as the tweet below illustrates: "Some parties treat us, women, as if we were weak. I believe in strong women who get where we want to be by merit and effort. In VOX, we believe in equality between men and women" (Monasterio, 2023b).

The Emergence of Anti-Feminist, Gender-Related Tweets by Politicians

The concepts defined in Table 1 were located and coded manually over the extracted tweets to answer RQ1. Table 2 summarizes the tweets that covered any of the concepts defined for this study.

Table 2. Total Tweets and Tweets About Concepts.

	Total Tweets	Gender-Related Tweets	% of Gender-Related Tweets
Meloni	208	9	4.3
Taylor Greene	383	76	19.8
Monasterio	306	69	22.5

Note. The elaborations have been provided by the authors of this study.

In the sample selected, Monasterio and Taylor Greene are, by far, the most active actors on Twitter. According to the classification above, this activity replicates proportionally in the number of gender-related tweets. Meloni’s activity confirms the intention of keeping a low institutional profile, with less than 5% of her posts referring to the predefined topics.

The distribution of tweets about gender-related issues over time (Figure 3) shows the coverage of concepts is proportional to the overall volume of tweets. Periods with a more significant number of posts (Figure 1) overlap with periods with more tweets that are gender-related, and the peaks also mostly co-occur: Taylor Greene’s peaks repeat on May 7, May 10, and May 25, 2022, while Monasterio’s peak in Figure 3 coincides with her increased number of posts around March 8, 2023.

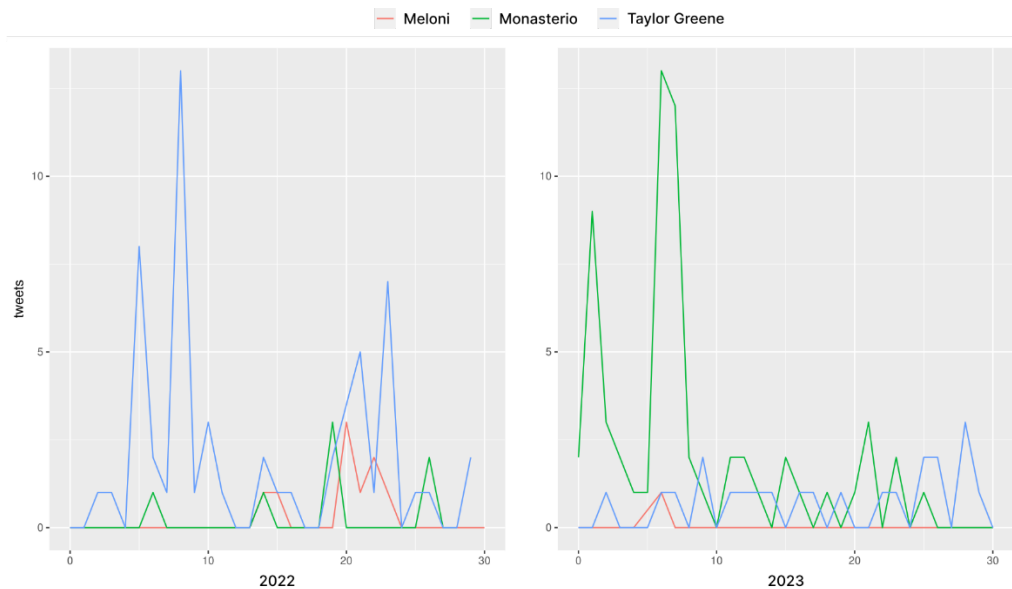


Figure 3. Number of tweets about gender-related issues over time, per user. Elaborated by the authors.

