

The use of Twitter in Online Political Communication

Barcelona en Comú case study during 2015 city council
election

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A Eva y Leo.

Porque la valentía se hereda.

Por las luchas compartidas.

Y a Álvaro.

Por equilibrarlo todo, siempre.

A Miguel.

Cuando acordemos.

A Carmen.

Porque levantar un hogar es levantar un imperio.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis presented for examination for the *Doctorate Program in Communication* of the *Pompeu Fabra University* is solely my original research work. Wherever contributions by others or discussion carried out with other people as collaborative research is identified and acknowledged, with due reference to literature.

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I declare that my PhD dissertation consists of 45,063 words, excluding references.

Barcelona, July 2019.

Lucía García-Carretero

Todos vosotros sois una *génération perdue*.
Pensé que todas las generaciones se pierden por algo,
y siempre se han perdido,
y siempre se perderán.

A Moveable Feast

Ernest Hemingway, 1964

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Abstract

This thesis aims to analyse the use of digital networks as a tool for electoral communication by new political organisations. Thus, the research study is focused on Barcelona 2015 city council election and the political organisation Barcelona en Comú, formed by six political parties.

Methodologically, it combines quantitative and qualitative technics through the mixed-method approach. These methods are social network analysis, content analysis, SEO analysis and semi-structured in-depth interviews.

Overall, the research identifies different opinion leaders and a hierarchical network according to citizen's feedback, the type of message according to populism as a style of political communication, and the design of the electoral strategies by the political parties.

Resumen

La presente tesis doctoral tiene como principal objetivo profundizar en el uso de las redes digitales como herramienta de comunicación electoral por parte de nuevas organizaciones políticas. Para ello, se toma como estudio de caso la campaña electoral en Twitter a las elecciones municipales de Barcelona en 2015 y la organización política *Barcelona en Comú*, formada por seis partidos políticos

La investigación combina, mediante la triangulación metodológica, métodos cuantitativos y cualitativos como son el análisis de redes sociales, el análisis de contenido, análisis SEO y las entrevistas semi estructuradas en profundidad.

De su aplicación, se infiere la presencia de diferentes perfiles que actúan como líderes de opinión y la heterogeneidad en el intercambio de información con los usuarios al tratarse de una red jerárquica, el tipo de mensaje electoral entendiendo el populismo como un estilo de comunicación política y el diseño de todas estas estrategias por parte de la organización política.

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Abbreviations

AE-IC	Spanish Association of Communication Research Asociación Española de Investigación en Comunicación
BComú	Barcelona en Comú
BeC	Barcelona en Comú
CA	Content Analysis
CatComú	Catalunya en Comú
CCP	Catalunya en Comú Podem
CSQP	Catalunya Sí que es Pot
CCOO	Comisiones Obreras
CIS	Sociological Research Centre Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas
DA	Domain Analytics
E	Edges
E	EQUO
EUiA	Esquerra Unida i Alternativa
Fav	Favourite
G	Graph Theory
IC	Iniciativa per Catalunya
ICV/IC-V	Iniciativa per Catalunya els Verds
ID	Indexes
ID	Identification
ILP	Popular Legislative Initiative Iniciativa Legislativa Popular
IP	Internet Protocol
JCR	Journal Citation Reports
JEC	Junta Electoral Central
LOREG	Organic Act of General Electoral System Ley Orgánica del Régimen Electoral General
MLGB	Movimiento de Liberación Gráfica de Barcelona
O	Objective
OWS	Occupy Wall Street
P	Podem
PAH	Platform of Mortgage Victims Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca
PDeCAT	Partit Demòcrata de Catalunya
PC	Procés Constituent
PCC	Partit Comunista de Catalunya
PhD	Philosophie Doctor
PSC	Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya
PSOE	Partido Socialista y Obrero Español

PSUC	Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya
PNV	Partido Nacionalista Vasco
Q	Quartile
RT	Retweet
SEM	Search Engine Marketing
SEO	Search Engine Optimization
SI	Semi-structured interviews
SJR	Scimago Journal Rank
SMS	Short Message Service
SMT	Social Media Tracker
SNA	Social Network Analysis
TDL	Top Domain Level
TT	Trendic Topic
TV	Television
URL	Uniform Resource Locator
V	Vertices
WoS	Web of Science
11M	Madrid terrorist attacks on 11 March, 2004
15M	Indignados movement
@	Mention
#	Hashtag

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Chapter I. Introduction

1.1. The topic of the research and the research problem

1.1.1. From economic crisis to social movements

Spanish economic crisis started between the end of 2007 and the beginning of 2008 (Carballo-Cruz, 2011; Orriols and Cordero, 2016), as in many other European countries (Auriemma *et al.*, 2015; Poulakidakos and Veneti, 2016; della Porta, Fernández, Kouki and Mosca, 2017). This situation of financial breakdown (*Table 1*) has produced a climate of distrust and political disaffection amongst deep layers of the population, singularly the youngest ones (Calvo, Gómez-Pastrana and Mena, 2011; Likki, 2012; Fernández-Planells, Figueras-Maz and Feixa, 2014). These are the essential characteristics for outbreaks of protests and riots (Castells, 2012; Alonso and Rovira, 2015; Gerbaudo and Screti, 2017). Also, the financial breakdown generated a transversal and endemic crisis in Spain, where the political system was deeply implicated (Feenstra, Tormey, Casero-Ripollés and Keane, 2017).

Table 1. Perception of the economic situation

	2008	2011	2015
Excellent	.2		0.1
Good	6.1	1.5	2.5
Average	37.0	16.5	25.6
Bad	36.7	40.8	42.9
Very bad	19.1	40.9	28.6
Do not know	.8	.3	.4
Do not answer	.1		
N	2463	2472	2484

Source: CIS Barometer June 2008-2011-2015

Some of the main requirements of the Spanish social movements' protest were related to greater involvement of citizens in policies, the criticism to only vote every four years, the struggle against the corruption, the will to change the Spanish two-party system and the aim to recover of social rights (Sampedro and Sánchez-Duarte, 2011). These kinds of participation in political life “emerging since the 15M prompted some core questions” (Feenstra *et al.*, 2017: 7). These requests (*Table 2*) are the result of the low degree of political participation and proactive policy (Lobera and Sampedro, 2014), understanding participation not only as an electoral process (Font and Fontcuberta, 1990), and the distance between political parties and citizens due to the highly unrepresentativeness (Sanz and Mateos, 2014; Torcal, 2014).

Table 2. Perception of the functioning of democracy

0-1	13.7
2-3	17.9
4-6	43.2
7-8	18.4
9-10	3.7
Do not know	2.6
Do not answer	0.4
N	2472

Source: CIS Barometer 2011 (0=completely dissatisfied; 10=completely satisfied).

In words of Sebastián Royo,

In terms of causal mechanisms between institutional degradation and economic crisis, it shows (following Acemoglu and Robinson's [2012] terminology) that institutions across the country became more «extractive» and concentrated power and opportunity in the hands of only a few. Indeed, political and economic institutions came short in empowering and protecting the full potential of Spanish citizens to innovate, develop, and invest (2014: 1570).

In May 2011, the *Indignados* movement (15M) capitalised the Spanish citizens' discontent in the public space (Sampedro and Sánchez-Duarte, 2011) as a consequence of a multi-dimensional crisis. Also, after the occupation of the public space, this movement (*Table 3*) started a new demonstration cycle of specific social rights and gave rise to several social organisations so-called *Mareas (the Waves)*, an example of the inequality rising (Roos and Oikonomakis, 2014). Also, the *Platform of Mortgage Victims (Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca, PAH)*, whose spokeswoman and activist was Ada Colau, also the Mayoress of Barcelona 2015-2019. Therefore, the *Indignados* movement was a channel of opinions which the previous conventional political organisations did not capitalise (Lobera and Sampedro, 2014).

Table 3. The *Indignados*' movement people rating

Excellent	26.3
Positive	44.0
Neither positive or negative	12.5
Negative	10.4
Very negative	2.3
Do not know	4.1
Do not answer	0.5
N	1901

Source: CIS Barometer 2011

According to John Markoff (1996), in general terms, social movements appeared in the eighteen century. However, as they are known today, social movements began to develop in England at the end of this century and took root in Europe, the United States, and other places during the nineteenth century (Tilly and Wood, 2009). In this process, mass media share the responsibility because the widespread literacy and the emergence of new media generated the connexion between different groups of people (Markoff, 1996).

In Spain, after Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and Francisco Franco's dictatorship (1939-1975), the *Culture of the Transition (Cultura de la Transición)* made the

deactivation of a critical culture and generated a hegemonic cultural paradigm (Martínez, 2012). Moreover, this cycle of mobilisations as a consequence of multi-dimensional crisis “have also contributed to change in the Spanish political system” (della Porta *et al.*, 2017: 46) and given roots for new political parties (Bosi, Giugni and Uba, 2016; López-García, 2017). The crisis of the political system and mainstream political parties, and the disillusionment with democracy radicalised voting patterns to extremist, nationalistic, and xenophobic parties (Berman, 2013).

These social movements broke “the social and political consensus established in the political transition” and led the political opportunity (della Porta *et al.*, 2017: 45). As a consequence, “processes of movements' institutionalisation have taken place with democratization waves throughout the world” (Doowon, 2006, in Piccio, 2016: 265).

Focusing on the twenty-first century in Spain, there are some relevant cases of organised civil disobedience before *Indignados* movement such as the liability claim at *The Prestige Case* (2002), the claim of non-Spanish intervention in the Iraq War (*No a la Guerra*) (2003) and the protests against terrorist attack *11-M* in Madrid (2004) (Sampedro, 2005). These examples briefly illustrate the local nature or local-making culture of Spanish protests and the ability to enrich the trust networks of social and political life (Calle, 2014).

During the last years, not only the Spanish *Indignados* movement appeared. Meanwhile, massive protest and social movements took place in the international arena. For example, the Greek anti-austerity riots, the *Pots and Pans Revolution* in Iceland, the *Jasmine Revolution* in Tunisia and the occupation of Tahrir Square in Egypt (Castells, 2012; Pérez-Altale, 2016). One of the most popular social movements of these years was *Occupy Wall Street*, which had a close background as *Indignados* (Linares, 2017). As Sasha Costanza-Chock affirms:

On 17 September 2011, a small group of activists took New York City's (NYC) Zuccotti Park and sparked a movement that, in three short months, would spread across the country and around the world. Occupy Wall Street (OWS) was inspired by the global protest wave that began in Tunisia with the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi, spread across the Middle East and North Africa in what is now broadly referred to as the Arab Spring, and continued through the Israeli 'Social Justice Summer', Spanish 'Indignados' mobilizations and Greek anti-austerity uprisings (2012: 376).

These social movements incorporate a repertory of actions and internal organisation which have ten chronological stages such as (1) call-outs without the traditional intermediaries (media), (2) *acampadas* (camping) and assemblies, (3) the aim to change political and media agendas, (4) the use of 'new' platforms and citizens monitoring, (5) stopped evictions, (6) popular legislative initiative (*Iniciativa Legislativa Popular, ILP*), (7) the *Waves (Mareas)*, (8) *escraches* and sieges of institutions and (9) the occupation of these institutions, and finally, the most critical consequence of this research: the emergence of new political parties (Feenstra *et al.*, 2017).

From 2011 onwards, new political organisations have born out in the Spanish and Catalan context as the political parties *Equo*, *Podemos (We Can)* and *Guanyem Barcelona (Let's Win Barcelona)*. These political parties take part in the post-15M context whereby the social movement is present in the social reality, and it is part of the collective imagination (Sanz and Mateos, 2014; Feenstra *et al.*, 2017). Moreover, the social movement has shown the ageing of Spanish cultural, political, economic and social structures that are insufficient for the Spanish challenges (Schlozman and Verba, 1979; Sanz and Mateos, 2014). These social movements have arisen consequences in different levels (della Porta and Pavan, 2017): on the individuals (Giugni, 2014) and the political environment (Amenta, Caren, Chiarello and Su, 2010). In brief, according to the authors, the most critical consequence of 15M movement democratic experimentation was "related to the

feeling that parliamentary representation was not fulfilling its role as a solid foundation” and “the proliferation of new parties” (Feenstra *et al.*, 2017: 93).

1.1.2. From social movements to political parties

The climate of distrust and political disaffection, institutional degradation, the widening of inequalities and the decrease in government responsibility was made manifest by social movements in Spain (Sampedro and Sánchez-Duarte, 2011; Roos and Oikonomakis, 2014; Royo, 2014). The Spanish social movements were born out of the economic crisis (della Porta and Mattoni, 2014; Casero-Ripollés, Sintés-Olivella and Franch, 2017) such as *The Platform of Mortgage Victims* or *Indignados* movement (Royo, 2014) introduced a different language and a variety of actions into the public scene (Sampedro and Sánchez-Duarte, 2011; Flesher and Montañés, 2014; Casero-Ripollés *et al.*, 2017). The social movements against austerity (della Porta and Mattoni, 2014; Feenstra *et al.*, 2017) also set a political opportunity for new political parties both in a national and supranational level (Mosca, 2014). “The political and economic crises have been major factors behind the explosion of new political parties” (Feenstra *et al.*, 2017: 30). In this context, new left-winged political parties arose in the framework of Mediterranean Europe as *Movimento 5 Stelle* in Italy, *Syriza* in Greece, or *Podemos* in Spain (Auriemma *et al.*, 2015; Poulakidakos and Veneti, 2016).

During the process of social movements institutionalisation, their actions “traverse the official terrain of formal politics and engage with authoritative institutions such as the legislature, the judiciary, the state, and political parties to enhance their collective ability to achieve [their] goals” (Suh, 2011: 443). To some extent, this process lies in the concept of *co-optation* (Meyer and Tarrow, 1998; Morgan, 2007). *Co-optation* is defined as “the rejection of disruptive strategies, which closely relates to *routinization*, whereby movement actors are brought into the realm of routinized and established politics” (Morgan, 2007: 274). Social movements

institutionalisation could be an opportunity. It is an unrelenting evolution of social movements (Morgan, 2007; Pavan, 2017). Nonetheless, the process is an opportunity to redefine the political agenda and political, the political frames, and the distribution of power (Giugni, 1998; Pavan, 2017).

Between 2014 and 2015, new political organisations burst into the Spanish two-party system (Orriols and Cordero, 2016) because of social movements' political changes (Sanz and Mateos, 2014). Although, the two-parties system is not so evident in the Spanish regions or *Autonomous Communities*¹, where some other political forces appeared, and it dominated the institutions such as the *Partit Demòcrat Europeu Català (PDeCAT)* in Catalonia and *Euzko Alderdi Jeltzalea-Partido Nacionalista (PNV)* in Vasque Country. Spanish national party *Podemos (We can)* and other local and regional organisations so-called “*the commons*” crystallised the Spanish social protests in terms of political opportunities. For instance, the political organisations emerged in 2015 such as *Ahora Madrid (Now Madrid)* in Madrid, *En Marea (En Masse)* in Galicia or *Barcelona en Comú (BComú, Barcelona in Common)* in Barcelona (Lobera, 2015; della Porta *et al.*, 2017).

The *Indignados* movement has not disappeared but has been diluted, resulting in these new political organisations (Casero-Ripollés, Feenstra and Tormey, 2016). The relationship between social movements and parties can lead to a context where movements join electoral parties or coalitions (McAdam and Tarrow, 2010). For this reason, it is highly essential to figure out how the social media practices of these organisations are more structured with organisational routines and formal communication channels (Mattoni and Treré, 2014). In this line, the new political parties not only include in their political programs new political demands but also incorporate alternative organisational structures and digital channels for organisation and communication strategies (Feenstra *et al.*, 2017).

¹ Translation into English from the Spanish Comunidades Autónomas.

Thus, *BComú* is part of Sidney Tarrow's (1995) political opportunity. This political opportunity is based on the conditions that encourage or discourage political and social actors from forming social movements or organisations (Tarrow, 1995). However, the relationship between these social movements and these recent political parties is not clear since they refuse to align with any political or institutional organisation (Roos and Oikonomakis, 2014). Movements turn into political parties as 'movement states' (McAdam and Tarrow, 2010) and *Barcelona en Comú* and *Podemos*, among others, inherited the practices, the tools and most of the leaders of the *Indignados* movement (Borge and Santamaría, 2015). As Ramón Feenstra, Simon Tormey, Andreu Casero-Ripollés and John Keane argue,

These new parties, such as *Podemos*, *Partido X* and various municipal council platforms, were largely founded by activists who, having considered alternative external channel of protest and pressure, switched strategies to stand for election. In effect, they have taken the step into institutionalised politics with all its structures, programmes and internal rules (2017: 15).

Hence, "research should consider the different ways in which social movements and parties interact" (Piccio, 2015: 80). Nonetheless, the relevance of Spanish social movements is not only their political opportunity (Mosca, 2014; della Porta *et al.*, 2017). Spanish social movements found in social media a complementary organisation and a communication channel in addition to mass media coverage (Linares and Pérez-Altable, 2015; Linares, 2017). Also, these new left-winged political parties inherited communication practices and tools as digital networks (Borge and Santamaría, 2015).

In this context, according to Sheri Berman, "the mainstream left parties have not been able to put forward convincing, coherent, or effective responses to European publics' cultural fears" (2013: 17). The left-right dichotomy has been denied during the first third of the twentieth century by the political parties and organisations that defined themselves neither right nor left-ideology (Pérez-Ledesma, 2008). For

some authors, the main consequence of the left political parties' crisis caused the abandonment of the objectives of social transformation and the economic and social organisation (Bertinotti, 2006; Polo, 2007). By contrast, Peter Glotz (1992) affirms that the left-ideology has very well defined objectives and the crisis and is an overestimate of Marxism-Leninism perception. In other words, it is an evolutionary process of the left where social movements are the watchdog in a context where socialist parties become a technocratic power and communist parties have been diluted (Eley, 2003).

1.2. The context of the case study

As it has already been mentioned, the political party, *Guanyem Barcelona*, currently *Barcelona en Comú*, appeared in June 2014 as a consequence of the social, political and economic context of the crisis in Spain (Lobera y Sampedro, 2014; della Porta *et al.*, 2017; Feenstra *et al.*, 2017). After the process of approval and evaluation, a coalition of six parties –*BComú*, *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds (ICV)*, *Equo*, *Podem*, *Esquerra Unida i Alternativa (EUiA)* and *Procés Constituent*– was founded under the same name. *Barcelona en Comú* is one of the *movement parties* against the austerity born out of the economic crisis, and it conserves characteristics, claims and activist/politicians from different social movements (della Porta, *et al.*, 2017). This party preserves the space autonomy of the urban and cyberspaces that Manuel Castells (2012) attributed to social movements and it represents a high degree of associationism of Barcelonese social capital and leads the alternative left forces (Solé, 2014).

Within the left political framework in Spain and Catalonia, *BComú* is a consequence of the consolidation of *catch-all parties* and the emergence of *Citizenship-parties* (Calle, 2014). *Catch-all parties* appeared after the II World War and are based on a less ideological baggage, strong and charismatic leader, less identification with the

class struggle –*BComú* case study is based on the “common people”– and also based on an ambiguous discourse (transversality) in order to reach as many voters as possible (Kirchheimer, 1954). *Citizenship-parties* are characterised by continuous participation on decision-making, the radicalisation of democracy and by the self-management and co-management of common property (Calle, 2014). *Barcelona en Comú* emerged in a context of transversal crisis (economic, political) where they benefit the advances in digital media technologies and as a consequence of the limitations of Catalan and Spanish political system to direct actions and to change the agenda of traditional political parties and mass media (Feenstra *et al.*, 2017). As the same authors summarise,

The political context in Spain can in no way be described as apathetic and inactive as a result of a post-democratic drift (Crouch, 2004); indeed, it may be considered as an exceptional political testing ground. Although Spain shares symptoms of apathy with many other countries, such as declining numbers of political party members, discontent with the political class and disaffection with electoral processes, the Spanish political context is unique in its wealth of incessant democratic experiments spawned by the political and economic crisis” (Feenstra *et al.*, 2017:61).

1.2.1. From Spanish Transition to postmodern politics: left-wing political parties’ coalition/confluence

The categorical affirmation of the existence of a direct evolution between the *Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya* (PSUC) and the *Comuns* (CatComú-Podem) could be a long shot. However, candidates and political leaders of the *Comuns* have referred to themselves as heirs to the *PSUC* on many occasions².

² For instance, “*Domènech (ECP) se compromete a construir ‘una esperanza posible’ ante los miembros del PSUC*” or “*Catalunya en Comú-Podem pierde 3 escaños y logra su peor resultado desde el fiasco de ICV en 1999*”. The press articles are the object of a paper presented at the Conference of *Asociación de Historiadores de la Comunicación* (2019).

This section includes some relevant aspects that place, at least, a link between both political organisations formed by a coalition of left-wing political organisations. In the first place, the fact of the support to the *CatComú-Podem*'s (the *Comuns* in Catalonia region) manifesto by part of the *PSUC* and members of the trade union *Comisiones Obreras (CCOO)*³. The manifesto *Una esperança és possible. Venim de lluny i anem més lluny encarca* referrals to the relevance of the confluence, where all the political organisations which form part of the organisation are relevant, and where they should remember anti-Franco struggles and the connexion with the *PSUC* and *CCOO*⁴. It had the support of political figures such as Joan Saura (*PSUC/IC/ICV*), Francesc Baltasar (*PSUC/IC/ICV*), Eulàlia Vintró (*PSUC/ICV*) or, among others, Isidor Boix (*CCOO/PSUC/PSC*).

Secondly, we refer to the political and historical evolution of the left-wing political forces such as they evolves from the *PSUC* to *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds*, and from *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds* to the *Comuns (Barcelona en Comú, Catalunya en Comú-Podem)*⁵. The *PSUC* is understood as the leading social and political precedent of *Barcelona en Comú*. The *PSUC* was born out on 23rd April 1936 –at the very beginning of the Spanish Civil War– as a result of the four parties' union *Federació Catalana-PSOE* –Catalan Federation and the Catalan Socialist Party–, *Partit Comunista de Catalunya* –the Catalan Communist Party–, *Unió Socialista de Catalunya* and *Partit Català Proletari* –Socialist Union of Catalonia and Proletarian Catalan Party– (Borja, 2016). After the Civil War, their efforts were focused on the anti-Franco alliance (the 1950s) and the democracy consolidation (1960s and 1970s) (Borja, 2016; Martín-Ramos, 2016). Also, the *PSUC* was the greatest exponent of the left parties' organisation in Catalonia and

³ “El PSUC se reencuentra para apoyar el nuevo partido de los ‘Comunes’” https://elpais.com/ccaa/2017/03/02/catalunya/1488490213_517133.html

⁴ “Domènech (ECP) se compromete a construir “una esperanza posible” ante los miembros del PSUC” https://www.eldiario.es/politica/Domenech-ECP-compromete-construir-PSUC_0_618389166.html

⁵ “Catalunya en Comú-Podem pierde 3 escaños y logra su peor resultado desde el fiasco de ICV en 1999” Available <https://www.europapress.es/nacional/noticia-catalunya-comu-podem-pierde-escaños-logra-peor-resultado-fiasco-icv-1999-20171222004506.html>

across organisation against the fascism (Martín-Ramos, 2016). In this sense, as Jordi Solé (1986) pointed out, the *PSUC* was the maximum exponent of diversity in communist reality.

One of the most relevant aspects of the *PSUC* was its political culture based on the militancy included in one left-wing party but with different ideological approaches (Borja, 2016). That is the relationship between social movements and people, but the social movement basis and culture were not enough to have an impact on institutions (Borja, 2016). On that count, most of the political, social and cultural movements under Franco’s dictatorship took the *PSUC* as an inspirational reference (Solé, 1986). After its legalisation in April 1977, the *PSUC* obtained electoral representation at Catalan Parliament elections in 1980 and 1984 (*Table 4*). In the first one, with the *Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya* (PSC), they made up the majority electoral space as the most supported parties during the very beginning of the Spanish democratic transition (Molas, 1980).

Table 4. From the *PSUC* to the *Comuns* electoral evolution

Catalan Parliament Election	Party-Coalition
1980	PSUC
1984	PSUC
1988	IC
1992	IC
1995	IC
1999	IC-EV
2003	ICV-EUiA
2006	ICV-EUiA
2010	ICV-EUiA
2012	ICV-EUiA
2015	CSQP
2017	CC-P

Source: Own elaboration

The bad results obtained in 1984 election, as a consequence of the political division between the *PSUC* and the *Partit Comunista de Catalunya* (PCC) (Ribera-

Llorens, 2014), made the parties refunding on 23rd February 1987 (Borja, 2016). For that reason, “the electoral space of the Left has undergone an inner reordering since 1982” (Colomer, 1996: 26).

La decadencia electoral fue la gota que colmó el vaso y que llevó al PSUC a reconvertirse en lo que desde entonces se conocería como Iniciativa per Catalunya (IC), coalición que surge con la intención de recomponer el espacio comunista catalán, en crisis, y también de actualizarlo (Europapress, 2017).¹

In 1987, the *PSUC*, the *PCC*, *L’Entesa dels Nacionalistes d’Esquerra* and social movements founded the parties’ federation *Iniciativa per Catalunya (IC)* (Ribera-Llorens, 2014). During those years, they focused on the role that each of the three parties was going to play in *IC*, on the development of the new organisation with the reluctance of the *PCC* –out of *IC* in 1989– and about the *PSUC* control (Ribera-Llorens, 2014). In 1995, they formed the electoral coalition with the green party *Iniciativa per Catalunya els Verds (IC-V)* and with the reintegration of *PCC*. *Iniciativa per Catalunya, Els Verds-Confederació Ecologista de Catalunya, el Partit Comunista de Catalunya* and *l’Espai Roig-Verd-Violeta* formed that electoral coalition. However, as Ricard Ribera-Llorens pointed out,

Les problemàtiques que porten a l’escissió –conflicte dins d’IC, conflicte entre IC i IU i conflicte dins del PSUC– se solapen i en part es poden explicar pel model de relacions i de funcionament pel que aposta cada sector, però l’explicació fonamental és el canvi ideològic i l’estratègia en política d’aliances d’Iniciativa i el seu acostament als socialistes (2014:13).

In 2003, with the party *EUiA*, they were giving raise to *ICV-EUiA*.

La mala experiencia llevó a ICV y EUiA a volver a unirse y sellar una alianza para las autonómicas de 2003 que ya no rompieron. En aquella cita, la reeditada coalición logró 9 diputados, lo que les permitieron incluso integrarse en el Gobierno del tripartito que presidiría Pasqual Maragall, del PSC y que también sumaría a ERC (europapress, 2017).¹

Nowadays, in Barcelona, these parties and electoral coalitions are part of *BComú*. In 2015-2017, in Catalonia, *ICV*, *EUiA* and *Podem* –the Catalan group of new Spanish party *Podemos*– formed the electoral coalition *Catalunya Sí que es Pot* (CSQP) and in 2017 born out *Catalunya en Comú Podem*. *CatComú-Podem*, the latter heir from the *PSUC*, is formed by *Barcelona en Comú*, *Equo*, *EUiA*, *ICV* and *Podem*. In this sense, Xavier Domènech, talking about the relationship between the *PSUC* and *CatComú-Podem*, said in an interview

That space would say that it is a complete expression of front-politics. In this sense, it takes forces, the identities of each of the forces that make it, but it goes beyond the identities of origin; In fact, almost a century later we know very little about what those identities were, but instead, we know very well what the *PSUC* was. [...] And I think that this is the success of *En Comú Podem*. It is the idea of creating a space where everyone can feel recognised, to which everyone can point, but that the conjunction of the space exceeds one of the parts. Moreover, this *PSUC* of the thirteenth century must be able to be a space that is more profoundly outlined this aspect of confluence, an area that integrates us all and that strengthens all of us, but at the same time surpasses us.⁶

Thirdly, some organisational similarities have been found between the *PSUC* and the *Comuns*, according to the bibliographical review carried out on the *PSUC* (Solé, 1986; Colomer, 1996; Ribera-Llorens, 2014), and according to the knowledge acquired during the research process of the case study *BComú*. In this sense, “Barcelona has a tradition of civil society engagement in local governance and local welfare” (Eizaguirre, Pradel-Miquel and García, 2017: 3). The main common characteristics are the organisational decentralisation and the relevance of the activist network, the municipalism and the relevance of neighbourhoods. This statement is based on the information gathered mainly by Gaiame Pala (2015), in his work *El partido y la ciudad. Modelos de organización y militancia del PSUC clandestino (1963-1975)*, where the author resorts to original historical sources.

⁶ Translate into English from Catalan.

In the organisational decentralisation and the relevance of the activists' network, the Estate of Emergency in 1969 in Spain had a key role. The Estate of Emergency showed the limitations of the *PSUC* structure and the necessity of orientation, dynamism and initiatives, a more horizontal structure and the confidence of its support base (Pala, 2015). Through the *PSUC*'s policy of the organisation, decentralisation led to the emergence or creation of neighbourhood committees and, as a consequence, the militants became activists (Pala, 2015). Moreover, the “so-called ‘Barcelona model’ included strategies for economic growth in which the citizenship participated” (Eizaguirre, Pradel-Miquel and García, 2017).

The ‘new’ *PSUC*'s organisation in neighbourhood committees resulted in stopping ‘going to the neighbourhood’ to ‘being a neighbourhood’ to know and try to solve the problems of each territory (Pala, 2015). The relevance of these neighbourhood committees was not only the closeness to different population structures but also its diversification of professional sectors with the common objective of the ‘globalisation of problems’ (Pala, 2015). This kind of organisation seeded the subsequent emergence of neighbourhood associations and the neighbourhood movement (Alabart, 1986). Notwithstanding, in this PhD dissertation, we do not go in-depth on the emergence and evolution of neighbourhood movement.

The above reminds us of the structure of *BComú* since it appeared in 2014. According to *BComú* own information, it is organised in neighbourhoods using assemblies and with high relevance of the districts. As the neighbourhood groups’ definition remains,

Neighbourhood groups and district assemblies are the sectorial areas of *BComú*'s growth and consolidation, open to the participation of all, with the autonomy of function and self-management. They are structured at two complementary levels: neighbourhood groups and district assemblies. They are sober on issues that affect only their territory. They have autonomy to

make decisions about their action and development. It is coordinated through the territorial coordinator⁷

Even though *CatComú-Podem* and the *Comuns* is one of the essential left-wing political organisations, they do not represent the entire heritage of the anti-Franco Catalan struggle. Above all, it is taking into account an essential factor of Catalan politics such as the nationalist axis.

In brief, (1) the participation of the neighbour in the different spaces –both the neighbourhood committees (*Assembleas*) and the city sectorials (*Eixos*)–, (2) the historical and political evolution of the left-wing Catalan political parties and (3) the self-attribution of *CatComú-Podem* leaders as a heirs of *PSUC* are compelling reasons to conclude that there is a particular relationship between the two political subjects.

Lucía García-Carretero (2019). De la transición española a la posmodernidad. ¿Son ‘Los Comunes’ herederos del PSUC? (September, 2019). *La revolución de la comunicación en perspectiva: Historia de los nuevos medios digitales, los nuevos medios en la historia*. XVI Congreso Internacional de la AEHC, Santiago de Compostela.

1.2.2. Timeline: *Barcelona en Comú* 2015 council electoral coalition

The movement party (della Porta *et al.*, 2017) *Guanyem Barcelona* was officially introduced on 26th June 2014 (*Figure 1*). One of the promoters was the activist and spokeswomen of *PAH* Ada Colau. On September 2014, a political manifesto was validated to form an electoral coalition based on new party logic in order to stop the inequalities and improve democracy.

⁷ Barcelona en Comú's activists spaces. Neighbourhood groups. <https://barcelonaencomu.cat/ca/grups-als-barris>

Figure 1. *Guanyem Barcelona* presentation



Source: <https://twitter.com/bcnencomu/status/482122223508287488>

On October 2014, four parties more validated the ethics code in order to form this left electoral bloc for 2015 Barcelona council election. The transparency is a consequence of “its pillars are to stimulate new practices and to built a project based on strict ethical criteria” (Feenstra *et al.* 2017: 27). In this sense, it is essential to mention that although the six political parties formed an electoral coalition, they are not a confluence of parties or “the Confluence”. Nonetheless, the mass media and the political organisation called themselves *confluence of parties*. The term “confluence” has a more positive symbolic background than coalition in the Spanish and Catalan left ideology context.

Simultaneously, they started the process to validate *BComú* (*Guanyem Barcelona*) as a political party. During this process, when they were trying to register *Guanyem Barcelona* as a political party in all co-official Spanish languages, they realised that *Ganemos* (*Guanyem* in Spanish) was registered before by someone

out of the coalition. They had to change the name to *Barcelona en Comú*⁸ (Figure 2) after two negative answers of *Ministerio del Interior*⁹. Nonetheless, the Spanish Ministry finally recognised the name *Guanyem Barcelona*, but after that, they did not change it because they had a new communication strategy.

The political party *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds* is a Catalan left-ecologist party being as a result of the fragmentation and reunification of the communist and socialist left in Spain and Catalonia over the years. As it has been mentioned, in 1995, *Iniciativa per Catalunya* formed together with *Els Verds-Confederació Ecologista de Catalunya* the electoral coalition *Iniciativa per Catalunya-Els Verds*. In 2003, *Iniciativa per Catalunya-Els Verds* and *Esquerra Unida i Alternativa* started a new period of electoral and programmatic agreement according to the institutional representation but being organically autonomous.

Equo is a Spanish ecologist party emerged in 2011. In the Catalan context, *Equo* and *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds* signed an association agreement¹⁰ respecting the sovereignty and autonomy of each political party due to the prevailing ideology about the green left and public ecology. The Spanish party *Podemos* (*We Can*) was founded in January 2014. *Podem Barcelona* is *Podemos*' territorial local extension in Barcelona. Finally, the political organisation *Procés Constituent* was formed in 2013 to promote a new anti-capitalism organisation based on Catalonia's self-determination.

⁸ Guanyem estudia canviar de nom després del segon veto d'Interior. Recuperado 25 abril 2015, desde http://cat.elpais.com/cat/2015/01/22/catalunya/1421936139_720089.html

⁹ English translation: *Spanish Ministry of Interior*

¹⁰ Equo-ICV: *Acuerdo de Asociación y Protocolo de Relaciones*. Available in <https://web.archive.org/web/20120422083934/http://www.equova.org/download/4/>

Figure 2. From *Guanyem Barcelona* to *Barcelona en Comú*



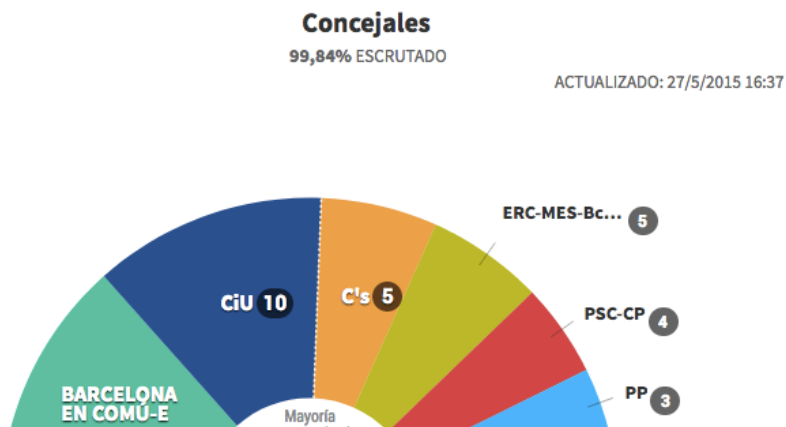
Source: *Movimiento de Liberación Gráfica Barcelona* (MLBG)

On February 2015, the negotiation period started in July 2014 was closed and the political coalition for 2015 Barcelona election was defined. They started open primaries to decide the electoral programme, which was officially presented in April 2015.

One day before the 2015 electoral campaign, the Spanish *Sociological Research Centre* (*Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, CIS*) published a pre-electoral election study where *Barcelona en Comú* was the potential main political force, in the same line as *METROSCOPIA*. By contrast, the results of the pre-electoral survey were different for *SIGMA DOS*, *OBSERVATORIO* and *Gesop*. They gave the victory to the traditional party of the opposition *Convergència i Unió*.

On 24th May 2015, the left electoral coalition *BComú* won the Barcelona council election with 11 council members of 41, so they needed to be agreed with other political parties (*Figure 3*).

Figure 3. Barcelona 2015 council election results



Source: <https://resultados.elpais.com/elecciones/2015/municipales/09/08/19.html>

1.3. Research questions and objectives

This PhD dissertation relies on 15 objectives organised in four journal papers and one international conference paper. The research study is a consequence of the interaction between two essential elements. The first is a great deal of interest in digital networks as political communication tools. The research interest in the use of Twitter as an electoral communication tool has increased substantially in the last years (Fenton and Barassi, 2011; Vaccari, 2013; Bor, 2014; Jungherr, 2016). It has contributed to the debate on the potential of social networks as a communication channel in a hybrid media system (Chadwick, 2013), where offline and online forms of communication take place at the same time.

Secondly, it is a consequence of the choice of a case study, which emerged, and evolution took place while this dissertation was done. This research study assumes

that *Barcelona en Comú* is a representative example and a case study (Yin, 2009) of movement parties against austerity in Europe and the Western World (della Porta *et al.*, 2017). These are “political parties that have particularly strong organizational and external links with social movements” (della Porta *et al.*, 2017: 4-5). The research lies within the academic thinking which affirms that in times of crisis, “issues of knowledge take center stage in the public debate” and these cases study “push on a reflection on the ways in which different streams in the social sciences have addressed the relations between social movements and knowledge” (della Porta and Pavan, 2017: 297).

The main objective of this research study is to deepen the electoral communication strategy on Twitter of the *confluence BComú* to better understand the way new political forces which appeared in a digital environment using digital networks. This dissertation analyses the electoral communication characteristics on Twitter of the *Barcelona en Comú* coalition during 2015 Barcelona council election. Thus, the behaviour on Twitter of the political parties *BComú*, *ICV*, *EUiA*, *Podem*, *Procés Constituent* and *Equo* from 8th to 22nd of May 2015. To be specific, the research study has been organised into four research levels or stages. These four levels are based on sub-objectives applying several methods of research (*see Chapter III*).

Level 1. Exploring *Barcelona en Comú*'s communication network on Twitter (Macro level).

In this section (first paper), we explore the electoral communication strategies and communication coordination among the six political parties that form the electoral coalition *BeC* from 8th to 22nd, 2015 (García-Carretero and Pérez-Altale, 2017). In order to answer the questions and further the research objectives, we have analysed the 1253 tweets disseminated by the official Twitter accounts of *BComú* (@bcnencomu), *ICV* (@iniciativaBcn), *EUiA* (@EUiABCN), *P* (@podem_BCN),

PC (@*pconstituentBCN*) and E (@*Equobcn*) with Social Network Analysis (SNA) method.

The first level of analysis is constructed around the following research questions and objectives:

RQ1. What are the relationship and the flow of communication between the six political parties of the confluence?

O1. Analyse the flow of communication and the relationship between the six political parties of the confluence on Twitter during the electoral campaign.

RQ2. Do the political parties use the possibilities that Twitter enables to interact with the users? Do they conduct a two-way process of communication?

O2. Study the multidirectional communication or the relationship among the parties and users or citizens through the replies and comments in the tweets spread by the six political parties.

RQ3. What are the main electoral issues disseminated by the political parties according to the hashtag used?

O3. Identify the dominant issues proposed by political parties through the *hashtags* used on Twitter.

Level 2. Identifying the electoral message (Micro level).

In this stage, we deepen on the electoral communication characteristics on Twitter. Based on content analysis research method, the analysis is organised in two steps.

Level 2.1. *Barcelona en Comú's* electoral message on Twitter.

Firstly, we analyse the six political parties of the electoral coalition (García-Carretero and Díaz-Noci, 2018). That is, the analysis of the electoral message spread by the Twitter accounts @bcnencomu, @iniciativaBcn, @EUiABCN, @podem_BCN, @pconstituentBCN and @Equobcn. The research questions and objectives (second paper) of this part of the analysis are:

RQ4. What is the electoral message of the six political parties? Do they use the same electoral issue for the six Twitter accounts? How are the frames of the electoral themes and ideas during the electoral campaign?

O4. Inquire about the electoral communication strategy according to the message. In other words, find out the thematic selection, the kind of message and, the concordance between the text of the tweets and the *hashtags*.

RQ5. How do they use Twitter possibilities? Do they use the text but also images, videos and link? In that case, which one they use?

O5. Analyse the use of Twitter by the parties of the confluence. That is, know if the parties took advantage of communication possibilities of Twitter such as images, videos or links.

RQ6. Do they have a fluent and an argued conversation? Do they debate election campaign issues?

O6. According to the replies on parties' tweets, deepen on the kind of conversation among the six political parties of the electoral coalition and Twitter users.

Secondly, we analyse the tweets spread by other relevant actors, according to the

results of the first level of this dissertation and the SNA. Among others, these users are the politicians of the *confluence* @AdaColau, @GPisarello, @Laiiaortiz and @janetsanz; and other users who set the electoral message on Twitter during the campaign such as @3eses.

RQ7. According to the SNA results, do the users who are not the political parties introduce new electoral issues on *Barcelona en Comú* network on Twitter? Which kind of message do they spread?

O7. Study the kind of message disseminated by the users, both politicians and citizens, which set the political message of the confluence during the electoral campaign.

Level 2.2. The “other campaign”: activism and decentralisation during the election campaign (Micro-level).