Greene's activism pivots around the *Roe v. Wade* case about abortion laws. As explained in more detail below, abortion is one of the topics that raises the most interest in this politician. Her anti-abortion position is notorious and is consistently made apparent in other areas related to family building, Christian values, and anti-Democrat policies. In May 2022, the Supreme Court overturned the *Roe v. Wade* case, declaring that the constitutional right to abortion no longer existed. This means that this right could be more easily reversed in many U.S. states. Previously, Taylor Greene had published tweets praising the courage of those anti-abortion activists who publicly demonstrated before the Supreme Court. The demonization of Democrat politics often accompanies pro-life movement discourses in a systematic association of the anti-abortion activists with "mobs," crime, and the Left, as the tweet (Taylor Greene, 2022a) cited above illustrates. This practice is repeated one year later, reacting to Jane Fonda's participation in a TV program when she ironically proposed to "murder" pro-life activists. The comment ruffled feathers everywhere, and Taylor Greene echoed this scandal:

Unapologetic Pro-Life Politician here. 🗿♀️ I routinely get death threats because of the nasty women on The View and the things they say about me. But calling for us to be assassinated makes The View, the hosts, the producers, the network, the advertisers, and everyone involved. (Taylor Greene, 2023b)

In the case of Monasterio, peaks respond mostly to her intense Twitter activity around March 8. While Taylor Greene ignores the March 8 celebration, which does not condition her political agenda, for Monasterio and many other Spanish politicians it is an important date that produces declarations and raises the temperature of the political debate. The hot debate around the so-called Trans Law and the law about sexual freedom and consent also conditions the relevance of gender issues in the Spanish political agenda ("Ley Orgánica," 2022). Between March 6 and March 10, 2023, of 43 tweets, Monasterio published 30 tweets dealing exclusively with gender issues, including criticism of these laws and direct attacks against the Ministry of Equality and its gender policies. This is one of the most salient topics addressed by the Spanish politician compared with the American congresswoman.

As with the amount, proportion, and distribution of tweets in time and type, the topic distribution and interests vary substantially among the three politicians. Figure 4 shows gender-related topics addressed by these politicians, and how the six main topics are distributed according to each politician's interests. This chart's differences are central to this analysis as they speak not only about how gender interferes with national political agendas and cultural singularities but also about the strategies that Far-Right political parties develop in shaping this anti-feminist stance.

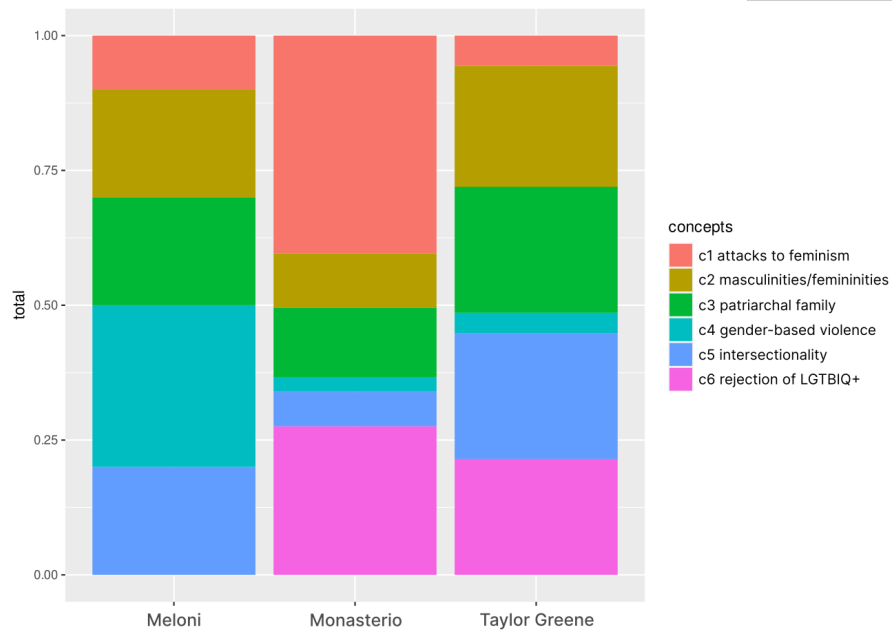


Figure 4. Tweets about gender-related issues, per user. Elaborated by the authors.