Activists and sympathisers of *BComú* form the "other campaign", and it is part of the political fandom (Coleman, 2003; Erikson, 2008; Madore, 2009; Sandvoss, 2013; Hernández-Santaolalla and Rubio-Hernández, 2017). In other words, it is the phenomenon that emerged around parties and leaders through which the distance between citizenship and parties is increasingly smaller (Sandvoss, 2005). This analysis corresponds to the third paper of the dissertation through a conference presentation. We use the information obtained on the previous levels of study and the results of the in-depth semi-structured interviews. The research questions and objectives to analyse @somcomuns, the *Movimiento de Liberación Gráfica de Barcelona* and the #guerrillacomunicativa are:

RQ8. What or who are @somcomuns and *MLGB*? Are they part of *Barcelona en Comú* electoral coalition? What kind of message do they disseminate during the election campaign?

O8. Analyse the 'informal' communicative elements of the electoral campaign such as @somcomuns and the *Movimiento de Liberación Gráfica de Barcelona* created from 'outside', but incorporated into the institutional campaign of *Barcelona en Comú*.

RQ9. What is the place of communicative activists within the communication commission of *Barcelona in Comú*?

O9. Deepen the internal structure of the communication group of *Barcelona en Comú* and the #guerrillacomunicativa to understand its internal and external communicative structure.

Level 3. Communication on Twitter in a coordinated online strategy (Macro level).

This third level of research is focused on the analysis of the use of social networks not only as a source of political information but also as a potential intermediary communication channel between the users/citizens and political parties' websites (conference two). For that, through Search Engine Optimisation analysis by *SEMrush* tool, we analyse the political parties' website from October 8th to 15th 2017, according to the concept of the permanent campaign (García-Carretero and Codina, 2018).

RQ10. How relevant are the digital networks as a visibility provider for the websites of the six political parties' in a coordinated online strategy?

O10. Ascertain the role of social networks as an online traffic provider of political parties' websites.

RQ11. Which are the most used words to search the information on parties'

websites? Are they related to the central electoral issues? Have they something in common with the electoral issues on Twitter?

O11. Study the keywords used for searching political parties' websites.

RQ12. What are the differences between the political parties' website visibility? Does it relate to the use of digital networks?

O12. Analyse the visibility differences among the six political parties' websites according to online traffic.

RQ13. Are the *SEO/SEM* tools useful for the analysis of political information?

O13. Explore the possibilities of *SEO/SEM* tool for the analysis of political parties' websites.

Level 4. Mixed-methods approach and conclusions (Macro-micro level)

To compare the results obtained by Social Network Analysis (*Level 1*), content analysis (*Level 2*) and the Search Engine Optimization and coordinated strategy (*Level 4*) this research study includes several interviews to the community communication managers or communication commission or group members of the coalition (García-Carretero, 2018). Before the objectives were set, several research questions and hence, research objectives arose. Combining different methods for the analysis of the same data.

RQ14. How useful is the methodological triangulation or the mixed method approach to this case study? Moreover, what level of information can we obtain through the application through the quantitative-qualitative approach of the *Barcelona en Comu's* electoral campaign?

O14: Deepen the design and application of the electoral communication strategies of the coalition of parties.

RQ15. Is there an agreement between the results obtained from the analysis and the response to the interviews?

O15: Compare the results obtained by the application of SNA and the content analysis with the information obtained from the political parties by in-depth interviews.

1.4. Structure of the dissertation

This PhD Dissertation is within the PhD Program in Communication at the *Communication Department of Pompeu Fabra University*, and it is a paper compendium modality (*Table 5*). According to the normative foundation, the modality B of the PhD Program must include:

- a) Two research papers indexed in Web of Science (WoS) or Scopus databases. At least one of these papers must be written in English. Also, the PhD Candidate must be the first author.
- b) Other two items, whether book chapters, international conferences or academic papers indexed in academic journals evaluated and accepted by the evaluation agencies.
- c) A report, which includes the theoretical approach, objectives and research questions, the methodological approach and the research results and conclusions.

Given the above, this PhD Dissertation starts with an Introduction (**Chapter I**), which introduces the topic and the context of the case study and the objectives of the research. Secondly, **Chapter II** presents the theoretical approach. Thirdly, **Chapter III** includes the methodological approach. Part of the content analysis method was presented at a conference. Followed, the findings of the dissertation (**Chapter IV**), which are organised in several papers according to the PhD Program modality. Finally, this dissertation includes the research discussion and conclusions are presented in **Chapter V**.

Table 5. PhD Compendium Requirements

Level of analysis	Research question	Objective	Method	Chapter	Dissertation requirement
Level 1	RQ1	O1	Social Network Analysis	4.2.1.	WoS
	RQ2	O2			
	RQ3	O3			
Level 2.1	RQ4	O4	Content Analysis	4.2.2.	Scopus
	RQ5	O5			
	RQ6	O6			
	RQ7	O7			
Level 2.2	RQ8	O8	Content Analysis	4.2.3.	Conference+ Indexed Journal
	RQ9	O9			
Level 3	RQ10	O10	Search Engine Optimization	4.2.4.	International Conference
	RQ11	O11			
	RQ12	O12			
	RQ13	O13			
Level 4	RQ14	O14	Social Network Analysis Content Analysis Semi-structured Interviews	4.2.5	International Conference + Indexed Journal
	RQ15	O15			
Content Analysis methodological proposal for Twitter analysis				3.4.2	International Conference

Source: Own elaboration.

CHAPTER II

Theoretical Approach

Chapter II. Theoretical Approach

2.1. Populism. Terms and definitions

Notwithstanding the difficulty to define what populism is because of the vaguely of the concept (Laclau, 2005), populism is understood as the denial of the left-right dichotomy, the multiclass approach and the participation of common people who demand equal political rights against privileged groups (Germani, 2003). There is a good deal in which political actors and which political phenomena are or not populist, but this concept or category is not well defined (Canovan, 1999; Moffit and Tormey, 2014). However, populism has an explicit political weapon focus on the people against the elites, and it transforms the relationship between politicians and people (Méry and Surel, 2002).

Until World War II the term populism was associated positively with the categories “people” and “popular”, but after the Cold War period, this connotation changed because of this new paradigm link “popular” and “populism” with the old Soviet Block, and the concept of populism alluded to the other side of the Iron Curtain (D’Eramo, 2013). Dissatisfaction with democratic institutions in contemporary democracies carried out conventional and unconventional parties and forms of political participation whose are directly related to the economic performance (Méry and Surel, 2002).

Consequently, the left-right dichotomy and theory of ‘opposite ends’ have won the war of positions of the political concepts and terms (Bourdieu, 1985; Gramsci, 2009). Theory of ‘opposite ends’ legitimises the political centre and excludes the very left-right political positions, and that is one of the main reasons why left and right populism parties are understood as similar (D’Eramo, 2013). Communist/anarchic movement parties on the Left and the

fascist/corporatist/authoritarian on the Right are considered ‘the outside’ and, bridging the gap between them, and they have a new set of ideas and values (Méry and Surel, 2002). Moreover, according to Paolo Gerbaudo,

the radical discourse of citizenship thus contains what could be described as a democratic populist element, that frames the contemporary conflict as one between the citizenry and the oligarchy, and sees the solution to the national level, seen as the only available means to reassert collective control on the economy and the society (2016: 12).

Authors talk about the ‘new populism’ or ‘new populist parties’ that criticises the over-representation of minorities and “attacks contemporary representative politics together with a diffuse by a powerful sense of dissatisfaction with politics” (Méry and Surel, 2002: 74). The reasons that promote this new populism are

Firstly, it creates greater complexity and therefore jars with the populist aspiration for simple, direct politics. Complexity, opacity, and bureaucracy are part and parcel of the politics of the new Europe but they are also bugbears for populists. Secondly, the new forms of politics engendered in European integration rely on very indirect representation and therefore emphasize the distance between citizens and elites. (Méry and Surel, 2002: 75).

In this chapter, we review the concept of populism. This section attempts to define what populism is according to different approaches. Thus, we define populism concept as an ideology (Freedon, 1998; Canovan, 1999, 2002; Mudde, 2004; Abts and Rummens, 2007; Stanley, 2008), populism as political logic (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001; Laclau, 2005; Abts and Rummens, 2007; Arditì, 2007, 2010), populism as discourse (Mudde, 2004; Laclau, 2005; Hawkins, 2009; Arditì, 2010; De Smet, 2016) and populism as political communication style (Canovan, 1999, 2002; Méry and Surel, 2002; Jagers and Walgrave, 2007; Cammaerts, 2015; De Smet, 2016). Accordingly, it is especially significant that Benjamin Moffit and Simon Tormey’s (2014) work to know better what populism is in each different approach. Even though these approaches have in common the perception of the society in two

main confronted groups, homogeneous and antagonistic, which are ‘the people’ and ‘the elite’ (Canovan, 1999, 2002; Laclau 2005, Mudde, 2004; Abts and Rummens, 2007; Stanley, 2008), this research study, assumes that populism is a political communication style, but it needs to be articulated as a political logic.

These populism’s conceptions also have in common the claim of the power to the people and popular sovereignty (Abts and Rummens, 2007) and ‘the people’ understood as a homogeneous unity (Canovan, 1999; Taggart, 2000; Abts and Rummens, 2007; Stanley, 2008). In this sense,

In modern society, the dominant conception of the subject is the individual person. From legal perspective, in most countries, being part of the human species is not sufficient condition to qualify for subjectness the capacity to act as a subject. [...] The notion of the individual person is a modern form of individuality. Modern individuality is that which the social science is commonly referred to as ‘identify’: the conscious recognition of one’s own composite individuality that is the result of one’s participation in diverse cultural systems (De Smet, 2016: 4-5).

Populism has an instrumental ambivalence in electoral processes, public debates, and public policy-making because it is a tool to put into the public and media agenda issues to construct alternative means, radical grass-roots or, by contrast, authoritarian relationship (Méry and Surel, 2002).

2.1.1. Populism as an Ideology

The first approach of populism concept is based on the association of the term as an ideology (Freeden, 1998; Canovan, 1999, 2002; Mudde, 2004; Abts and Rummens, 2007; Stanley, 2008). Over the past few years, this definition of populism has become dominant, particularly among European political scientist (Moffit and Tormey, 2014). Ideology is understood as a cultural framework that provides convincing and useful ways for organisations to interpret ideas (Stanley, 2008). Populism “is an ideology that considers society ultimately separate in two

homogeneous and antagonistic groups [...] which argue that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* of the people” (Mudde, 2004: 543). The tension between these two groups, ‘the people’ against ‘the elite’, invites to populist mobilisation, where the power of democracy depends on its redemptive elements (Canovan, 1999).

Populist ideology is not only a reaction against dominant power structures (political and economical); it demands popular sovereignty, which goes beyond the class struggle based on economic differences (Canovan, 1999). For that, populism as an ideology can emerge from anywhere in a context-specific that permit them to do so (Stanley, 2008). According to the author,

Populism, like nationalism, focused on the ‘who’ of politics; it is an ideology dedicated to identifying the people as the privileged subject of politics and justifying their place on pedestal (Stanley, 2008: 102).

There are two main visions to define populism, which are the liberal and radical approaches (Mudde, 2004; Rovira, 2012). According to the former, from the liberal approach, populism is a multi-class movement or political party and a passive consequence of the socioeconomic development (Mudde, 2004; Rovira, 2012). By contrast, agree with the radical point of view, populism is an integral part of democracy and not only a pathological consequence of it (Rovira, 2012). Nevertheless, nowadays, populism becomes ‘mainstream’ in Western democracies due to the independence and commercialisation of popular media (Stanley, 2008).

Apart from liberal and radical categorisation, “populism should be regarded as a distinct ideology in that it conveys a particular way of constructing the political in the specific interaction of its concepts” (Stanley, 2008: 95). To identify populism as a distinct ideology, we should mention the differences between ‘full’ and ‘thin’ ideologies, because authors define populist as a thin ideology based on a combination or contrast with the ‘full’ ideologies (Stanley, 2008).

'Full' ideology "contains particular interpretations and configurations of all the major political concepts attached to a general plan of public policy that specific society requires" (Freeden, 1998: 750). By contrast, 'thin' ideology and, therefore populism, (Canovan, 2002; Abts and Rummens, 2007; Stanley, 2008) provides "a reasonable broad, if not a comprehensive range of answers to the political questions that society generates" (Freeden, 1998: 750). This 'thin' ideology needs stronger of 'full' ideologies, as the neoliberalism (Hesmondhalgh, 2002; McChesney, 2004) to be translated into a coherent policy (Stanley, 2008). It is not possible to understand populism alone because "it lacks the capacity to put forward a wide-ranging and coherent programme for the solution to crucial political questions" (Stanley, 2008: 95). Bart Cammaerts (2015) points out that, in the post-hegemony status, neoliberalism (full ideology or 'the inside') tries to reduce the power of the state but there also plenty of alternatives (e.g. populism as a thin ideology or 'the outside').

2.1.2. Populism as a Discourse

The second approach to populism is based on illustrating the discourse perception of populism. Several authors tried to define the term populist agree to discursive focus. Despite that, the discursive discussion also leads to the debate on the variety of labels or categories. Thus, populism could be a political style (Knight, 1998), an appeal (Canovan, 1999), a discourse (de la Torre, 2000; Laclau, 2005) or a language (Kazin, 1998).

The typology of populism as discourse is based in a pragmatic approach, and the acceptance or rejection of the democratic assumption and the role of citizens to govern (Cannovan, 1999; Mudde, 2004) and it describe something cultural (Hawkins, 2009). Nonetheless, based on Kirki A. Hawkins, "the convention of much of this literature and use the problematic term discourse in its largely

postmodernist sense, as something that combines elements of both ideology and rhetoric” (Hawkins, 2009: 1045).

Populist is a Manichean discourse, a broad typology, that includes elitism and pluralism, that identify God with the people and Evil with the elite (Hawkins, 2009). Empty and floating signifiers form the populist discourse to construct popular identities and to draw the frontiers between identities (Laclau, 2005; Ardit, 2010). These frontiers between hegemony, politics and populism are built by conceptual groups or blocks (Arditi, 2010) based on the articulation of hegemony of Ernesto Laclau (2005). The discourse is based on the intuitions of how the world works and its interpretation in political terms and political parties (Gerring, 1997; Knight, 2006). As a result,

populism is a latent set of ideas or a worldview that lacks significant exposition and “contrast” with other discourses and is usually low on policy specifics. It has a subconscious quality that manifests itself primarily in the language of those who hold it (Hawkins, 2009: 1045).

Similarly, as the other approaches of populism, the discursive is refocus on the concept of ‘people’ changing the relations of power, domination and alter-globalization (Gerbaudo, 2014), the citizens as sovereign (Hawkins, 2009) and the social demands as the minimal unit of analysis of populism (Arditi, 2010).

2.1.3. Populism as a Political Logic

The third approach is the assumption that populist is a democratic political logic (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001; Laclau, 2005; Abst and Rummers, 2007; Ardit, 2007, 2010). Basing on the liberalism logic, the place of the power is widely disseminated in favour of an anonymous rule of law (Abts and Rummers, 2007). In this context, we “will call logic of populism, on the other hand, the empty place of power is

closed by a substantive image of the people as a homogeneous unity” (Abts and Rummens, 2007: 406).

On the opposite side, we find the neo-Gramscian or post-hegemonic point of view to define what populism is as a political logic. In this sense, instead of “general contradiction as a principle of explanation for oppression, rebellion and change, they speak of articulation of a series of discrete struggles or, more precisely, that generate relations of equivalence that make each struggle signify its own particularity as well as supplementary meaning” (Arditi, 2007: 206).

For that, this approach does not understand populist as an inevitable consequence of abstract logic, and it is an empirically and a relation of contingency between concepts and their articulation (Stanley, 2008). Precisely,

Therefore, populists are no longer ordinary adversaries, but political enemies who hold an incompatible view of the symbolic structure of the locus of power itself. In these cases, the legitimation of populist by accepting them as equal democratic adversaries or by allowing them to access to power constitutes a disavowal of the democratic of the democratic logic and might as a result, contribute to a corrosion of the democratic ethos of people (Abts and Rummens, 2007: 422).

Even so, it is essential not to confuse the post-hegemony framework of populism as a political logic with the transfer between macro and micro level of politics or from the mainstream to alternative ways of political parties or organisations (Arditi, 2007).

To better understand the hypothesis that affirms that populist is a logic, we need to explain the articulation of this logic further, the differences between the mainstream-institutional versus alternative political parties, and, ultimately, hegemonic and counter-hegemonic political organisations (Laclau, 2001, Laclau and Mouffe, 2005; Gramsci, 2009). Due to its complicated, we consider that a

section it is needed (*see* 2.2.) after defining populism as a political communication style.

2.1.4. Populism as a Political Style

Finally, in this research, we understand populism as a kind of political style or political communication style. As the authors pointed out, the approaches discussed previously are problematic and not very well delimited between them, so we think populism as a political style and it “offers a promising new perspective on populism that helps to solve a number of issues raised above in relation to existing literature” (Moffitt and Tormey, 2014: 386-387). Populism is a strategy to appeal to the vote, to mobilise citizen’s support –to win electoral processes– through a standard communication technique that refers to the people (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007). Political leaders and political parties continuously appeal to the power of ‘the common people’ to change the symbolic legitimacy of the political establishment (Abts and Rummens, 2007). “The external opposition between the abstract and the real people becomes internal contradiction within the moments of the protest: if the people are, in fact, a sovereign power they have rights, but their demanding these rights of themselves in the shape of a state that represents them” (De Smet, 2016: 10).

Populism can be a political style due to “the effect of the mediatisation of the political equating to a simplification of political discourse, it’s the reduction to neat us-against-them antagonisms and sound-bite solutions” (Moffitt and Tormey, 2014: 7). In words of Jan Jagers and Stefan Walgrave (2002) the communication style of populism is based on:

- a) A conspicuous exhibition of closeness to (ordinary) citizens. This self-representation can make different guises –wing casual or colloquial language or adopting an informal dress code– but the most important element of a political style is the content of the discourse (2002: 322-323).

b) By referring to the people, a political actor claims that he or she primarily wants to defend the interest of the people, that he or she is not alienated from the public but knows what the people really want (2002: 323).

c) When political actors talk about the people and combine this with an explicit anti-establishment position and an exclusion of certain population categories, one can speak of thick populism (2002: 323-324).

d) Since the populism holds a very broad concept of politics; they are caused by political incompetence, unwillingness and sabotage. This all-on-composing vision of the politics corresponds to an equally broad definition of the elites (2002: 324).

e) Hence, some specific population segments are stigmatized and excluded from 'the people', they are defined as being a threat to and a burden on the society (2002: 324).

This political communication style has a concrete vocabulary and the slogan "the people want" shows the transfer from a passive population to an active people (Méry and Surel, 2002; De Smet, 2016). The 'people' is not defining as 'the population' (De Smet, 2016) and the elite or 'the others' are assimilating with political elites, economic power, intellectuals, media and journalists and the State (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007). The ambiguous term of 'the people', 'the population' and 'popular identity' can be (re)appropriate from different political parties, social movements or political groups, so they have an effective content (De Smet, 2016). The ambiguous and practical content of the populist style is useful in the trench-war or the hegemony articulation of Antonio Gramsci (2009) because it situated in a cultural level construct through educational and media system (Cammaerts, 2015).

In this regard, the importance of the language in a populist strategy style determines concepts and notions (Gramsci, 2009) and politics adopt this style or tactic intending to communicate as a 'tabloid style' (Canovan, 1999). That is, in Yves Méry and Yves Surel words,

populism invariably claims to speak in the name of the people (the heartland's population), there is a consequence between these types of claims and demands of democracy that politics legitimized insofar as it embodies popular sovereignty. This means that, although is, at best, a vague claim, it is a powerful tool and has the effect of legitimizing populism claims the ambiguity of terms means that it can be used to evoke some very particular constituencies without explicitly excluding others. Populism benefits from of the people, allowing it to imply the 'unsayable' without actually having to say it (2002: 77).

The populist framing is organised into two main groups with the aim to structure the communication strategy, the debate and the political life in dichotomises issues, in a dualism which is an intrinsic part of this political style (Méry and Surel, 2002) and "a way to wrap up all kinds of issues" (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007: 322). Despite this, in electoral processes, the articulation of the hegemonic could be more mundane and straightforward "like the aggregation of disparate special interests groups, the expression of the people's disenchantment with ruling groups and existing policies or simply a whim" (Arditi, 2007: 211). As a result, hegemonic articulation through communication or populist style is reduced as a struggle of particular interests where the 'common good' or the democracy idea is not mentioned (Abst and Rummens, 2007). The common good is based "on the community through the urban dimension in the municipalities or gravitating to the community" (Garau, 2014: 28) and it is shared and linked to an intangible reality (Nivarra, 2012). That is,

All populist movements speak and behave as if democracy meant the power of the people. Indeed, this feature is probably the sole element shared by populist movement parties. They have defied all attempts to have comprehensive definition or adequate typologies both from a longitudinal and/or spatial perspective (Méry and Surel, 2002: 9).

Compelling, populism as a political (communication) style is based on several populist characteristics (*Table 6*) that allow counter-hegemonic or alternative/new

political organisations become visible as the alternative to the dominant power in a post-hegemonic stage (Cammaerts, 2015).