Once again, Meloni presents a particular case as her tweets do not show any particular interest beyond a calculated approach to gender issues from an institutional position. Her statement on March 8 reveals her interest in vindicating women and their historical ability to overcome difficulties and drawbacks. Addressing all women and emphasizing their brave qualities and their fight for freedom, Meloni caters to all Italian women and avoids controversial issues such as abortion, gender violence, feminism, sexuality, and LGTBQI+ issues. This last topic has not been addressed once in the sample selected, while other tweets are very general statements about international and renowned cases of violence against women in other countries. An example of this is the Mahsa Amini case, which Meloni tweeted about on September 28, 2022. The only cases of violence against women in which Meloni engages are those in countries with a severe democratic deficit and have religious regimes, like Iran. This way, violence against women is associated with a specific religious group, highlighting cultural differences that are overlooked when the violence is perpetrated against women in European territory and by non-Muslim men. The discursive association of violence and religion has already been noted as a feature of Far-Right parties, especially in the case of Fratelli d'Italia (Colella, 2021; De Giorgi et al., 2023). This joint analysis shows that this strategy is not exclusive to this political party; other Far-Right leaders also relate gender violence to race, religion, or ethnic singularities, as shown below.

In opposition to Meloni, Taylor Greene and Monasterio develop an intense and complex discourse on issues that reveal salient differences and a powerful, ideologically rooted common ground. While differences respond to national singularities, one general leitmotif pervades all other discourses: The attack on gender policies as a threat to traditional family values. All other topics are derived one way or another from this powerful conviction and are usually addressed in close connection with other aspects of the national political agenda that articulate the demands of the Far Right. The demagogical discourse used to address

these issues results, for instance, in Taylor Greene elaborating a message that blames migrants at the Mexican border for the shortage of baby food supplies in supermarkets thousands of miles away:

Food security is national security. The Biden administration is sending pallets of baby formula to the border for illegal aliens, while American mothers are crying in the grocery store searching for it. We should Protect America First! (Taylor Greene, 2022c)

Another example is that the so-called radical feminists in Spain would be responsible for poisoning girls or defending veiling women in Iran:

What @PabloEchenique would like is to gag women who disagree with radical feminism. He does not tolerate anyone to disagree; he hates freedom. That's why he gets along so well with those who poison little girls, those who veil women in #Iran. #8MA (Monasterio, 2023a)

It is noteworthy that the attack on feminism, feminist movements, or parties associated with feminism as such is almost exclusive to the Spanish politician. In the case of the United States, the anti-feminist backlash always resonates with other debates and the Democratic Party.

A closer look at the tweets posted by Monasterio, indistinctive of their modality as quotes, tweets, or retweets, shows that there is a recurrent argument: The attack on feminism because it is an ideological doctrine. More than 40% of her tweets are assaults on "radical feminism," "gender ideology," or parties supporting feminist policies. Her rejection of LGBTQI+ people, defense of binarism, and plea for "real" women are justified by the erratic and harmful measures of the left-wing government.

The analysis of the 2022 tweets shows that Monasterio builds her rhetoric on a dissociation between "feminism" and a defense of women, arguing that feminism does not represent women. "There are many of us women who do not want them to speak on our behalf" (Monasterio, 2022b). "Today's feminism is an ideological doctrine that seeks to collectivize women" (Monasterio, 2022a). This discourse establishes a clash between the radical *bad* feminism sustained by the parties in the Left-ish government coalition versus the *good* feminism defending the women she represents. This strategy of confrontation and exclusion is not new and has already been noted in the manosphere (Gutierrez, Pando-Canteli, & Congosto, 2020).

The 2023 sample reinforces this idea of demonization of feminism by reducing it to a doctrine that goes against children, mothers, families, and freedom. To the intense activism held on social platforms in Spain around March 8, 2023, two critical political events were added: the passing of two laws in the Spanish Parliament, one in favor of enlarging the rights of trans people and the other a revision of the law on sexual freedom and consent. These controversial laws triggered much of the discourse produced on Twitter during March 2023. Monasterio's frontal opposition to these laws is expressed through elaborated arguments that place women as the losers. The Far-Right party stands out as the only defender of women, whose rights are being trampled: "Women had never suffered such a setback in Spain. Brutal! #8DeMarzo (March 8th #8M)" (Monasterio, 2023d). In Monasterio's words, radical feminism violates women's rights and leaves them unprotected. In the case of the so-called Trans Law, this violation is exercised by erasing the male-female binarism and thus removing the identity of women, who are then exposed to the abuses of trans people and deprived of safe spaces. In the case of the law regulating sexual freedom and consent, women would be the victims of rapists released from jail, in a rhetorical exercise that aligns these dangers to the violence exerted

by “foreigners”: “These are the problems of Spanish women, not colored crosswalks or gender-sensitive mathematics. Anyone who loves women’s freedom must tackle this problem at its roots: with penalties, with security, with education, and with expulsions” (Monasterio, 2023c).