Table 6. Populism’s main characteristics

Populism as a political (communication) style
The people against the elite (economic, political)
The people as homogeneous part of the society (overcoming of class struggle)
The people as “the commons”, bottom-up
Internal/external ways of communication inherited from social movements (PAH, Indignados)
Charismatic leadership
“Institutionalisation” of social movements
Communication strategy in mass media and social media at the same time

Source: Own elaboration from the authors

This communication style contributes to “the power game” (Mazzoleni, 2017: 142) based on the articulation of hegemony and counter-hegemony relation (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001; Laclau, 2005). Hegemony is a type of relationship or a political form, with an open and incomplete nature constituted by the antagonisms articulations and frontiers (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001). The constant redefinition of the hegemony is based on democratic struggles and the difficulty to articulate the system of relations (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001). In this context, political communication articulates this system of relations. Two differentiated groups of parties play the power of relationship in political communication. On the one hand, the traditional parties which are considered the historical block (Gramsci, 2009) and the hegemonic formation (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001). On the other hand, the minor or new parties are the counter-hegemonic (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001).

2.1.5. Populist leadership model

The new political parties we are referring to –*Barcelona en Comú* in Barcelona, and *Podemos* in Spain– could not be as we know them without their leaders (Feenstra *et al.*, 2017). The charismatic leader is one of the bases of populism as a political

communication style (McDonnell, 2015). The populist parties and movements –on the left, on the right, old and new– have in common the charismatic leaders who represent the ‘common people’ through in an unmediated and direct kind of fashion (Tudoroiu, 2014). The leader of *Barcelona en Comú* Ada Colau, activists and spokeswomen of the Spanish social movement *Platform of Mortgage Victims (PAH)*, is a clear example of a charismatic leader because she “largely came to fame for drawing attention to the shortcomings of the established political elite and of the very democratic process itself” (Feenstra *et al.*, 2017: 94). According to Alexandros Kiouпкиolis and Francisco Seoane, the Spanish political party *Podemos* “has manufactured a ‘machine’ of political communication which ‘hacks’ public opinion and reconstruct it [...]” and the leader Pablo Iglesias acts as a leader, as a communicator and centralised the public image of the party (2018: 6).

Takis Pappas, based on Max Weber’s (1978) work, understands the charisma of the populist politics as “the power of leaders (mostly of religious movements) to defy prevailing worldviews, forging instead new collective identities [...]” (2016: 2). These new identities are constructed through the media (Bracciate and Martella, 2017). Two of the characteristics of these charismatic leaders are, on one hand, the ‘personalism’ because they usually are the founders of the party and, on the other, the ‘radicalism’ to break with the establishment (Weber, 1978; Pappas, 2016) or hegemonic parties/policies (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001; Laclau, 2005). The charisma should be understood as a model of exemplarity according to the actions and values (Feenstra *et al.*, 2017). Thus, “the personalised or charismatic leadership runs counter to representative politics because it leads to a reversal of the relationship between the masses and their representatives” (Méry and Surel, 2002: 73).

Assuming this political style, its leaders carry out a communicative performance with a focus on the ‘form’ and the ‘content’ (Bracciale and Martella, 2017). Although populism style is a charismatic model of ties and a discourse of the

popular will (Hawkins, 2003), a charismatic or populist leader uses indicators or labels to obtain media visibility (Cammaerts, 2015). These indicators are the emotionalisation, the informality, instrumental actualisation (events), adverse affects, simplification, storytelling, taboo broker and vulgarism (Bracciale and Martella, 2017). As the author set, in this populist leadership style the leader “influence their foreign policy actions” and its “serve their domestic agenda of mass mobilization and power consolidation” (Tudoroiu, 2014: 164).

2.2. Articulating the Hegemony: mainstream and new political forces

The political party, as a complex social organism is an expression of the collective, which is supported and partially recognised in action (Gramsci, 2009). According to this definition and the characteristics of the Spanish political system (Colomer 2004), *Barcelona en Comú*, and other new parties like *Podemos*, that have appeared in recent years in Spain are within this conceptual framework. This is due to their initial motivation is disrupt in the Spanish political system and show its limitations and shortcomings (Feenstra *et al.*, 2017). *Podemos* and the other local and regional movement parties as *Barcelona en Comú* (della Porta *et al.* 2017) are based on populist communication strategies (López-García, 2017), according to Antonio Gramsci's (2009) and Ernesto Laclau's (2005) work. In European populist atmosphere, the Spanish left-wing populism is unusual in a context where right-wing populism is dominant (Casero-Ripollés, Sintés-Olivella and Franch, 2017). They take part in the framework of left populism, more common in Southern than in Western European countries (Muis and Immerzeel, 2016) as a ‘counter democracy’ parties (Rosanvallon, 2008). In that sense,

Populism is forced to articulate a sustained position through the competition of representative politics, but the driving force behind it is bit necessarily a sustained one, but is, at root (Méry and Surel, 2002: 72).

The war of position between political parties in a democratic system is related to two positions or kinds of political parties: the hegemonic parties and the counter-hegemonic parties (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001; Laclau, 2005). Hegemony is a relation or a political form susceptible to change, that is continually being redefined because of its open and incomplete nature that is constituted by the antagonisms articulations and frontiers (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001). According to Antonio Gramsci, hegemony “connected to an implicit in practical life or ordinary people” (2009: 330). The articulation of the hegemony is between the historical bloc or hegemonic formations (Gramsci, 2009), like traditional Catalan and Spanish parties and the counter-hegemonic parties (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001), such as new parties like our case study.

The underlined hypothesis is that this trench-war or articulation (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001; Laclau, 2005; Gramsci, 2009) takes place in (populist) communication. It is a mediated communication conflict in a symbolic place between invisibility (counter-hegemony) and visibility (hegemonic) (Cammaerts, 2015). The articulation of the hegemony (Méry and Surel, basing on Leca, 1996), in short, is

an intrinsic tension between the power of the people on the one hand (the popular/the populist will), and, on the other hand, the constitutionalist provisions which protect the citizen from the government, and the arbitrary exercise of power, even when this power derives from the political majority responsible to government (2002: 7).

There are two kinds of political logic in the articulation of the hegemony based on the hegemonic or mainstream parties or the counter-hegemonic new or alternative parties (Robinson and Tormey, 2005, 2007; Flesher and Montañés, 2014, Freenstra *et al.*, 2017). The vertical logic

assumes that there is a ‘centre’ of power that can be occupied and, once taken over, gives power holders the opportunity to mould society according to the

principles they defend. Intrinsic to this perspective is the notion that there is no other way ‘outside’ representation and representative politics” (Feenstra *et al.*, 2017: 8).

By contrast, the horizontal logic introduces alternative strategies as civil disobedience and promotes the self-organisation in line to bring social transformations rejecting the central institutions (Feenstra *et al.*, 2017). The same authors affirm that the horizontal logic

approaches advocate creating alternative spaces where people can interact to mutual benefit. Defenders of horizontal logics seek to undermine the hegemony of existing political forces while stimulating alternative social, economic and political relationships (2017: 8).

According to Chantal Mouffe (Carpentier and Cammaerts, 2006), social is the result of a hegemonic articulation, and it implies that there is always ‘an outside’. Thus, in line with Bart Cammaerts and Nico Carpentier, “dominance and hegemony are again being reproduced, also on the Internet, but there are also counter-hegemonic spaces at the same time” (Carpentier and Cammaerts, 2006: 6). Therefore, although online political communication research was initially positive about the democratic possibilities “research has continuously demonstrated that these more mundane and less demanding usage patterns are by far the most prevalent” (Bechmann and Lomborg, 2013: 6) and that, to a large extent, social media reproduces broadcasting and mass media logic (Graham, Broersma, Hazelhoff and van’t Haar, 2013). Cammaerts affirms that

it is, however, also too simplistic to assume that those who are in the receiving end of this post-hegemonic war of position between invisibility and visibility as outline above are somehow drugged by media spectacles to such an extent that they cannot see their own ‘real’ material interests anymore or only consider self-interest rather than cultivate a sense of community and collectivity (2015: 534).

In the same line, although Twitter can be an instrument for political parties to share information and connect to the people (Jackson and Lilleker, 2011), their message is not out of the control of traditional communication. On that account, Bart Cammaerts (2015) reaffirms the difficulty to the ‘counter-hegemonic’ to compete or operate in the war of positions because of the mass media representation, but they can play through self-mediations and networked technologies of communication.

Following this, we could be to differentiate two models according to the liberal representative of democracy and Marxism/Neo- and Post- Marxism approach (see *2.1.1 Populism as an Ideology*) (Cammaerts, 2015). On the one hand, the liberal model represents the interests of a small part of the society versus the many; protect capitalism and property rights, and its crisis could be understood because of the gap between ordinary citizens and the political elite (Norris, 2011; Cammaerts, 2015). On the other, the Marxist ideology that legitimates the unequal relationship between dominant and subordinate classes (Cammaerts, 2015). To articulate the hegemony, to build ‘the people’ in the struggle of position between hegemonic/counter-hegemonic or liberal/post-Marxist model, the contingency relation is necessary (López-Alós, 2017). Brecht De Smet (2016) perceives struggle as a collective learning process that generates a social body based on new ideas and practices.

The populist communication style would be useful in order to define which parties are hegemonic because ‘the people’, or ‘the commons’ in the case of *BComú*, are opened and empty concepts (López-Alós, 2017). The contingent relation between antagonisms is based on a confrontation where hegemony emerges in a field crisscrossed by antagonisms and equivalences (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). This political style relies on upon debate around the ‘politics of simplicity’, the popular sovereignty, the clarity, directness and simplicity (Méry and Surel, 2002). However, in this debate, the duality visibility/invisibility is relevant because the

“role of liberal mainstream media in perpetuating the post-hegemonic status and the strategies of visibility of the counter-hegemonic to articulate the communication struggle” (Cammaerts, 2015: 527).

2.3. Hypermediated electoral campaign: mediatisation and social media logic

2.3.1. Political and electoral communication: Terms and evolution

The advances in political communication are a consequence of the quick development of mass media and the emergence of ‘new media’ because of, in some cases, the first one did not adapt themselves to the new political communication possibilities, and they have been sifted by the social media (Maarek, 1997). However, media development is not a complete change of political communication, but it is an adjustment to the communication arena that the Internet provides. Political communication on the Internet is adjusted to preexisting patterns on a different communication channel, although the application of previous theoretical approaches to analyses online communication is deficient (Krueger, 2006). Some forms of online political participation and communication have their homologous in the offline space; nevertheless, the Internet has applied the spectrum of channels and the purpose of each of them (Anduiza, Cantijoch, Colombo, Gallego and Salcedo, 2010). Several years ago, Salomé Berrocal, Eva Campos-Domínguez and Marta Redondo (2012) remarked the need to know the details of the application of new tools for the transmission and collection of political information.

To go in deep to the innovations and synergies, hereunder a brief historical approach to political communication evolution is presented. Philippe Maarek (1997) places the origin of political marketing in the second half of the twentieth

century in the United States even though kings and princes already made use of these strategies based on a unidirectional co-communication. Gianpietro Mazzoleni (2010) assures that it is not until this century when we can speak of political communication in the full sense due to the appearance of the mass media. In this sense, television is the primary source of political information during the electoral campaign (García-Beaudoux and D'Adamo, 2006).

According to the definitions of the authors collected by María José Canel (2006), in her book *Comunicación Política. Una guía para su estudio y práctica*, political communication is the communicative activity whose present, and future consequences have an impact on the functioning of the political system (Fagen, 1966); the role played by communication in the political process (Chaffee, 1975) or the exchange of messages and different symbols that influence and are conditioned by the political system (Meadow, 1980). Gianpietro Mazzoleni (2010) defines political communication as the exchange of relevant content and public interest between the political system the media system and citizens. Also, political communication is understood as a set of strategies and techniques used by politicians to seduce and manipulate (Gerstlé, 1992). In Annette M. Holba's words,

Political communication is critical to the ongoing process of building society and is considered an activator that permits two-way communication and participation among members of a society and between different societies (Lilleker, 2006) Political communication also involves persuading others to your own perspective by shaping the ethos of people and circumstances, negotiating differences, and seeking common ground (2010: 23).

Initially, political communication was conceived as the communicative process between the government and the electorate; then, the exchange of discourses between the government and the opposition and the role of the media as intermediaries with society; now, political communication is understood as the communicative process in political life in general terms (Baena, 2001). The main three features of political communication are the informative-regulatory function,

the answer-strategic function and the legitimating-dialogic function (Vázquez, 1998).

In essence, the evolution and integration of the market in societies' everyday life are also translated in a market sense of political communication and, as a consequence, political marketing during an electoral campaign is one of the most useful tools for political activity (Baena, 2001). Political marketing takes place in the post-modern stage of political-electoral communication (Norris, 2000; Plasser and Plasser, 2002). The design of proper communication strategies is one of the main phases of political marketing. Political marketing is the definition of objectives and political programs' to influence citizens' behaviour during the electoral campaign (Maarek, 1997). Thus, during the electoral campaign, authors briefly the political marketing such as the base of the election campaign because it is formed by different strategies to better know the electoral context in order to produce the campaign (communication) strategies (Kotler and Kotler, 1999).

Also, political marketing is understood as a kind of work philosophy which contains, among others, electoral marketing (Barrientos, 2006). For electoral-political marketing, previous knowledge of the characteristics of the media, to adjust the political message to the different ways of communication is needed (Maarek, 1997). Electoral marketing, in this case of study, is based on the application of several communications strategies to get visibility of the candidate and the political message, to persuade the electorate. Political marketing is "the process by which the political candidates and ideas are directed at the voters in order to satisfy their political needs and thus gain their support for the candidate and ideas in question" (Shama, 1975: 793). Nonetheless, the assimilation of the candidate as a product is not entirely true because the politics and government is a service with unique characteristics (Cwalina, Falkowski and Newman, 2011). According to these authors,

political marketing is mainly concerned with people and their relationship with each other, whereas mainstream marketing is often concerned with the people's interaction with products. Therefore, attitude and impression formation in reference to political candidates also has a number of characteristics distinguishing it from consumer brand (2011: 8).

The United States has been the leader country in the development of the communicative strategies of the political, due to the early appearance of the mass media first (60s of the twentieth century) –that supposed a turning point in the electoral campaigns, also on Internet–, and promoting its development in Europe (Turiera-Puigbò, 2009). These changes are understood as a consequence both of the process of Americanisation and the Modernisation of political communication (Xifra, 2011). In the words of the author,

the hypothesis that we wish to put to the reader is that of the new modalities of electoral campaigning that lie within a general framework of changes, which can hardly be grouped around a single cause and which affect society overall and its different subsystems—we are witnessing a modernization of electoral campaigns instead of an Americanization or globalization (2011: 671).

Modernisation and Americanisation translated into the personalisation of parties in a candidate, and the spectacularisation of politics is also part of Spanish and Catalan parties (Xifra, 2011). According to Gerald Sussman and Lawrence Galizio:

Professionalization facilitates more direct influence of political action committees and direct contributions from corporate interests, eliminates much of the guesswork and horsetrading in politics, and rationalizes the best electoral system that money can buy. Those without deep pockets, corporate support, and the favourable attention of the mass media, however, are excluded from serious political consideration. This is not as entrenched a system elsewhere as it is in the United States. But it increasingly is becoming the European reality, and foreign consultants are learning from their American peers the modern means of «manufacturing consent» (Sussman and Galizio, 2003: 323).

During the electoral campaign, television has contributed that the image takes precedence over the political program, the faces over the ideas (Paniagua, 2004). It generated the simplification of the message, the staging, the personalisation, the slogan or even the permanent campaign and, in short, the strategies of more traditional electoral communication such as the posting of posters to be visible to media coverage (Paniagua, 2004). Gianpietro Mazzoleni (2010) focused on three variables of political communication and electoral campaigns: the secularisation of politics, the multiplication of media resources and professionalisation. Secularisation is the gradual loss of relevance of the ideologies and cultural aspects in favour of commercial sense; the multiplication is the diversity of communication channels (such as social media); and professionalisation refers to the design of communication strategies and the creation of political communities (Mazzoleni, 2010).

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, society is moving from *teledemocracy* to *cyberdemocracy*, which has led a process of change in the environment and political activity –such as new political parties and social movements and organisations– of which only we know its first manifestations (Del Rey, 2007). As Davis (1999, *apud* Rodríguez, 2011) describes, the Internet is a full part of North American political communication since the 90s of the twentieth century, and politicians attempt to be or participate in each new advance. Some of these manifestations are collected by Teresa Turiera-Puigbò (2009) in her political communication chronology where she includes the first communication strategies on the Internet, such as the first campaign through emails in 1992 of Brown in the Democratic primary of California. Nonetheless, in 1952, Eisenhower carried out direct mail marketing to know in which topics his campaign should focus on (Maarek, 1997) and in 1998 the Ventura –candidate from Minnesota– put into practice the first interactive website (Turiera-Puigbò, 2009). Although, some years ago, José Luis Dader (2003) affirmed that the messages through e-mail were not

answered, so their possibilities were not fully used, and this was translated into the discouragement of the citizenship's expectations.

The qualitative leap of electoral campaigns took place at the beginning of the twenty-first century (Turiera-Puigbò, 2009) with Barack Obama's electoral campaign. Following the example of the online strategies that the president of the United States Barack Obama carried out during the pre-campaign and the electoral battle to the presidential elections of 2008 and 2012, Spanish politicians try to connect with their supporters and target audience through this new form of propaganda action (Cárcar, 2015). However, the 'new' communicative paradigm mediated by the Internet does not exclude the characteristics of traditional political communication. It is not about the displacement of old media by new media; it is but about media convergence –Chadwick's (2013) hybrid media system– in the field of political communication (Espino-Sánchez, 2014). One example is the phenomenon of personalisation of the policy resulting from Americanization that, according to Jesús E. Cárcar (2015), extends to the Internet through the interaction although political communication can no longer continue to rely exclusively on the quality of the message (David, 2012).

Taking into account the local level of our case study, and the study research based on council electoral campaign, social media do not replace the communication process or the information exchange that a reduce geographical space offers. Local electoral campaigns –and by extension local political communication– allows politicians to have more direct contact with a large part of the citizens who make up the potential public of communication strategies (Maarek, 1997). Regardless of the channel used in this communication, the quality of the message that is transmitted is essential and, just as in traditional political communication, the segmentation of the public must be carried out and a coherent message must be produced with the consolidated opinion leaders, in this case on digital networks (David, 2012).

The primary objective of political work lies in achieving that the message is perceived as a reality through proper communication strategies based on the words' selection and the argumentation regardless of the channel or tool (Del Rey, 2007). From Peter Dahlgren's (2005) point of view, the communication on the Internet has five forms related to the interaction and, for this work, is especially relevant to the structure based on digital networks. In this sense, digital networks are not exclusively intended for political communication, but much of its content is –on one way or another– in this subject (Dahlgren, 2005). Digital networks, particularly Twitter and Facebook, have an essential place in online political communication strategies; because of they favour the political action and the creation of consensus among citizens and politicians, and also it provides a space for mobilisation as a vehicle towards a more direct democracy (David, 2012).

In traditional political communication, political parties' messages are mainly disseminated by mass media –in a unidirectional way of communication– where the public is a passive actor (Castells, 2003). The use of digital networks has given rise to more multidirectional communication among the parties, politicians, citizens, media, and journalist (Rodríguez, 2011). However, the expectations generated by social media are not always realistic (Fernández, 2012). On social networks, there is a low level of direct contact, visibility, 'real' debate and horizontal communication (Túñez and Sixto, 2011). The digital networks are indispensable for the public and media agenda's dynamics (Fernández, 2012). For instance, the analysis of *#hashtags* and trending topics (*TT*) in a specific context and time allow the researchers to make inferences about political issues and public interests (Fernández, 2012).

Once the changes and the evolution of political communication have been presented, in this section we focus on the electoral campaign communication. This research field is one of the most common areas of study in communication research (Dader, 2008) based on mass media and social media.

The *General Electoral System Spanish Organic Act (Ley Orgánica de Régimen Electoral General, LOREG)*, in its Article 50.4, defines the electoral campaign as the set of legal activities that political parties, federations, parties' coalitions and candidates carry out to obtain citizens votes. An electoral campaign is a period when the candidate introduces himself, the ideas and he/she explains the way he/she is going to represent the general will (Mazzoleni, 2010). During this time, electoral communication comprehends the entire political communication field in a symbolic moment (Báez, 2011).

Anne Johnston (1990) pointed out that the electoral communication as one of the mains subjects of study related to political communication. Notably, she highlighted the attention of researchers to media coverage of electoral processes, advertisings, and television debates. Electoral communication is the part of the political communication whose primary objective is the persuasion, in other words, the way to convince through psychological and informative sources to obtain votes and reach the power (Canel, 2006). Political marketing strategies consist of the identification of the objectives or purposes of political groups and the scheme through which this purpose will be achieved (Nielsen, 2012). For Mazzoleni (2010), the link between communication and politics is so strong that the electoral campaign has developed to extend that media have done so.

From the citizens' point of view, the electoral campaign offers information about the candidates and political programmes, and from the partisan point of view the campaign allows the political parties to make known their candidates, explain themselves and take advantages of the media coverage (Pallarés and Rodón, 2014). However, there are different types of electoral campaigns. Each city or municipality has its context and characteristic, and the relationship with the electorate is diverse (Báez, 2011). The council electoral campaign has greater flexibility and diversity of communication channels, both traditional and

postmodern, mass media, interpersonal and related to new technologies (Dader, 2008).

According to Pippa Norris' (2000) classification, there are three stages in the evolution of electoral campaigns: the pre-modern (1850-1950), the modern (1960-1980) and the postmodern (1990-present) as *Table 7* shows.

The last one, according to the author, is based on the professionalisation of political communication and based on the use of new technologies and social media. For Mazzoleni (2010), this classification shows that political campaigns are phenomena that are continually changing. The characteristics of electoral campaigns (Norris, 2000) and the different stages of this communication varies insofar the media channel do. Some authors affirm that a new phase or sub-stage in the postmodern era of electoral communication appeared as a consequence of the diversity of channels, primarily on the Internet (Lilleker, Tenscher and Štětka, 2015). In other words, the hypermedia campaign (Römmele and Scheneidmesser, 2016) is based on the hybrid media system (Chadwick, 2013) (see the following sections).

Table 7. Electoral campaign stages

Stage	Pre-modern	Modern	Post-modern
Political communication System	Campaign based on the parties	Campaign based on the television	Campaign based on multiple channels and media
Main political communication style	Partisan messages	Sound-bites image construction	Fragmentation
Media	party press, posters, newspaper advertising, radio programs	Television information programs (news, special programs)	Local or niche televisions, traditional mail and email
Main advertising media	Propaganda printed, posters, leaflets, rallies	TV ads, large posters	Ads aimed at convincing, telemarketing, Internet
Campaign direction	Party leadership	Internal management, advisors and external experts	Specialized units and specialized advisers
Dominant paradigm	Political party logic	Mass media logic	Marketing logic
Duration	Brief and <i>ad hoc</i> campaign	Long campaign	Permanent campaign
Election spending	Controlling	Increasing	Very high
Electorate	Stable behaviour related to social differences	Erosion of partisan fidelity/identity and growing volatility	Voting based on issues and volatility

Source: Plasser and Plasser (2002: 6).

2.3.2. Mediatisation of political communication

According to the authors (Aalberg, Esser, Reinemann, Strömbäck and De Vreese, 2017; Block and Negrine, 2017), populism can be understood as a political (communication) style due to “the effect of the mediatisation of the political equating to a simplification of political discourse, it’s the reduction to neat us-against-them antagonisms and sound-bite solutions” (Moffitt and Tormey, 2014:

7). Many elements have defined a populist political communication style. For instance, the construction of “the people”, the anti-elitism and “the people” against “the elite” and, among others, the “crisis” is a central point in the shape of the message (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007; Moffitt and Tormey, 2014; Rooduijn, 2014). In words of Bart Cammaerts, “the post-hegemony war of positions is approached here mainly as a mediated discursive war [...]” (2015: 534).

Besides, this kind of political communication is related to the theoretical concept of mediatisation of politics (Strömbäck, 2008; Landerer, 2013; Mazzoleni, 2017). Mediatisation is a “process of communicative construction of socio-cultural reality” (Couldry and Hepp, 2013: 196) through the mainstream media as a political source and the adoption of their logic by political parties and politicians (Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999). Hence, mass media are relevant because “they have gained central position in most political routines, as election campaigns” (Mazzoleni, 2008: 3048). The media have the power to influence political communication in one direction, to the other social (Feenstra *et al.*, 2017).

As Lance W. Bennett and Shanto Iyengar (2008) pointed out, media are a part of the governing political process due to its macro-oriented or institutional approach to communication and the variations in the organisation, regulation or structure of the media can be an influence to the citizens and the elites. In a mediatisation context, media have control in political life “where they play a leading role as political actors defending their own values and interest, and where they play a key role in articulating the public’s political knowledge” (Feenstra *et al.*, 2017: 68-69). Media, as a part of politics, take diverse forms (Strömbäck and Esser, 2014).

However, a review of the concept of mediatisation is necessary (Mazzoleni, 2008; Couldry and Hepp, 2017; Treré and Barranguero, 2018) due to the researchers' interest to explain how the political communication works based on this concept or theoretical approach (Strömbäck and Esser, 2014). The theoretical approach of

mediatisation argues that, for political parties' visibilities (Deacon and Stayer, 2014; Cammearts, 2015), they inevitably require to adapt to media criteria (Strömback, 2008).

This process of communication “cannot be understood without considering the larger context of a world of being integrated technologically, economically, and culturally” (Landerer, 2013: 240). In this sense, social media and mass media have some different characteristics that “makes them distinct engines of the digital public sphere where players engage in dialogical tugs-of-war in the power game” (Mazzoleni, 2017: 142). Mediatisation is not only exclusively on mainstream or mass media, but also digital media (Jensen, 2013; Treré and Barranguero, 2018).

Political parties on social networks, particularly on Twitter, can spread and manage their political programme without mass media even though the power of social media remains at social networks too (Fenton and Barassi, 2011). The mass media and social media mediatisation produce hypermedia electoral campaigns (Lilleker, Tenscher and Štětka, 2015; Feenstra *et al.*, 2017) so the mediatisation concept is essential in the articulation of hegemony or war of positions (Cammaerts, 2015). Concerning this, in electoral campaigns they “do not abandon their traditional tactics and tools; they enrich them with the new logics and possibilities of digital media” (Casero-Ripollés *et al.*, 2016: 382). For that reason, political parties have to combine old communication strategies and new tools to incorporate both media logic in a hybrid media or hypermedia campaign (Feenstra *et al.*, 2017). A clear example of the two-stages strategies for political communication is the case of *Podemos*. The ‘new’ political party used the mainstream media with their television program as *La Tuerka* and the appearance of their leaders in other programs, and also digital tools in a two-way mediatisation of politics (Feenstra *et al.*, 2017).

2.3.3. Hybrid media system: Mass media logic versus social media logic

As it has been mentioned above, the mediated process of (political) reality construction (Couldry and Hepp, 2015) takes place in mass and social media (or in a hybrid media system) where boundaries between them are blurred. This process of political reality construction also could be a so-called 'political information cycle' (Chadwick, 2010). The mainstream or mass media and the digital media try to influence the social representation of politics, and both can interact and compete, generating the hybrid media system (Chadwick, 2013).

The institutional (new) political parties "adopt ways of working that combine traditional mechanisms with the digital repertoires associated with social movements" (Feenstra *et al.*, 2017: 6). As a consequence of this media system, fourth or post-modern phase in the political campaign appears, the hypermedia phase (Lilleker, Tenscher and Štětka, 2015). Besides, the hybridity maintains in the political groups' organisation. In other words, the organisational hybridity (Chadwick, 2005, 2007) "exhibit quite diverse ways of organizing and mobilizing, mashing together online and offline efforts [...]" (Chadwick, 2007: 286). The fourth phase of political-electoral communication is based on a "mediatized campaign to prominence stems from the citizen-media nexus, producing a reaction from political actors to the changes in production and consumption of media" (Römmele and von Scheneidmesser, 2016: 428).

The hypermedia campaign (*Table 8*) is based on the mediatised campaign (Römmele and Scheneidmesser, 2016) and the use by political parties both social and mass media (Lilleker, Tenscher and Štětka, 2015). In this sense, there are two trends in the parties' organisation and communication hybridisation. On the one hand, the parties which adapt themselves to the hybridisation, and on the other hand, the genuinely hybrid organisations (Chadwick, 2007). As Andrea Römmele

and Dirk von Scheneidmesser pointed out, in the hypermedia campaign “the distinction between online and offline aspects has been subsumed by the large-scale permeation of an all-hands-on-deck approach to the total campaign” (2016: 428).

Table 8. Election campaigning 4th phase: the mediatised campaign

Arena of change/ Evolution	Change in	Point of departure	Identifying Characteristic of Mediatized Campaigns
Citizens	Role of citizens	Duty-Based Citizen	Enable Citizen
Media	Politics Mediation Communication mediums	Local Broadcast/Narrowcast Limited channels of widespread use	Personal Hybrid Media System Diverse channels with high usership
Politics	Governance Knowledgebase Political style Political style campaign	Governing for ends Qualitative data, available quantitative data plus surveys Party/Ideology based Centralized fewer tasks	Governing as a means Integrated, quantitative campaign specific databases Person based Centralized, more complex spectrum of tasks

Source: Römmele and Scheneidmesser (2016: 429).

The mediatised or hypermedia campaign comes off in a multimodal system of many mediums where the politicians/political parties can interact with voters in a personal connection (Römmele and Scheneidmesser, 2016). In this hybrid media system (Chadwick, 2013), despite the mainstream media play the central role in political and electoral communication, they are opening the agenda to new civil society actors (Feenstra *et al.*, 2017). The transformation of the political sphere via technopolitics and social media began and refiguring the political/media spaces, especially for the new Spanish parties after the *Indignados* movement (Treré and Barranguero, 2018). The communication is central to the political action and in the hybrid campaigns stress the ‘two models’ or hypermedia communication of

Podemos in mainstream media (television) and social networks (Feenstra *et al.*, 2017).

As some authors affirm, there is not only one media logic or channel in the hypermedia political campaign due to political actors use the most appropriated medium (online and offline) for a solid strategy (Römmele and Scheneidmesser, 2016). Nonetheless, in Ulrike Klinger and Jakob Svensson affirm,

the theory of media logics is different from mediatization in that the theory of mediatization refers to a general tendency in which almost all parts of the society are affected by the media, whereas, the theory of logics attempts to uncover to what in media platforms, their organization and practices, the institutions of society are adapting (2015: 1243).

Media logic is defined as a process, particular rules, codes or format for drawing up a message to be disseminated by a specific medium (Altheide, 2004). So, to get the political message out, politicians and political parties need to adapt their strategies to media criteria or media logic for favourable new coverage (Feenstra *et al.*, 2017).

The academic research on the new/social media in electoral campaigns has been grown exponentially last years (Lilleker, Tenscher and Štětka, 2015). The appearance of these alternative media understood in this research as a proper tool to articulate the hegemony (García-Carretero and Pérez-Altale, 2017), does not mean that the new media do not have some restrictions or limitations such as the media logic. Like mass media, social media access and content are in a limited number of actors (Cammaerts, 2015).

Secondly, we refer to the cyber optimistic approach or the positive expectations related to the technopolitics as “the tactical and strategic use of digital tools for organization, communication, and collective action” (Toret, 2013: 20)¹¹. Although

¹¹ Translated into English. Original quote: “uso táctico y estratégico de las herramientas digitales para la organización, comunicación y acción colectiva” (Toret, 2013: 20).

it is one of the central points of our research, the so-called alternative or new media are also social spaces where “everyday space in the digital era is not just mediated but ‘networked’, that is, its action-possibilities are structured by hierarchical and differentiating work of informational networks” (Couldry and Hepp, 2017: 99). The social media also have their logic. The network media logic (*Table 9*), apart from the differences among the media, politicians need to suit the message as well (Klinger and Svensson, 2015). The fact that the political message’s articulation is based on the kind of media makes us consider the Marshall McLuhan’s (1987) asserts ‘the medium is the message’.

Table 9. Mass media logic and network media logic

	Mass media logic	Network media logic
Production	Expensive information selection and content generation by professional journalists according to news values	Inexpensive information selection and content generation by (lay) users according to their individual preferences and attention maximizing
Distribution		Content selected by expert/professional gatekeepers – based on established news values distributed to a paying fixed audience of subscribers
Media usage		Location bound mass audience with limited selective exposure oriented towards passive consumption of information, based on professional selection.

Source: Klinger and Svensson (2015: 1246).

2.3.4. Electoral campaign: Twitter as a communication tool

According to Estephanie E. Bor (2014), there are two ways to understand political, and for instance, electoral communication in the digital network. On the one hand, the communication related to mass messages diffusion and the mere presence in

social media, and on the other hand, the communication based on the exchange, participation, and feedback (Bor, 2014). In this line, scholars have pointed out the relevance of Twitter as a fluid and opinionated channel of communication between politicians and the audience or citizens, but the power of mass media remains at digital network too (Lawrence, Molyneux, Coddington and Holton, 2014). The expectations of bidirectional communication in social media are not always completed (Fernández, 2012) and also they are not a substitute for social or political practices and other ways of political communication (Couldry, 2015). Also, it is important to note that this study is about political parties that used digital networks as the principal channel of communication when they appeared—for the counter-hegemony— although it “is very different to conclude that the natural balance of politics overall has been changed by these new communication tools” (Couldry and Hepp, 2017: 209).

Manuel Castells (2003) explained the evolution of the concept of ‘mass communication’ to ‘mass self-communication’, a new communicative process in which the messages are from many to many, and where senders/receivers are the creative audiences that manage its messages. Victor Sampedro (2005) referred to how the demonstrations of 13-14 of March 2004 –in which the Spanish society demanded the truth of terrorist attack in Madrid, where carry out through SMS (*Figure 4*). Although the use of this tool was for citizens’ demonstration, after that the political parties incorporate this way to mobilisation for their organisations (Sampedro, Sánchez-Duarte and Polleti, 2013).

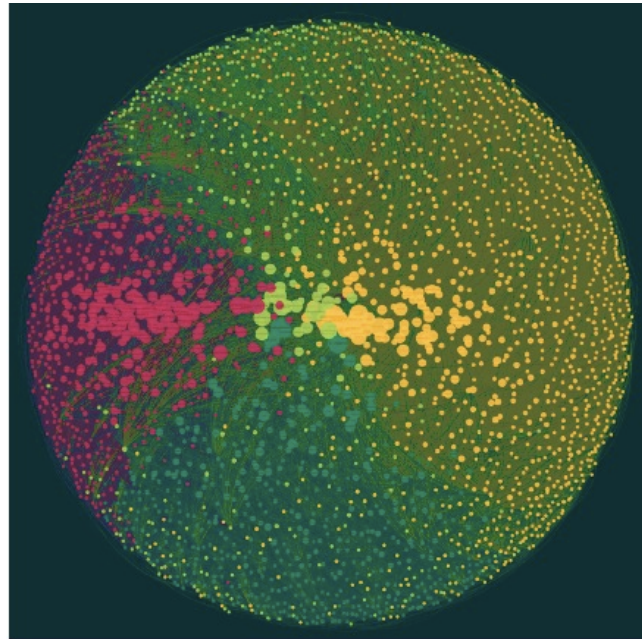
Figure 4. Call for demonstration of March 14 through SMS

- "¿Aznar de rositas? ¿Lo llaman jornada de reflexión y Urdaci trabajando? Hoy 13M, a las 18h. Sede PP, C/ Génova 13. Sin partidos. Silencio por la verdad. ¡Pásalo!".
- A las 6. Sede PP, calle Génova, sin partidos. Silencio por la verdad
- Hoy a las 6, en Génova, exigiendo información veraz. Pásalo
- ¿Jornada de reflexión? Entonces, ¿qué hace Urdaci?
- Conéctate a *bloomberg.com* y *new york times*, todo el mundo escandalizado x la manipulación y mentiras del pp. Pásalo
- Estáis saliendo en Euronews y en la CNN. En TVE: Cine de Barrio
- En la jornada de reflexión, Rajoy ha salido hablando en la primera
- Contra su manipulación, nos estamos organizando a las 18:30h. en la Plaza Catalunya.
- Se está convocando una cacerolada para hoy (sábado 13 de marzo) por la noche a las 22h. Contra el terrorismo, contra la guerra, por la libertad. Se ruega la mayor difusión posible, gracias.
- A las 12 en Sol. Pásalo.
Fuentes: Indymedia, ediciones electrónicas de algunos diarios, especialmente *El País* y de *El Mundo*; literatura secundaria, i.e. VV.AA (2004); y observación participante.

Source: Sampedro (2005: 258).

Another example of the capitalisation of new tools from political parties after social movements or civil protest was the use of Twitter by the *15M* movement (Figure 5). On May 15, 2011, when social movements have already started in Africa and Europe, the *Indignados* movement internalised the ‘mass self-communication’ both for the call for demonstrations and organisation, deliberation and decision making (Castells, 2012). As during the first social movements, the mass media were relevant because they spread the message (Markoff, 1996), during *Indignados* movement –among other international examples– the Internet was the tool to voice the *15M* claims (Masip, 2015; Linares, 2017). After this use by social movements, Spanish political parties incorporate the digital tools for communication and internal organisation. The social movement generated two different models of online communication which had influenced the mass media issues, one for the activist and another for new political parties such as *Podemos* (Feenstra *et al.*, 2017) and by extension for *Barcelona en Comú*.

Figure 5. The 499 most influential Twitter accounts in *#theSpanishrevolution*



Source: Lucas (2012).

In the integration of social networks as a political communication tool (Jungherr, 2016), Barack Obama's 2008 campaign is underscored (Hendricks and Denton, 2010; Nielsen, 2012) as it was mentioned earlier. Nevertheless, the United States should not be understood as a typical case because of the distance and differences between parties and the degree of sophistication (Vaccari, 2013). That said, cross-national comparisons of the use of Twitter during electoral campaigns are useful for understanding that tweeting behaviour depends on the political and media conditions of each country (Graham, Jackson and Broersma, 2014). Despite of the growing research on electoral or political communication and Twitter (Conway, Kenski and Wang, 2015; Larsson and Ihlen, 2015; Jungherr, Scheen and Jügens, 2016; Graham, Jackson and Broersma, 2018), in this section, we mainly focus on the works based on the Spanish political and media system and the use of digital networks as an electoral communication tool.

The LOREG¹² Spanish Act regulates the public service media's coverage of the electoral campaign according to the results of the previous election on State media. Nevertheless, the regulation of the content plurality may vary in electoral information and electoral propaganda in the case of private media companies, which have to which must provide information under the principles of pluralism and equality. According to the LOREG regulation of electoral information during the campaign,

Respect for political and social pluralism, as well as the informational neutrality of publicly-owned media during an election period, shall be guaranteed by the organization of said media and their control as provided for in the Laws. The decisions of the administrative bodies of the aforementioned media during the aforementioned electoral period may be appealed to the competent Junta Electoral in accordance with the provisions of the preceding article [art. 65] and in accordance with the procedure established by the Junta Electoral Central¹³

The propaganda –and also information– media coverage is regulated by the *Junta Electoral Central* (JEC), and consequently, there are differences among parties' media coverage according to the so-called 'electoral blocs' (Almirón, Stantcovsky and Capurro, 2010). Thus, in Catalonia political context, "major national and regionalist/nationalist parties have greater coverage in the traditional media than minor/news parties" (Aragón *et al.*, 2013: 184). Therefore, considering that television is the main political communication mass media in Spain (Lilleker and Vedel, 2013; Sampedro, Sánchez-Duarte and Campos, 2014) and the counter-hegemonic have fewer mass media coverage, social media can thus be understood as a channel to articulate the hegemonic by these new political parties. The mediatisation theory states the mass media, particularly television, is the primary communication channel for the citizens, in political framework too (Couldry and Hepp, 2013; Hjarvard, 2013). Despite this, mass media and social media can coexist (McNair, 2006; Chadwick, 2013; Casero-Ripollés, Feenstra and Torney, 2016).

¹² Ley Organica de Régimen Electoral (LOREG)/Organic Act of Electoral Regime

¹³ Translated from Spanish into English

Recent studies have explored the use of Twitter as a political communication tool in regards to the Spanish electoral context at different levels. For example, the works based on Spanish election (Sampedro, 2011; Aragón *et al.*, 2013; Zugasti and Sabés, 2015; Alonso-Muñoz, Marcos-García and Casero-Ripollés, 2016; López-García, 2016; Campos-Domínguez and Calvo, 2017), regional election (Pérez and Nicasio, 2015; López-García, Cano and Argilés, 2016; Marín and Díaz, 2016). As in our case study, there is research based on council election (Carratalá and Galán, 2016; Quevedo, Portalés-Oliva and Berrocal, 2016). Moreover, among others, investigations focus on the use of Twitter during critical political moments in Spain (Marcos-García, Alonso-Muñoz and Casero-Ripollés, 2016). Also, some studies have explored the purpose of this social network in other Southern Europe countries like Greece (Poulakidakos and Veneti, 2016) or Italy (Auriemma *et al.*, 2015).

The diversity of the approaches to studying Twitter as an electoral communication tool forces us to think about the necessity to study several levels in this field. For that reason, we consider applying three different methodologies to the same data. That is the tweets disseminated by the electoral coalition *Barcelona en Comú* during 2015 electoral campaign. In this sense, the use of Social Network Analysis, content and SEO analysis, and semi-structured interviews allow us to go in depth to different and similar Twitter communication strategies through different approaches.