For Monasterio, women’s freedom and rights are at odds with LGBTQI+ rights and the growing presence of migrants, often associated with high crime rates and violence against women. In sum, she sees Spanish institutional feminism as producing policies that go against women’s rights, facilitating hostile environments, restricting women’s freedom, questioning their value, and threatening the basis of the family. The nativistic, femonationalism associated with Meloni (Colella, 2021) also finds fertile ground in the Spanish case.

Underlying different expressions of attacks on the LGBTQI+ community, there is the shared conviction—for Taylor Greene and Monasterio—that the existence of this community means a severe threat to women. While Monasterio’s arguments are not based on religious principles, Taylor Greene builds her anti-feminist manifesto on fundamentalist Christian beliefs of the laws of God and the constitution of social order, expressed through pro-life activism, pro-motherhood, and pro-traditional family models and against gender self-determination. As with Monasterio, Taylor Greene’s attacks on feminism are intrinsically attacks on her political opponents; gender, thus, functions here as the *symbolic glue* (Petó, 2015) that brings together the reactive discourses against progressive advancement.

Figure 4 shows how Taylor Greene’s concerns are distributed proportionally among the different gender-related concepts proposed in this study. Except for texts specifically addressing feminism and gender violence, her tweets follow a constant pattern of denouncing aspects that imply a direct attack on the traditional family and the values associated with it: The defense of motherhood, the traditional vision of masculine and feminine nature, anti-abortion assumptions, and a refusal to accept alternative expressions of sexuality and gender identity:

Something must be done to protect the sacred identity of children. Because God made all of us male and female in his image. My bill, the Protect Children’s Innocence Act, will do that. I urge every one of my colleagues to join me. (Taylor Greene, 2023a)

Both children and women are the groups most harmed by what conservatives call the Antifa (a left-wing, anti-fascist, and anti-racist movement): “The trans mafia targets children to chop off their body parts and make permanent life-altering decisions before they are even considered adults. Of course, Antifa supports child abuse, would we expect anything different” (Taylor Greene, 2023c). Taylor Greene emphasizes hyperbolic expressions such as children’s mutilation or chopped bodies in other tweets, establishing a parallelism between sex change surgery and genital mutilation. She firmly assumes that only two genders are possible, male and female. This strategy aligns with her anti-abortion stance in supporting the patriarchal family and defense of children’s innocence. The unborn children and the children forced to change their sex or gender are victims of the Leftist erratic politics, in her view. Her discourse includes denouncing trans women in sports as they damage girls’ and women’s competition opportunities, for example, in the case of Lia Thomas: “Lia Thomas is not a brave, courageous woman who EARNED a national title. He is an arrogant, cheat who STOLE a national title from a hardworking, deserving woman” (Taylor Greene, 2023e).

Perhaps the most evident expression of her transphobia comes in a tweet in which she blames the medical treatment and hormones taken by a transitioning person for their violence in the killing at Covenant School in Nashville, Tennessee, without blaming the easy access to firearms: "How much hormones like testosterone and medications for mental illness was the transgender Nashville school shooter taking? Everyone can stop blaming guns now" (Taylor Greene, 2023f).

Abortion and non-binarism are, according to Taylor Greene, powerful feminist vindications that undermine women's lives and the basic principles of peaceful, patriotic, and free coexistence. Antifa and "wokes," for Taylor Greene, and socialist and "Podemos," for Monasterio, are responsible for nourishing a discourse that diminishes the relevance of women in society. In this logic, real feminism is what they practice, defending women in a heterosexual world as workers, mothers, and family cornerstones and protecting an education free of gender indoctrination. An analysis of the distribution of concepts in the publications of the three politicians not only reveals some differences in how they address these different gender-related concepts but also helps identify a substantial common ground. The following section further explores these similarities and differences.