CHAPTER III

Methodological Approach

Chapter III. Methodological approach

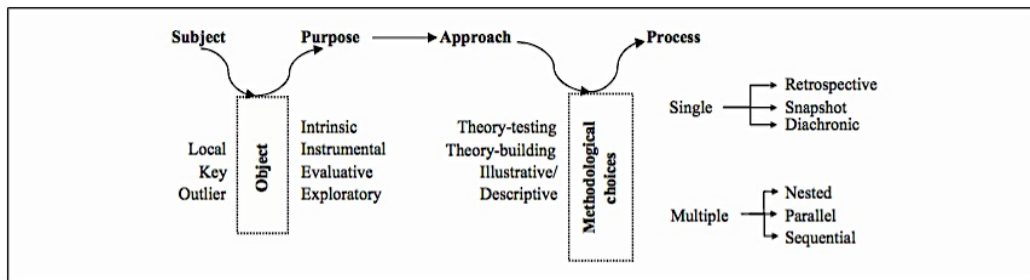
3.1. The case study and methods' triangulation

According to Robert Yin (2009), a case study should be a representative or typical example. This research assumes that *Barcelona en Comú* is both a representative example and a case study (Yin, 2009) of movement parties against austerity in Europe and Western World (della Porta, *et al.*, 2017). This research strategy allows us to study a program, event, activity, process, or more individuals collecting data collection in a period (Creswell, 2009). Throughout the case study, we can explore the process and effects and explain a complex phenomenon (Kohn, 1997). A case study “is an in-depth explanation from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system in “real life” context” (Simons, 2009: 21) but it is not a method (Thomas, 2011). Robert E. Stake wrote,

case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be study [...]. By whatever methods we choose to study the case. We could study it analytically or holistically, entirely by repeated measures or hermeneutically, organically or culturally, and mixed-methods [...] (2005: 443).

Likewise, it is useful to differentiate between the object of study and the case study (*Figure 6*). In this sense, a case study should be understood as a mix between, “something to be explained (an object) and something potentially to offer an explanation (the analysis of the circumstance of a subject)” (Thomas, 2011: 153).

Figure 6. A typology of case study



Source: Thomas (2011: 516).

More specifically, this research study is based on a mixed-method approach (Edwards, 2010) or methodological triangulation as a feature of the case study (Bellotti, 2015). Therefore, a quantitative-qualitative methodological approach is necessary to analyse and explore the case study, so we use method's triangulation, which is the use of different methodological approaches intending to study the same phenomenon (Mitchell, 1986). In agreement with Irati Agirreazkuenaga's work

the tendency nowadays is to adopt for a combination of the two methodological strategies, even though the level is not the same for each tool: in some cases it could happen that the quantitative tool is put above the qualitative one, [...] in others, however the dominance of the qualitative method may prevail giving priority to observations and in-depth interviews. In that respect, the author of this thesis agrees with MacKinlay (1995) [...] when he says than qualitative methods rather than quantitative ones on a level of socio-political issues and relationship because they bow to the complexity of this subjects (2012: 135).

In this dissertation, we use several methods, both quantitative and qualitative namely social network analysis (SNA), content analysis (CA), Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and in-depth semi-structured interviews (SI). The triangulation is applied to increase the preciseness of the research (Denzin, 1978; Webb, Campbell, Schwartz and Sechrest, 1966; Golafshani, 2003) and to product categories and themes of information within the convergence of multiple sources

(Creswell and Miller, 2000). Multi-methodological research is useful to combine different techniques that provide different levels of knowledge. Thus,

while quantitative studies are generally more concerned with counting occurrences, volumes, or the size of associations between entities (which require the reduction of phenomena to numerical values in order to carry out statistical analyses), a great deal of qualitative research aims to provide rich descriptive accounts of the phenomenon under investigation (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014: 7).

The quantitative approach offers patterns of regularities in a macro level of analysis, and the application of the qualitative methods shows the details according to a micro level of analysis (Bellotti, 2010). In agreement with Gemma Edwards, we consider that “SNA represents a specific opportunity to mix methods because of its dual interest in both the ‘structure’ or ‘form’ of social relations” (2010: 4-5). Moreover, we use qualitative content analysis with the aim “to supplement its procedures for mapping and measuring networks with more qualitatively sensitive forms of analysis” (Edwards and Crossley, 2009: 40). As outlined in the introduction of the dissertation, quantitative methods SNA and SEO were applied at the macro level of study and qualitative CA and in-depth SI on a micro level.

3.2. Data collection

A relevant concept related to the data, the methods and the analysis is *the analysis triangulation*. The analysis triangulation is the use of more than one method for the study of the same data (Kimchi, Polivka and Stevenson, 1991). Thus, is

whenever a researcher uses both qualitative and quantitative data in the same study, then more than two methods are needed in the analysis towards attaining data validation within the single paradigm (Hussein, 2009: 4).

In this research study, we include both types of categories in one database: quantitative (the macro level of analysis) and qualitative (the micro level of

analysis). The unit of analysis is composed by the tweets disseminated by the six parties, which formed the electoral coalition *Barcelona en Comú* during the 2015 electoral council election (*Table 10*), including the users answers to those tweets. In our case, “Twitter readily affords network data in the form of follower and followed ties, while social networking sites” and its processing through “electronic sources offer almost endless opportunities to collect and analyze network data of one kind or another” (Borgatti, Everet and Johnson, 2013: 59).

Table 10. Electoral coalition’s tweets

Unit (Tweets from)	N
@bcnencomu	570
@iniciativabcn	334
@pconstituentbcn	152
@podem_bcn	100
@euiabcn	38
@equobcn	11
@adacolau	66
@g_pisarello	22
@jaumeasens	72
@laiaortiz	51
@janetsanz	117
@3eses	317

Source: Own elaboration.

The sources of the database were *Dataminer* from *Google Chrome* and *Twitter Advanced Search*. The data were collected twice to compare the data from both sources. First, the data were gathered through *Dataminer* during May 2015 electoral campaign, day by day. Second, the data were collected during September-October 2016. After that, we process the database obtained by the two sources making a database with *File Maker Pro Advance* (*Figure 7, Figure 8*).

Figure 7. Data before processing

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1	SomComuns y 3 mÀis retwittearon Barcelona en ComÀr ð€ @bcncomu 8 de may. Som partidaris de l'elecciÀ directa dels consellers de districte i no deman											
2	LesCorts en ComÀr y 1 mÀis retwittearon Barcelona en ComÀr ð€ @bcncomu 8 de may. Cal lluitar pels drets FONAMENTALS com l'ECM aigua #BTVe15 Hem											
3	Adria A #BcnEnComÀr retwittearon Barcelona en ComÀr ð€ @bcncomu 8 de may. Cal prioritzar el transport als barris populars: com la L9 a la Zona Franca i											
4	Ciutat Vella en comÀr y 2 mÀis retwittearon Barcelona en ComÀr ð€ @bcncomu 8 de may. Cal avançar cap a un model de transport pÀblic integral i sost											
5	Laia #BCNenComÀr y 3 mÀis retwittearon Barcelona en ComÀr ð€ @bcncomu 8 de may. Cal voluntat polÀtica i tenir les prioritats clares per a l'habitatge d											
6	Cuentas Ver todos Desactivar silencio para @AdaColau Silenciar a @AdaColau Acciones de usuario Twitwear a @AdaColau Enviar un mensaje directo AÀzadir o c											
7	toret #BcnEnComÀr y 1 mÀis retwittearon Barcelona en ComÀr ð€ @bcncomu 8 de may. La nostra prioritat À es evitar els desnonaments per motius econÀ											
8	Barcelona en ComÀr ð€ @bcncomu 8 de may. Cal governar el turisme, acabant amb les males prÀctiques, redistribuint millor els beneficis i fent sostenible											
9	SarriÀ -Sgerv en ComÀr y 4 mÀis retwittearon Barcelona en ComÀr ð€ @bcncomu 8 de may. L'Ajuntament s'ha de pensar com acusaciÀ en casos greus d											
10	Barcelona en ComÀr ð€ @bcncomu 8 de may. Les desigualtats poden trencar la ciutat, @adacolau #BTVe15 pic.twitter.com/UgRBhZyQM 21:52 - 8 de may											
11	Barcelona en ComÀr ð€ @bcncomu 8 de may. Nosaltres sÀ que tenim un pla de xoc per als primers mesos de mandat https://barcelonencomu.cat/ca/pos											
12	Barcelona en ComÀr ð€ @bcncomu 8 de may. Les polÀtiques de CIU han creat una ciutat polaritzada. Consulta el mapa de la desigualtat de BCN #BTVe15 f											
13	Barcelona en ComÀr ð€ @bcncomu 8 de may. @AdaColau ð€Se nos visibiliza como la alternativa que no existÀ a un modelo que ha disparado la desigu											
14	Tarragona En ComÀr retwittearon Barcelona en ComÀr ð€ @bcncomu 8 de may. DemÀ 9M, #PrimaveraDemocrÀtica. Una trobada amb 2 persones que h											
15	Gerardo #BcnEnComÀr y 3 mÀis retwittearon Barcelona en ComÀr ð€ @bcncomu 8 de may. @AdaColau ð€Inadmissible recurs Suprem. Ens posarem al c											
16	PConstituent#NoATTIP y 1 mÀis retwittearon Barcelona en ComÀr ð€ @bcncomu 8 de may. @AdaColau "Cal una polÀtica activa de prevenciÀ de desnon											
17	Podem Barcelona y 1 mÀis retwittearon Barcelona en ComÀr ð€ @bcncomu 8 de may. Us presentem el mapa de la Barcelona que tenim, una ciutat cada co											
18	ICV BCN #BCNenComÀr retwittearon Barcelona en ComÀr ð€ @bcncomu 8 de may. Ara amb @Taula3sector amb @AdaColau i @Laiaortiz parlant de mesur											
19	Equo BCN #BcnEnComÀr y 3 mÀis retwittearon Barcelona en ComÀr ð€ @bcncomu 8 de may. Barcelona en ComÀr retwitteÀ BTVNOTÀ-CIESEns agrada la											
20	EUiÀ BCN #BcnEnComu y 2 mÀis retwittearon Barcelona en ComÀr ð€ @bcncomu 7 de may. Ja es pot dir votÀ Vota Barcelona En ComÀr! https://www.you											
21	Marcado como favorito por #HoEmmerdemTot Barcelona en ComÀr ð€ @bcncomu 7 de may. Es pot fer polÀtica d'una altra manera: amb alegria, coopera											
22	Laia #BCNenComÀr retwittearon Barcelona en ComÀr ð€ @bcncomu 7 de may. Europa necessita una ciutadania organitzada des de baix que pari els dictats											
23	toret #BcnEnComÀr y 1 mÀis retwittearon Barcelona en ComÀr ð€ @bcncomu 7 de may. @AdaColau Tenim o el model del 3% o el de la democrÀcia real i											
24	MLGB y 1 mÀis retwittearon Barcelona en ComÀr ð€ @bcncomu 7 de may. Vagi per davant el nostre compromÀs per l'escola pÀblica i el model d'immers											
25												

Source: Own elaboration.

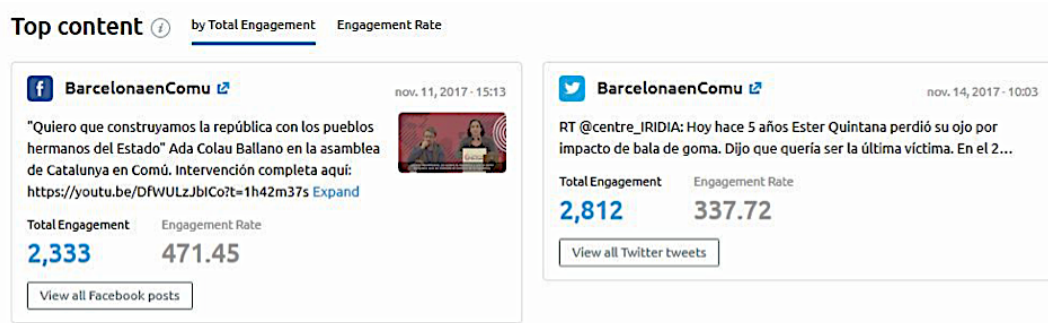
Figure 8. Data after processing

N Tweet	Data	Usuario	N Tweets	Idioma	Tweet	Macro tema	Hashtag	tema-bash	Extensi3n	Votos	Imagen
#1	08/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	Vagi per davant el	Escola pública	#LuznyemBarcelona	No	115	1	1
#3	08/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	Europa necessita	Activismo/participaci3	#LuznyemBarcelona	No	217	1	1
#7	08/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	Agraim molt el	Metacarpala	#LuznyemBarcelona	No	207	1	1
#8	08/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	Ens agrada la	Convocatoria	#BTVe15	Si	216	1	1
#12	08/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	@AdaColau "Cal	Desigualdades	#Municipal2015	No	30	1	1
#14	08/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	@AdaColau	Escola pública	No	139	1	1	
#15	08/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	@AdaColau	Políticas sociales	#Municipal2015	No	97	1	1
#16	08/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	@AdaColau "Em	Asociaci3n	No	206	1	1	
#17	08/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	DemÀ 9M,	Convocatoria	#PrimaveraDemocrÀtica	Si	218	1	1
#23	08/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	Avui 11:30 de el	Convocatoria	#regulaci3n	Si	232	1	1
#24	08/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	"La Meridiana es	Modelo de ciudad	#NavasEnComu	Si	98	1	1
#27	08/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	No et perdís el	Convocatoria	#BTVe15	Si	91	1	1
#29	08/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	Nosaltres sí que	Programa	#BTVe15	283	1	1	
#30	08/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	Les desigualtats	Desigualdades	#BTVe15	No	80	1	1
#31	08/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	L'Ajuntament s'ha	Convupsion	#BTVe15	No	208	1	1
#32	08/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	Cal governar el	modelo de ciudad	#BTVe15	228	1	1	
#33	08/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	Cal un control del	modelo de ciudad	#BTVe15	No	97	1	1
#35	08/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	Cal voluntat	Desigualdades	#BTVe15	No	83	1	1
#36	08/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	Cal avançar cap a	Transparencia/Invididat	#BTVe15	No	279	1	1
#41	08/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	Bon dia! A les	Convocatoria	#PrimaveraDemocrÀtica	Si	212	1	1
#43	09/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	Estem a	Activismo/participaci3	#PrimaveraDemocrÀtica	Si	237	1	1
#50	09/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Español	@Pablo_Iglesias	activismo/participaci3	#PrimaveraDemocrÀtica	No	213	1	1
#51	09/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Español	@Pablo_Iglesias	Convupsion	#PrimaveraDemocrÀtica	No	214	1	1
#52	09/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Español	Le dijeron a Ada en	Cantibio	#PrimaveraDemocrÀtica	No	218	1	1
#53	09/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	@AdaColau	Convupsion	#PrimaveraDemocrÀtica	No	215	1	1
#54	09/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	@AdaColau Que	Escola pública	#PrimaveraDemocrÀtica	No	88	1	1
#55	09/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	@AdaColau Hem	Crisis Europa Sur	#PrimaveraDemocrÀtica	Si	204	1	1
#56	09/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	@AdaColau El 24M	Convupsion	#PrimaveraDemocrÀtica	Si	84	1	1
#57	09/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	El 24M fem que el	Cantibio	#PrimaveraDemocrÀtica #Ada24M	Si	206	1	1
#58	09/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	Suspensem els actes	Metacarpala	No	228	1	1	
#60	09/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	Condemnem	Metacarpala	No	238	1	1	
#61	09/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	Us deixem l'agenda	Convocatoria	#Municipal2015 #Ada24M	Si	266	1	1
#63	09/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	Comencem l'acte a	Convocatoria	#SantEnComu #Ada24M	Si	85	1	1
#64	09/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	¡G. Pisarello Ens	Convocatoria	#SantEnComu	Si	217	1	1
#66	09/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	Aquesta tarda, 18h	Convocatoria	#SantEnComu	Si	217	1	1
#70	09/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	¡G. Pisarello	Quienes son	#SantEnComu	No	207	1	1
#73	09/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Español	¡G. Pisarello "El	Crisis Europa Sur	#SantEnComu	No	216	1	1
#75	09/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	¡G. Pisarello: "E	activismo/participaci3	#SantEnComu	No	95	1	1
#86	11/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	Bon dia! Aquí teniu	Convocatoria	#Ada24M #Municipal2015	No	212	1	1
#87	11/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	"Sin evidencias,	presencia medios de	No	284	1	1	
#88	11/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	Enllaç al mapa de	Desigualdades	No	238	1	1	
#89	11/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	Avui estem a la	Convocatoria (acto	#Ada24M #Municipal2015	No	212	1	1
#90	11/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	@AdaColau No	benches (servicio)	#Ada24M #Municipal2015	No	232	1	1
#95	11/05/2015	@bcncomu	870	Català	[VIDEO]	Convocatoria	#PrimaveraDemocrÀtica #Ada24M	Si	263	1	1

Source: Own elaboration.

As it has been mention above, we also gathered data from SEMrush SEO analysis tool (Figure 9) to the traffic research and semi-structured in-depth interviews.

Figure 9. SEMrush top content data



Source: Own elaboration

3.3. Social Network Analysis (SNA)

Social networks (not only digital networks) are a way to understand the social system because it focuses on the relationship between the actors that built this system (Borgatti *et al.*, 2013). They are empirical phenomena of relations' patterns (Bellotti, 2015) not only on the online space but also in real life (Bellotti, 2015; Borgatti *et al.*, 2013). The social relations take place in the concreted cultural environment, with particular contextual characteristics and through specific social networks (Bellotti, 2015). In the case of Internet and digital networks, the discussions among users or the exchange of information (multidirectional online communication) are represented as threads because someone post, people reply and so on (Aragón, Gómez, García and Kaltenbrunner, 2017: 1). To understand this way of social relations, we use network science (specific approach) through the methodological tool network analysis (SNA), which consists in the application of graph theory (Bellotti, 2015).

The representation of SNA is carried out by graphs where the actors/nodes are points or vertices and the relations or ties among them can be represented by arrows –when there is a logic direction– or by arcs –where there is more than one direction– (Borgatti *et al.*, 2013). This social space is formed by different actors (nodes) and the communication exchange between them (links or edges). The actors or nodes have their characteristics so-called attributes, whereby it is possible

to categorise, define and differentiate each node (Borgatti *et al.*, 2013). The following table (*Table 11*) summarised the different elements that form the social network. SNA is based on an adjacency matrix (A) formed by nodes organised in rows (i) and columns (j), where 1 is the relation between *i* node and *j* node ($a_{ij}=1$), and 0 is no-relation ($a_{ij}=0$) (Borgatti *et al.*, 2013).

Table 11. Graph (G) Theory SNA

G (V, E)			
Vertices (V) Set of Vertices	Actors/Nodes	Points	
Edges (E) Set of Edges	Flow lines (of communication)	Direct (logical) Indirect (multidirectional)	Arrows Arcs

Source: Own elaboration.

Furthermore, the relationship between these nodes, or in other words, the ties or links, has their characteristics (Borgatti *et al.*, 2013). After analysing our data, one way of conceptualising networks mathematically was by using these graphs. In the graph, nodes are represented as points, and directional arrows represent arcs. In our study (*Paper 1*), we used the software *UCINET*. In the example below, we used for the visualisation of the network we used *Gephi* software (*Figure 10*) because during the analysis period, we explore different options.

There are different kinds of relationships among nodes. In this research study, we focus on relational events (Atkin, 1977). That is a non-permanent relation between actors as, for example, kinship. The relational events are formed by interactions and flows, where flows are outcomes of interactions and interactions are part of the medium that enables actors to flow (Borgatti *et al.*, 2013). The number of connections among vertices is called the degree. According to Borgatti, based on Freeman (1979), “degree centrality can be defined as the number of the incident upon a node” (2005: 62). There are two types of degree centrality: in-degree and out-degree. In-degree centrality refers to the connections received by a node; meanwhile, out-degree relates to the connections sent by a node (Freeman, 1979).

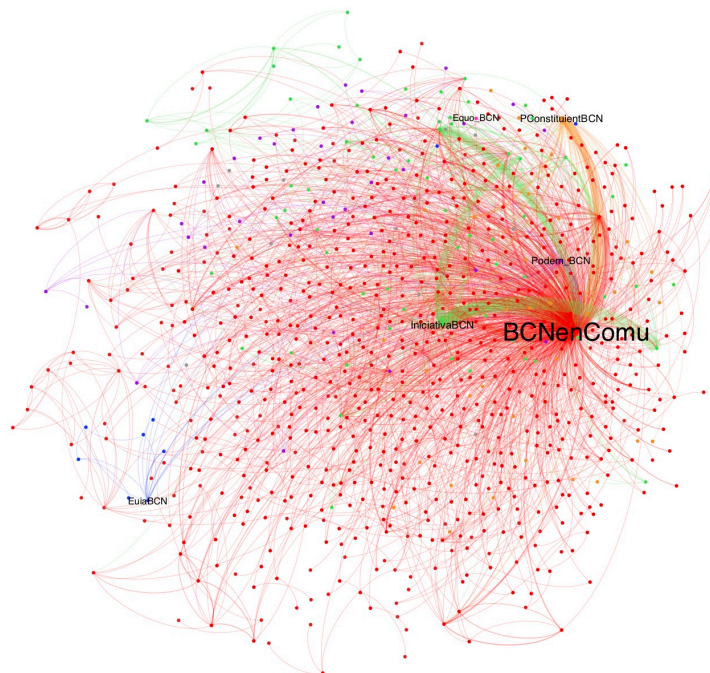
primary nodes/actors –the vertices on the figures– corresponds to the Twitter accounts of the six political parties that form the electoral confluence Barcelona en Comú. Nonetheless, the nodes can be anything of everyday life (Borgatti *et al.*, 2013). The reciprocity between different nodes is based on the “myth of horizontality” related to the digital network was a low level, or reciprocity shows that the relation among nodes (multidirectional communication) are commonly unreciprocated (Pavan, 2015).