Exploring a Discourse Network Among the Three Politicians

To address RQ2—to what extent are the debates about gender equality on Twitter similar in the three accounts based on the agreement shown in the three accounts—a weighted two-mode network of persons and concepts was produced using the discourse network analyzer methodology and software. The resulting network is shown in Figure 5.

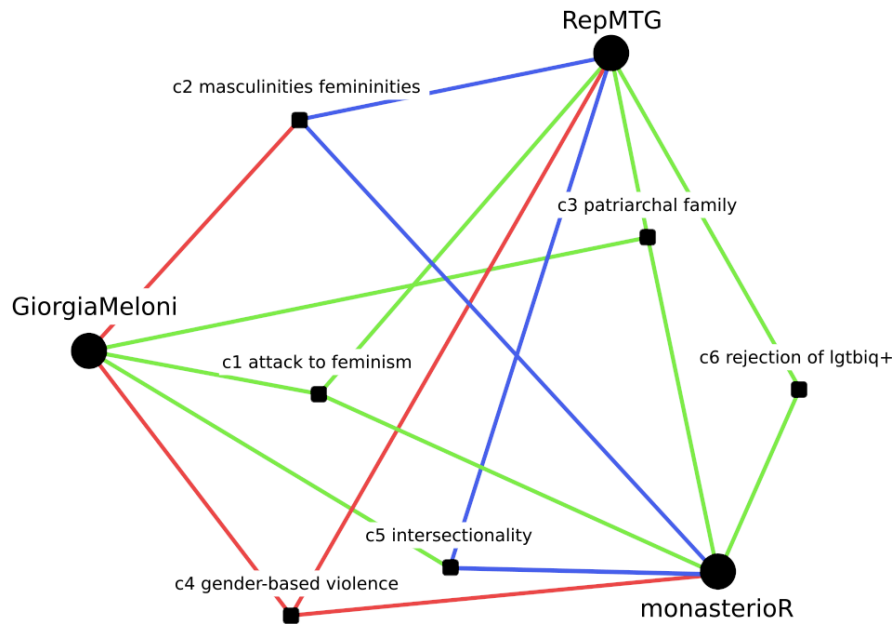


Figure 5. Weighed two-mode person-concept network of tweets. Elaborated by the authors.

In Figure 5, actors (politicians, in this case) are connected through their mentions and level of agreement on the predefined concepts. Green lines indicate that the person refers to the concept to indicate agreement (noted as “yes” in Table 1); red lines indicate that the person refers to the concept to indicate disagreement; and blue lines indicate a mix of agreement and disagreement references to the concept.

The network shows both concordances and discordances among the politicians regarding the concepts defined for this study. On the side of concordance, they coincide in displaying agreement with concept 3, “Patriarchal family,” and being in disagreement or rejecting the conceptualization of concept 4, “Gender-based violence.” Regarding discordances, it is noteworthy that Meloni’s references to concepts consistently differ from those by Monasterio and Taylor Greene, who coincide in all of them. More precisely, Monasterio and Taylor Greene support the definition of concept 6, “Rejection of LGBTQI+ people,” while Meloni does not mention it (as covered in the previous section).

Monasterio mainly agrees with concepts 2, “Masculinities and femininities,” and 5, “Intersectionality: Nation, anti-immigration, and/or religion.” However, she also has some tweets in disagreement, which produces the blue lines in Figure 5. The following post is an example of Monasterio in disagreement with the definition of concept 2, where she highlights equality rather than difference: “Some parties treat us women as if we were weak. I believe in strong women who get where we want to be by merit and effort. In VOX we believe in equality between men and women” (Monasterio, 2023b).

Taylor Greene also posted some exceptional tweets that could be classified as rejecting concept 2 in the context of the baby formula shortage in the United States during May 2022. While in most cases, mothers are addressed as the only ones affected, in two tweets she frames the problem as affecting both the mothers and fathers, which is interpreted as joint responsibility and shared roles in childcare: “Don’t worry Moms and Dads, while you are frantically searching for baby formula, Congress is busy naming Post Offices” (Taylor Greene, 2022b).