We also include secondary nodes or actors. According to Pérez-Altamira (2015), based on work by Borgatti, Everett and Johnson (2013), the Twitter accounts of both political parties and users are the ego network, which means these nodes or actors are a part of the network on the research is focused. In this sense, the Twitter data are particularly useful in terms of our research objectives as they allow us to determine the diffusion of information through the platform and the interaction between users. The interaction between users fundamentally drives social media. By doing so, we can talk about *components* or a maximal set of nodes in which every node can add or reach every node (Borgatti *et al.*, 2013). Thus, “communication is interactive and networked” (Bechmann and Lomborg, 2013: 3) and for that reason “part of the power of the network concept is that it provides a mechanism –in-direct connection– by which disparate parts of a system may affect each other” (Borgatti *et al.*, 2013: 2).

With this file, we generated a node list. In a node list, the first name in each row gives the node that is ‘sending’ a tie (the ego) and in the same row, are the nodes/actors receiving the information (the alters) (Borgatti *et al.*, 2013). The software used to process the node list was *UCINET*. The program allows for the measurement of the properties of the network as a whole and on the element level. Analysing our data with *UCINET* (*Figure 11*), we obtained degree centrality measures. Thus, we can identify the most central nodes in the network.

According to the authors (Lazarsferld and Merton, 1954; Deutsch and Gerald, 1955; Kelman, 1958; Hatfield, Cacioppo and Rapson, 1993, 1994; McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook, 2001; Newman, 2003; Watts and Doolds, 2007; Kappas, 2013; Quattrociocchi, Caldarelli and Scala, 2014; Lönnqvist and Itkonen, 2016; Aragón *et al.*, 2017) there are three main social theories in online discussion: homophily, social influence and emotional contagion. Homophily is the exchange of information between similar people, which are more likely that among dissimilar people (McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook, 2001). Also, homophily has maintained a presence in offline social networks where, “people tend to form links of all sorts, such as friendship, support, or more contact links with other people of similar age, ethnicity, gender, religion, and social class” (Aragón *et al.*, 2017: 4).

Figure 11. *UCINET* example



Source: García-Carretero and Pérez-Altale (2017).

The second social theory is about social influence (Aragón *et al.*, 2017). Social influence is based on the interaction between individuals causes, the people influence, and it can be informational –when the people need to be right– and normative– people need to be liked– (Deutsch and Gerald, 1955; Aragón *et al.*,

2017). Finally, emotional contagion is based on the process where the individual emotions link with similar individual emotions (Hatfield, Cacioppo and Rapson, 1994), and it generates collective emotional states with persistent patterns (Garas, García, Skowron and Scheitzer, 2012).

3.4. Content Analysis (CA)

This dissertation presents the results of the qualitative content analysis with the aim of making inferences from the text (Krippendorff, 2013). According to Bernard Berelson's traditional definition, content analysis "is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (1971: 18). This research technique makes inferences about the speaker(s), the receiver(s) and the message (Colle, 2011) and it has to be objective, standardised and mechanic (López-Nogueró, 2002). Content analysis is flexible so, that can be used in a lot of ways (Berelson, 1971). Consequently, researchers can apply it for many kinds of communication considering that is a classification of nominal, ordinal or scale method (Colle, 2011).

We use a thematic analysis (Bardin, 2002) to know the campaign issues on Twitter and the context or frame of those issues (Goffman, 1986). Agreeing with Van Gorp's constructionist approach, the concepts "become frames when someone applies them for their defining capacity" (2010: 88). Several political communication studies use frame analysis (Gitlin, 1980; Entman, 2004; Lakoff, 2004). Thus, we refer to collective action frames that "organize experience" and "guide action" (Benford and Snow, 2000: 614). Consequently, we attempt to know how *Barcelona en Comú* relates their main campaign issues, the cause of the problems, consequences and solutions (Entman, 2004).

The deductive content analysis is used in this work. In that respect, the deductive content analysis is a process where the structure of the study is based on previous

knowledge, model or categories and it moves from the general to the specific (Kingäs and Vanhanen, 1999; Burns and Grove, 2005). A pre-test of the content analysis of the categories was made to define the content analysis categories (see *Appendix 1*).

The pre-test's unit of analysis was the tweets disseminated by *Barcelona en Comú* on Twitter on 24th of June 2014, the official presentation of the party. According to this previous study, we concluded that several categories were useful. The categories of analysis, defined as follows, are related to the illocutionary acts of the speech (Searle, 1976; Austin, 2003), the digital participation (Lobera, 2010), the political actors, *Twitter* possibilities and the classification of the issues disseminated by the political parties. The latter part has been completed with the frame analysis. By contrast, part of the investigation has been deleted for the current work. For example, the three phases of neo rhetoric analysis (Gómez and Capdevilla, 2012) were dismissed. A model for the replies on Twitter (López-García and Valera-Ordaz, 2015) did not appear in the pre-test, but it is included in the dissertation.

3.4.1. Categories of the content analysis

With the purpose to find the intention of political parties' communication out, we use the speech acts of Austin (2003) and Searle (1976). At the illocutionary acts, we refer to the categories (1) of directive acts, (2) commissive acts, (3) expressive acts, (4) declaration acts and (5) assertive acts (*Table 12*). However, in agreement with Searle (1976), every expression has an illocutionary force but does not necessarily have propositional content. Besides, verbs are not the only sign of illocutionary force (Alarcón, 2008), and it is possible that several tweets do not have a verb, because of the space limitation of Twitter 140 characters.

Table 12. Speech acts' classification

	Category	Definition
(1)	Directive acts	When the speaker affirms or denies anything certainly
(2)	Commissive acts	When the speaker is committed to future action
(3)	Expressive acts	When the speaker express emotions
(4)	Declaration acts	When the speaker is committed to change the reality
(5)	Assertive acts	When the speaker commits to the truth of the expressed

Source: Based on Searle (1976) and Austin (2003).

We use the classification of Lobera (2010) to deepen on digital participation. According to the author, there are five sorts of digital participation (*Table 13*) related to their use and the kind of social network or online tool used by the political parties. Nevertheless, in this investigation the communication channel is Twitter, so we classify the tweets in connection with their use: (6) information, (7) communication, (8) deliberation, (9) enquiry/decision making and (10) creative action (Lobera, 2010).

Table 13. Classification of digital participation

	Category	Description
(6)	Information	The access to information
(7)	Communication	The exchange of information
(8)	Deliberation	The exam, evaluation, reflection and discussion process
(9)	Enquiry/decision making	The process to know citizens' opinions
(10)	Creative action	Collaborative actions in the digital environment

Source: Based on Lobera (2010).

We also analyse the communication possibilities related to the use of Twitter by the six parties concerning the images, videos or links. Besides, we explore some Twitter possibilities, for example, (11) the number of *likes* or *favourites (Fav)*, (12) *retweets (RT)* and (13) the *#hashtags* used by the political parties.

In connection with the replies to the parties' tweets, we analyse the kind of dialogue and the replies between the political parties of the *confluence* and Twitter users. The aim is to find out whether it is a multidirectional communication between parties and citizens during the electoral campaign. In this sense, several authors have noticed the limitations on the use of digital networks as a bidirectional communication channel (Graham *et al.*, 2013; Jungherr, 2016) because the power, economic and political offline structures prevail (Lilleker, Koc-Michalska and Schweitzer, 2011). To analyse the users' replies, we use the categories (14) political parties/politicians, (15) journalist/media and (16) users/citizens depends on who answers the tweet (*Figure 12*). This classification is related to Wolton's (1989) thesis, in which three main actors are legitimate as political agents. According to the author, it is possible to differentiate between 'public actors' such as institutions or politics, 'media actors' media and journalists and 'citizen actors' individuals or groups like associations (Wolton, 1989).

Figure 12. Replies' categories

Agentes políticos			
<input type="checkbox"/> Partidos políticos	<input type="checkbox"/> Medios de comunicación	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Usuarios/ciudadanos	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Partidos políticos	<input type="checkbox"/> Medios de comunicación	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Usuarios/ciudadanos	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Partidos políticos	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medios de comunicación	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Usuarios/ciudadanos	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partidos políticos	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medios de comunicación	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Usuarios/ciudadanos	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Partidos políticos	<input type="checkbox"/> Medios de comunicación	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Usuarios/ciudadanos	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Partidos políticos	<input type="checkbox"/> Medios de comunicación	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Usuarios/ciudadanos	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Partidos políticos	<input type="checkbox"/> Medios de comunicación	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Usuarios/ciudadanos	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Source: Own elaboration.

Likewise, we focus on the classification proposed by Freelon (2010) and further expanded by López-García and Valera-Ordaz (2015). Also, ascertain if the replies of the users introduce a new issue (micro issue) and if political parties participate in the conversations generate as a consequence of their tweets. We also investigate the users' comments (*Figure 13*).

Figure 13. Users' replies

Comentario	Texto
Ghandi @Ghandi1964:	@bcnencomu @AdaColau És a dir ¿esteu
Jordi Marina RepCat @JoMarina55:	.@bcnencomu @AdaColau
Manuel Huerga @Manuel_Huerga:	@bcnencomu Gràcies a
nuni seva @nuniseva:	.@bcnencomu @toret doncs a mi no
Nuvolari @Nuvolari78:	@bcnencomu @AdaColau "Expropiar".
Ghost @gostgrandfather:	@bcnencomu @AdaColau Collau a
Ghost @gostgrandfather:	@bcnencomu @AdaColau Collau es
Miguel Sánchez @Misanchezgar:	.@bcnencomu @ToniPeraba
Sylvia Torras @Sylvatic:	@bcnencomu Us hagues votat tot i
Southern gentleman @yupyop:	@bcnencomu vull q
La Renaixença @La_Renaixensa:	@bcnencomu UNA ALTRES
El Boss escorcollat @AlfreBos:	"vinga que ho PODEM" Ei,
Sylur @sylur_anailii:	@bcnencomu no es gens fiable una

Source: Own elaboration.

Under this taxonomy (Freelon, 2010, López-García and Valera-Ordaz, 2015, Valera-Ordaz, 2018), there are three models of conversations, thereby, three models of democracy (Figure 14). The taxonomy is divided as follows:

(17) *Liberal individualistic model*: this model emphasises the renewed capacity of the individual to make his voice heard in the public space through the new digital areas.

(17.1) *Monologue*: the speaker issues is a little comment without the intention of discussing his / her point of view with other users and without referring any of the previous contributions to the rest of the commentators.

(17.2) *Personal revelation*: the speaker reveals personal information.

(17.3) *Own showcase*: the speaker uses the online forum as a platform for public, disseminate and publicise their content.

(18) *Communitarian model*: insists on the potential of new technologies to strengthen the links between pre-existing ideological communities.

(18.1) *Ideological homophily*: The speaker expresses the degree of agreement or rejection with the published tweet. The greater the degree of agreement between speakers, the more homophilia. The subcategories are: (18.1.1) focused opposite, (18.1.2) opposite, (18.1.3) neutral, (18.1.4) favorable, (18.1.5) positive and (18.1.6) focussed positive.

(18.2) *Mobilisation*: the speaker expresses his intention of political mobilisation through participation in electoral acts, intention to vote, economic contributions or, among others, mobilisation to other users.

(18.3) *Community identification*: the speaker includes himself as part of the community, and the message denotes the feeling of belonging.

(19) *Deliberative Model*: claims the technological potential of the Internet to host a thoughtful dialogue between individuals, capable of jointly discussing issues of general interest.

(19.1) *Arguments*: presents a reasoned opinion, with the will of argumentation detectable in the presence of causal adverbs.

(19.2) *Reciprocity*: Measures whether the comment contains a response to another commenter using the categories: (19.2.1) no answer/do not know, (19.2.2) hard language and (19.2.3) reply with arguments.

(19.3) *Discursive Freedom*: it is operationalised as the type of language by speakers in their interventions. The subcategories are (19.3.1) neutral

language, (19.3.2) hard language and (19.3.3) hard language with the speakers.

Figure 14. Conversations' analysis

Conversaciones políticas
m.comunitario-h.ideológica-contrario
m.comunitario-h.ideológica-contrario
m.comunitario-h.ideológica-f.focalizado
m.deliberativo-argumentación
m.l.individualista-monólogo
m.deliberativo-libertad discursiva-duro hablantes
m.deliberativo-libertad discursiva-duro hablantes
m.l.individualista-monólogo
m.comunitario-h.ideológica-f.focalizado
m.l.individualista-monólogo
m.deliberativo-libertad discursiva-duro hablantes

Source: Own elaboration.

3.4.2. Methodological proposal for *Twitter* analysis as an electoral communication tool during 2015 Barcelona council election. The case of *Barcelona en Comú*

This section includes the first content analysis proposal made to check the content analysis' categories. The first proposition (*see 3.4.1*) has undergone modifications throughout the PhD Dissertation development. The final categories are included in section 3.4.1. The proposal was published at the conference's proceedings *I Congreso Internacional de Comunicación y Pensamiento*.

García-Carretero, Lucía (2016). Propuesta metodológica para el análisis de Twitter como herramienta de comunicación electoral en las elecciones municipales de Barcelona 2015. El caso de Barcelona en Comú. In A. I. Nogales (Coord.), *Experiencias de análisis del discurso periodístico. Metodologías propuestas y estudios de caso* (pp. 32-52). Sevilla: Ediciones Egregius.

CAPÍTULO II

PROPUESTA METODOLÓGICA PARA EL ANÁLISIS DE TWITTER COMO HERRAMIENTA DE COMUNICACIÓN ELECTORAL EN LAS ELECCIONES MUNICIPALES DE BARCELONA DE 2015. EL CASO DE BARCELONA EN COMÚ

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Resumen

Desde 2007, España atraviesa una crisis económica que ha dado lugar, en última instancia, a la crisis y desafección política, características esenciales según Manuel Castells para el estallido de revoluciones y protestas. Es este contexto, en mayo de 2011, el Movimiento 15-M materializó el descontento en las plazas y calles de varias ciudades españolas (Sampedro y Sánchez-Duarte, 2011) manteniendo su presencia, simultáneamente, tanto en el espacio físico como en el espacio virtual.

Considerando este movimiento social como un punto de inflexión que ha evidenciado el envejecimiento de estructuras sociales, políticas y económicas (Sanz y Mateos, 2014) se observa la aparición de nuevas organizaciones políticas que tratan de capitalizar electoralmente el descontento social, como es el caso, entre otros, del grupo municipalista Barcelona en Comú, candidatura formada por Barcelona en Comú, Iniciativa per Catalunya, Esquerra Unida i Alternativa, Podem, Proces Constituent y EQUO.

El aparente cambio en las forma de hacer política implica, asimismo, cambios en las estructuras y estrategias comunicativas tanto de partidos políticos tradicionales como de partidos de reciente aparición. El potencial que Internet y las redes digitales ofrecen en relación a la comunicación política y electoral, dada

la reciente aparición de este partido político y, entre otras características, su bajo coste, propician una interesante materia de estudio. Así, se observa cómo a principios del siglo XXI los investigadores comenzaron a explorar las posibilidades de la comunicación digital. De esta forma, Castells (2003) advertía la evolución del concepto de comunicación de masas a autocomunicación de masas y explicaba un proceso comunicativo en el que los mensajes son de muchos para muchos y donde tanto los emisores como los receptores conforman la audiencia creativa.

Por todo ello, este trabajo, incluido en el marco de una investigación mayor como es la tesis doctoral de la autora, busca la elaboración y aplicación de una propuesta metodológica de análisis de contenido para llevar a cabo una primera aproximación al análisis de las estrategias comunicativas electorales de Barcelona en Comú durante las elecciones municipales de Barcelona 2015. La investigación engloba el análisis de los perfiles en varias redes digitales de los partidos políticos que confluyeron en las elecciones municipales bajo la marca de Barcelona en Comú. No obstante, en esta ocasión, se ha elaborado una propuesta metodológica para el análisis de la cibercampaña que Barcelona en Comú llevo a cabo en la red social Twitter y su aplicación en algunos tuits para averiguar la validez de nuestra ficha de análisis.

A partir del *framing analysis* y otras categorías de análisis propuestas por autores como Searle (1976), Austin (1988), Lobera (2010) o, entre otros, Sádaba, Rodríguez Virgili y Bartolomé (2012), se han analizado algunos de los mensajes difundidos a través de esta red digital durante la campaña electoral. Así, se analizan parte de los contenidos publicados en Twitter por el partido políticos de Barcelona en Comú en el periodo comprendido entre los días 8 y 22 de mayo. Este trabajo no solo se centra en aspectos vinculados mensaje difundido, sino también en algunas de sus características formales vinculadas al empleo de Twitter como canal comunicativo.

Palabras clave: comunicación política, comunicación electoral, Twitter, redes sociales, elecciones municipales, Barcelona en Comú.

1. Comunicación política en la Red: el caso de Barcelona en Comú

La tecnopolítica es la combinación del uso estratégico de las tecnologías en la organización y acción política (Toret, 2012). Para Gutiérrez-Rubí (2014) la clave de la tecnopolítica se encuentra en la posibilidad de actuar como factor de renovación política facilitando la participación y la deliberación. En la misma línea y anticipando el segundo apartado de este trabajo, Sampedro, Sánchez-Duarte y Poletti aseguran que «las herramientas digitales constituyen y forman parte de la comunicación política y, en concreto de la electoral» (2013:107). Por otra lado, autores como Garrett (2006), Tilly & Wood (2009) o Sampedro (2005) se han centrado en aspectos como origen de los movimientos sociales, en la influencia que las nuevas tecnologías de la información y la comunicación (NTIC) ejercen sobre el nuevo mapa político, social y mediático así como sus posibles consecuencias en los sistemas democráticos (Sampedro y Sánchez-Duarte, 2011). Partiendo de los movimientos sociales, en concreto el Movimiento 15-M como origen de la confluencia de partidos políticos Barcelona en Comú, Sanz y Mateos (2014) afirman la existencia de un contexto post 15-M y sitúan a este movimiento social como un punto de inflexión, también, en términos comunicativos.

Las posibilidades de la comunicación digital ha sido tratada por autores como Morris y Ogan (1996) que advirtieron sobre las posibilidades de Internet como medio de comunicación de masas centrándose en varios modelos comunicativos (*one to one, one to many, many to many*). De forma similar, Castells (2003) proponía una evolución del concepto de «comunicación de masas» a la «autocomunicación de masas», con mensajes

son «de muchos para muchos» dando lugar a audiencia capaz de gestionar sus propios canales y mensajes y actuando, simultáneamente, como emisor y receptor. Dalton et al. (2006, en Valenzuela, Arriaga y Scherman, 2012) se refieren a un proceso comunicativo que promueve la retroalimentación interpersonal, la aceptación de los compañeros, el refuerzo de las normas del grupo y la construcción de identidades. León, Burch y Tamayo (2005) manifiestan que Internet interconecta diferentes redes de ordenadores –y dispositivos móviles– de todo el mundo y facilita la interrelación de muchos a muchos que permite establecer niveles de coordinación y aglutinaciones por encima de la distancia geográfica.

Desde el punto de vista de Dahlgren (2005) esta comunicación intermediada por la Red presenta cinco formas de interacción política, y este artículo, se centra en la modalidad referida a los portales o redes digitales (como Facebook y Twitter) que, aunque no están destinados en su exclusividad a aspectos políticos, gran parte de sus contenidos versan de una u otra forma sobre este tema (Dahlgren, 2005).

En cuanto al uso en comunicación política y electoral de las redes digitales, es necesario mencionar que «la utilización de Internet como un recurso político para la movilización es un fenómeno empleado tanto por las organizaciones de izquierda como las de derecha» (Resina, 2010:158). El mismo autor, antes de la aparición del 15-M advertía de la importancia de no «perder de vista cómo muchas de las estrategias introducidas por los movimientos sociales a través de Internet son utilizadas luego por partidos y grupos de interés» (2010:157).