It is noteworthy that the instances in which Monasterio rejects concept 5, “Intersectionality: Nation, anti-immigration, and/or religion,” are those embracing Ukrainian refugees: “Welcome to Spain! / Mothers with their children, going to Spanish families who are delighted to welcome them and share their home” (Monasterio, 2022c).

Although the disagreement cases mentioned in the previous paragraphs are mainly exceptional, the case of concept 4, “Gender-based violence,” is especially relevant. The hypothesis in Table 1 in the Methodology and Case Study section stated that these Far-Right politicians would deny its existence: “Gender-based violence does not exist. Violence is universal and not specific to men.” This does not happen to be the case, and whenever they address gender-based violence, it has been the opposite, acknowledging its existence and calling for measures to act against it. However, as is the case with Meloni, denouncing cases of violence against women only in Muslim countries or perpetrated by men of that religion, the case denounced by Taylor Greene has clear political overtones against her political opponent:

Tara, thank you for bravely speaking out about such a horrible sexual assault you endured by your boss, then Senator Joe Biden, as a young staffer. It’s time to take a stand against

the two-tiered injustice system. @RepMattGaetz and I would like to invite you to come to Washington to speak with us. (Taylor Greene, 2023d)

The supposed sexual assault is news because of the supposed perpetrator's identity, not because her claim against this violence is a selfless and unbiased one.

The analysis reinforces the view that a distinction can be made between Meloni and the other two politicians, Monasterio and Taylor Greene, not only in terms of overall mentions and distribution but also in supporting or rejecting the concepts.

Conclusions

This article analyzes the discourses related to gender concepts as found in the Twitter accounts of Far-Right politicians Rocío Monasterio (Spain), Giorgia Meloni (Italy), and Marjorie Taylor Greene (the United States) in a period extending between 2022 and 2023. A discourse network analysis was conducted to find the main thematic concepts and the level of recurrence and agreement among them. We examine how a core democratic value—gender equality—is discussed by these three figures and to what extent we identify similar debates in the three countries. The three main results of this study can thus be formulated.

First, there is a clear international trend whereby Far-Right parties use gender-related issues to advance their political agenda. In the case of these three politicians, the analysis shows an exploitation of their position as women to give legitimacy to their condemnation of what they call radical feminism and its postulates. Gender issues do, as indicated in the academic literature, act as a glue and a catalyst of social discomfort or unrest. They are often addressed with other political issues and are essential in constructing a consistent discourse of patriotism. The defense of the patriarchal family and the homeland is opposed to any position in defense of the rights of LGBTQI+ people. In that sense, the nativistic approach described as femonationalism associated with Meloni (Colella, 2021) also finds fertile ground in the Spanish case.

Second, Twitter interactions reflect differences in the levels of engagement among the actors. This case study shows that institutional responsibilities and political positions condition their responses to Twitter communication. Their relevance and political roles affect how they engage in political discussions on Twitter. As prime minister, Meloni is the most constrained in her comments, which shows very limited relevance for this study. The concepts addressed by Monasterio and Taylor Greene can be perceived similarly although their methods and approach are somewhat dissimilar. A heavy salience in Spanish politics of direct attacks on feminism as such and as associated with institutional politics can be perceived. Likewise, in the United States, Democrats are often associated with groups (e.g., Antifa, wokes) whose intention, according to Taylor Greene, would be to destroy the country. Remarkable religious overtones are present in the messages sent by the American representative but absent in Monasterio's tweets although both are similarly concerned with abortion, trans identity, and gender diversity. Family and tradition are both expressions of patriotism; they also mirror God's commandments in the United States.

Third, the network analysis confirms this convergence between Monasterio and Taylor Greene, and Meloni's differentiated stance in Twitter communication. It also reinforces the idea that women's rights can only be preserved by the parties they represent.

Future studies could develop this methodological approach by comparing different data by female leaders from Far-Right political parties for cross-country comparisons to systematically analyze country-wise differences and further develop the presence of gender and sexuality issues in political campaigns as a transnational strategy. Additionally, it might be worth analyzing how these campaigns threaten democratic values such as gender equality and nonbinary identities.

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