Según Mazzoleni (1999) Internet está modificando la forma en que partidos e instituciones atienden las necesidades comunicativas de los electores o ciudadanos siendo este proceso más directo ya que no cuenta con la mediación de los medios de comunicación. Sin embargo, resulta necesario cuestionar si esta comunicación directa –sin los intermediarios tradicionales– da lugar a un feedback real, la co-participación de Martínez Rodrí-

guez (2005). Sampedro (2011) afirma que, tras las elecciones españolas de 2004 y 2008, el papel jugado por las TIC supuso el inicio de un proceso cuya principal consecuencia ha sido «la institucionalización de las nuevas herramientas de la comunicación política por las burocracias electorales» (2011:11).

Además de la tecnopolítica, se puede hablar de una disciplina, propia de la comunicación política, relevante en futuras investigaciones, que tiene su propio espacio dentro de la comunicación electoral y, que bien ejecutada, actúa de forma integrada en el proceso comunicacional político: la ciberpolítica (Fernández, 2012:10). Desde comienzos de siglo, la comunicación política se encuentra inmersa en un proceso que parte de la teledemocracia y avanza hacia la ciberdemocr@cia, produciendo cambios en la comunicación política de los cuales solo se vislumbran los primeros signos (Del Rey Morató, 2007). Para Capdevilla (2009:36):

La figura del candidato en Internet no consiste en crear un perfil en Facebook, Tuenti o de cualquier otra red social y emprender la carrera de hacerse con el mayor número de «amigos simpatizantes». No hay que ponderar la importancia de una figura política según la cantidad de seguidores que tenga en una red social. Esta herramienta es útil solamente si se usa como medio de comunicación alternativo, no como una encuesta de afiliación ciudadana. En España, hoy en día, disponiendo de una cuenta en Facebook para crear eventos (mítines, encuentros con militantes, reuniones...) y muro de discusión y otra en Flickr con fotos, lo cual sería suficiente para un correcto uso de esta herramienta.

Para Linares (2013) el movimiento 15-M utilizó las herramientas online de forma estratégica generando gran cantidad de datos en plataformas como Flickr, Youtube, Twitter, Facebook o N-1. Por ejemplo, situando el foco de atención en Twitter, el 15-M generó cientos de miles de tuits (Linares, 2013).

Por otra parte, durante la presentación de Guanyem el 26 de junio de 2014, el partido político generó un volumen de 69 tuits en los que no solo se informaba sobre el acto de presentación con finalidad de convocatoria sino que, además, se solicitaba la participación de los usuarios/ciudadanos en la recogida de firmas para la validación de este como partido político⁷. Si desde la plataforma DRY se utilizó el voto a distancia en su portal web para decidir los lemas de la manifestación del 15 de mayo de 2011 (Linares, 2013) desde Barcelona en Comú emplearon el suyo para la recogida de firmas para la validación del partido⁸.

En comunicación política, Twitter presenta posibilidades comunicativas tanto internas como externas relativas a la interacción y a la instrumentación política de las redes digitales introducidas por Dahlgren (2005) anteriormente. En primer lugar, Twitter puede ser «una vía de comunicación interna con sus propios militantes, simpatizantes y seguidores, que ven cómo con esta herramienta pueden ser aún mucho más protagonistas de la acción política y que los partidos les necesitan y cuentan con ellos para el desarrollo de sus campañas» (Rodríguez Andrés, 2011:95). Además, para el mismo autor (2011:95) puede ser útil

para mantener informados a los propios militantes y para que éstos, a su vez, actúen como correa de transmisión de los mensajes, aumentando así su difusión y eficacia. Y este proceso no necesariamente debe ser unidireccional, porque un candidato o un partido pueden también retuiutear los comentarios de sus seguidores.

En este sentido, se ha podido observar como los militantes o simpatizantes con el partido Barcelona en Comú han incluido

⁷Esta información forma parte de un trabajo de esta autora en la asignatura de *Análisis del contenido y del discurso comunicativo* del Máster en Comunicación Social de la Universitat Pompeu Fabra incluido en el TFM y futura Tesis Doctoral.

⁸Barcelona en Comú, recogida de firmas. Disponible en: <https://quanyembarcelona.cat/signal/> Última consulta: 24/03/2015.

en su nombre de usuario las palabras «Bcn en Comú» de forma que la estrategia comunicativa en esta red digital no solo parta o incluya al perfil oficial del partido, sino que se distribuya, en cierta forma, a un número mayor de usuarios. Por ejemplo, el nombre de usuario en Twitter de la candidata a la alcaldía Ada Colau fue *Ada #BcnEnComú*, pero también lo incluyeron otros de sus miembros como *Laia #BcnEnComú*, o *J L Merino #BcnEnComú*. Esta estrategia comunicativa cobra mayor sentido si se tiene en cuenta la confluencia de partidos que se presentan a las elecciones municipales bajo este nombre. Según las estrategias digitales para la comunicación de Capdevilla (2009, en Capdevilla, 2009:35) –comunicación, comunidad y cooperación– esta estrategia formaría parte de la creación de comunidad digital. De forma similar, en el Movimiento 15-M se creó una comunidad en Twitter en la que el nodo central era la cuenta de DRY alrededor de la cual aparecieron otros nodos, por ejemplo, todos los relativos a cada acampada en las ciudades españolas (Linares, 2013).

Para Cárcar Benito (2015) las redes digitales son un canal apto para la interacción con los usuarios (posibles y futuros consumidores de un producto, en este caso de un candidato o partido), son canalizador de mensajes y favorecen el contacto directo con los ciudadanos. Otra de sus funciones es la de cauce para adquirir mayor presencia en los medios de comunicación tradicionales (Rodríguez Andrés, 2011).

Sampedro, Sánchez-Duarte y Campos (2014) sitúan el punto de inflexión de estas nuevas formas de comunicación política entre las elecciones españolas de 2008 y 2011. Exactamente periodo en el que tuvo lugar el Movimiento 15-M. Para estos autores, «la comparación entre las campañas electorales de 2008 y 2011 ofrece un estudio de caso paradigmático: estos años son claves para entender la institucionalización de las herramientas y las prácticas tecnopolíticas» (Sampedro, Sánchez-Duarte y Campos, 2014:4).

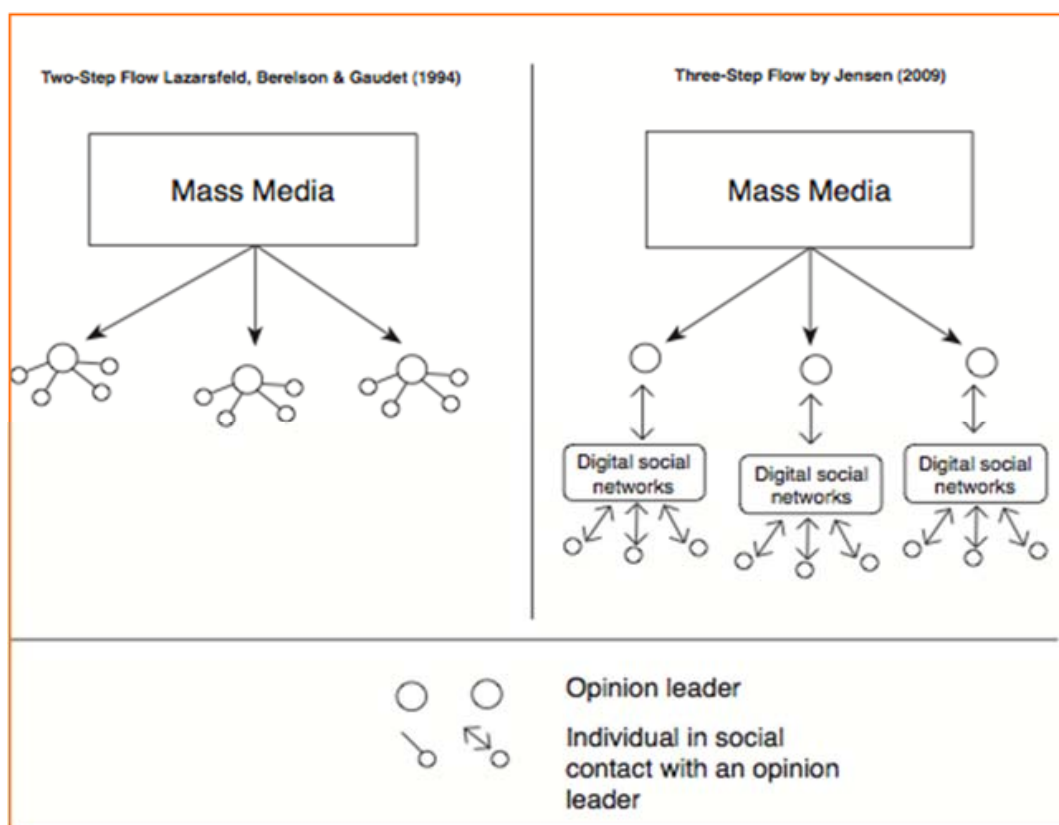
Empero, las herramientas digitales en boga en los últimos años en la comunicación política española no solo son causa del empoderamiento comunicativo y del aumento de visibilidad surgido por el 15-M sino que se debe, también, a la modernización o americanización de la comunicación política. Como describe Davis (1999, en Rodríguez Andrés, 2011), Internet forma parte de forma plena en la comunicación política norteamericana desde los años 90 del siglo XX y cada nuevo avance es inherente al intento de los políticos de estar o participar en él.

Algunas de estas manifestaciones las recoge Tuirera-Puigbò (2009) en su cronología a través de la cual se pueden vislumbrar las primeras estrategias comunicativas en Internet, como la primera campaña de correos electrónicos en 1992 de Brown en las primarias demócratas de California –lo que se entiende como una adaptación de las estrategias comunicativas más tradicionales a Internet ya que, por ejemplo, en 1952 Eisenhower llevó a cabo marketing directo por correo postal para saber en qué temas debía centrarse su campaña (Maarek, 1997). O la primera web interactiva de 1998 del candidato Ventura por Minnesota. No obstante, el aspecto que más destaca es el salto cualitativo de las campañas políticas con la llegada del siglo XX (Tuirera-Puigbò, 2009).

Es por ello que, siguiendo el ejemplo de las estrategias online que el presidente de Estados Unidos Barack Obama llevó a cabo durante la precampaña y la campaña electoral a las presidenciales de 2008 y 2012, los políticos españoles tratan de conectar con sus simpatizantes y público objetivo a través de esta nueva forma de acción propagandística (Cárcar, 2015).

Por último, antes de presentar la propuesta metodológica de análisis de contenido para la red digital Twitter como herramienta de comunicación electoral, cabe señalar otra posible evolución de una de las teorías clásicas de la comunicación en la esfera digital. La imagen que se muestra a continuación (Imagen 1) se refiere a la posible evolución del Two-Step Flow

Communication –la teoría basada en los líderes de opinión– al Three-Step Flow Communication en Twitter (Said y Arcila, 2011):



Two-Step/Tree-Step Flow of communication

Imagen 1. Modelos de flujos de comunicación. Fuente: Said y Arcila (2011) en base a Lazarsfeld, Berelson y Gaudet (1944) y Jensen (2009)

2. Propuesta metodológica de análisis de contenido

A continuación, se muestra la propuesta metodológica de análisis de contenido que, en futuras investigaciones, se combinará con otras técnicas metodológicas de investigación cualitativa. El fin de cada una de las categorías incluidas en este análisis de contenido es tratar de averiguar las estrategias comunicativas electorales de Barcelona en Comú en la red digital Twitter.

Siguiendo la definición clásica propuesta por Berelson, el análisis de contenido «is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication» (1952:18). Asimismo, esta técnica de investigación «ha de permitir la formulación de inferencias acerca del emisor y de los receptores así como del contenido o significado latente del mensaje» (Colle, 2011:5). De la misma forma, ha de sustituir la interpretación y la subjetividad del estudio por un procedimiento más objetivo, estandarizado y mecánico que analice los datos y el contenido de documentos y comunicaciones (López Noguero, 2002). A partir de esta técnica «todo transporte de información y/o significación de un emisor a un receptor, controlado o no por aquel, debería poder ser descrito y descifrado por las técnicas de análisis de contenido» (Bardin, 1986, en López Noguero, 2002:174).

La aplicación del análisis de contenido que interesa en esta investigación forma parte de la clasificación de Janis (en Krippendorff, 1980) y se basa en la clasificación de mensajes o fragmentos de mensajes en relación a su significado como, por ejemplo, contar las referencias que se realizan a unos temas concretos. En palabras de Bardin, «si nos servimos del análisis temático –es decir, del recuento de uno o varios temas o ítems de significación en una unidad de codificación previamente determinada– se advierte que en este discurso es fácil elegir como unidad de codificación la frase (limitada por signos de puntuación)» (2002:58).

Así, la propuesta metodológica diseñada se estructura en cuatro grandes bloques con categorías y subcategorías que permiten indagar tanto en las posibilidades comunicativas que la red digital Twitter ofrece, como en otras características propias de la estrategia comunicativa electoral de Barcelona en Comú.

- 2.1. **Bloque 1. Datos de identificación.** Este primer bloque contempla los aspectos clave de identificación de cada uno de los tuits objeto de análisis. De esta forma, se incluye el nombre del tuit (asignando a partir de la inicial del partido político y un número vinculado al orden de su difusión), la fecha de publicación, el número total de tuits difundidos por el partido político durante la campaña electoral y el idioma de difusión.

Bloque 1. Datos de identificación	Nombre del tuit
	Fecha de publicación
	N total
	Idioma

Bloque 1. Datos de identificación

Imagen 2. Fuente: Elaboración propia

- 2.2. **Bloque 2. Análisis del mensaje y recursos utilizados.** Este bloque cuenta con dos categorías principales a través de las cuales se organizan el resto de ítems. En primer lugar, encontramos el *nivel formal*. En él se engloban categorías como la vinculada al texto completo del tuit, el macro tema (tema principal al que hace referencia el partido político en el tuit), el hashtag empleado, la extensión caracteres teniendo en cuenta todo aquello que no sea texto y categorías relacionadas con si contiene o no video, imagen u otro enlace.

En cuanto al *nivel simbólico* engloba dos grandes categorías: la primera vinculada a los actos del habla de Searle (1976) y Austin (1988) y la segunda en relación al frame analysis (Entman, 1993; Goffman, 2006; Van Gorp, 2010; Brewer y Gross, 2010; Lawrence, 2010; García Marín, 2011; Sádaba Garraza, Rodríguez Virgili y Bartolomé Castro, 2012). A partir de los actos del habla se busca averiguar cuál es la intención del hablante –en este caso Barcelona en Comú– cuando difunde sus tuits en relación a las subcategorías de actos representativos, actos directivos, actos comisivos, actos expresivos y actos declarativos (Searle, 1976; Austin, 1988). En cuanto al frame analysis, interesa en esta investigación la asociación de campos semánticos que Barcelona en Comú lleva a cabo a partir del tema principal propuesto en el tuit.

Bloque 2. Análisis del mensaje y recursos utilizados

Bloque 2. Análisis del mensaje y recursos utilizados	Nivel formal	Texto del tuit	
		Macro tema o tema principal	
		Hashtag	
		Extensión	
		Video	
		Imagen	
		Enlace	
	Nivel simbólico	Taxonomía de los actos del habla (Austin, 1955; Searle, 1976).	Representativos
			Directivos
			Comisivos
			Expresivos
			Declarativos
		Asociación de campos semánticos Frame Analysis	

Imagen 3. Fuente: Elaboración propia en base a los autores

2.3. Bloque 3. Participación e interacción. En este apartado se contemplan varias subcategorías como el número de comentarios o menciones que posee cada tuit, el número de retuits y me gusta, la clasificación

propuesta por Lobera (2010) para el análisis de los tipos de participación online –información, comunicación, deliberación, consulta/toma de decisiones y acción creativa–, el tipo de agentes que participan –políticos, medios de comunicación y usuarios/ciudadanos– y si en estos comentarios surgen micro temas, es decir, temas diferentes a los propuestos por el partido político en el tuit matriz o principal.

2.4. Bloque 3. Participación e interacción

Bloque 3. Participación e interacción	<u>Retuits</u>	Sí	Cuántos
		No	
	Me gusta	Sí	Cuántos
		No	
	Comentarios	Sí	Cuántos
		No	
	Clasificación de la participación digital Lobera (2010)	Información	
		Comunicación	
		Deliberación	
		Consulta/toma de decisiones	
		Acción creativa	
	Agentes políticos	Partidos políticos	
		Medios de comunicación	
		Usuarios/ciudadanos	
Micro tema	Sí		
	No		

Imagen 4. Fuente: Elaboración propia en base a los autores

2.5. **Bloque 4. Análisis de las conversaciones políticas.** Por último, basándonos en la propuesta metodológica de los autores Valera Ordaz y López (2015), en el trabajo se propone el análisis del tipo de conversación que surge a partir del tuit matriz. De esta forma, y siguiendo la misma línea propuesta por los autores (Valera Ordaz y López, 2015:11), el potencial democrático de estas conversaciones mediante la operacionalización de tres modelos contrapuestos de democracia a) el modelo liberal-

individualista, que enfatiza la renovada capacidad del individuo para hacer oír su voz en el espacio público mediante los nuevos espacios digitales, b) el modelo comunitario, que insiste en el potencial de las nuevas tecnologías para reforzar los vínculos entre comunidades ideológicas preexistentes y c) el modelo deliberativo, que reclama el potencial tecnológico de Internet para acoger un diálogo racional entre individuos, capaces de debatir conjuntamente sobre los asuntos de interés general.

Como se puede observar en la imagen 5, cada modelo de democracia se organiza en varias subcategorías. En el modelo liberal individualista se incluye a) el monólogo, b) la revelación personal y c) la exhibición personal. En el comunitario, a) la homofilia ideológica –a.a) contrario focalizado, a.b) contratio, a.c) neutro/no atribuible, a.d) favorable, a.e) favorable focalizado–, la identificación comunitaria y la movilización. Por último, modelo deliberativo se organiza en a) argumentación, b) reciprocidad y c) libertad discursiva. Esta última se subdivide en c.a) lenguaje neutro y respetuoso, c.b) lenguaje duro y c.c) lenguaje duro hacia el hablante.

Bloque 4. Análisis de las conversaciones políticas

Bloque 4. Análisis de las conversaciones políticas	Modelo liberal individualista	Monólogo	
		Revelación personal	
		Exhibición personal	
	Modelo comunitario	Homofilia ideológica	contrario focalizado
			contrario
			neutro/no atribuible
			favorable
			favorable focalizado
		Identificación comunitaria	
	Movilización		
	Modelo deliberativo	Argumentación	
		Reciprocidad	
		Libertad discursiva	lenguaje neutro y respetuoso
lenguaje duro			
lenguaje duro hacia el hablante			

Imagen 5. Fuente: Elaboración propia en base a los autores

3. Resultados preliminares

De la aplicación exploratoria de la propuesta metodológica de análisis de contenido, se han obtenido algunas de las características que componen las estrategias comunicativas del partido político Barcelona en Comú durante las elecciones municipales de Barcelona en mayo de 2015.

En cuanto a algunos de los temas principales en los que Barcelona en Comú centro su campaña electoral en Twitter, se ha observado, especialmente, la aparición de tuits relativos al bloque temático denominado como **convocatoria**. Este bloque temático hace referencia a la difusión de los actos de campaña celebrados en el espacio físico, las apariciones en los medios de comunicación de miembros de la coalición –por ejemplo, debates electorales–, o, entre otros, a la difusión de la agenda de los miembros del partido durante la campaña electoral.

Otro tema dominante en la cibercampaña en Twitter de Barcelona en Comú es la **educación pública**. Así, se presenta como uno de las prioridades del partido si gobierna y se vincula, además, a la docencia en catalán como un derecho. No obstante, la materia educativa también mantiene presencia durante la campaña electoral en relación la necesidad de guarderías públicas o en el apoyo del partido político a la protesta del centro Llotja.

En tercer lugar, se ha observado la relevancia durante la cibercampaña del modelo de ciudad que defiende Barcelona en Comú. Es decir, se plantean cuestiones como el turismo sostenible, las desigualdades entre barrios –vinculada directamente a otro bloque temático, las desigualdades sociales–, o la necesidad de defender e impulsar el comercio de proximidad.

Otro aspecto, esta vez vinculado a alguna de las posibilidades que Twitter ofrece como canal comunicativo es el concepto de co-participación –mencionado con anterioridad– y la participación. Se ha podido observar que en las conversaciones surgidas a través del tuit difundido por Barcelona en Comú, intervienen miembros de las diferentes comisiones que conforman el partido y responden desde sus cuentas personales. Desde la cuenta oficial de Barcelona en Comú, no se participa en las conversaciones.

En cuanto al uso de imágenes, videos o enlaces, se concluye que en la cibercampaña de Barcelona en Comú en Twitter predomina el uso de imágenes. Desde el partido, la difusión de esta se encuentra determinada por su uso como resumen de declaraciones, por ejemplo, en los actos físicos, como muestra la imagen 5.

Tuit de Barcelona en Comú



Imagen 6. Fuente: @bcnencomu

La exploración del frame analysis y asociación de campos temáticos muestra, por ejemplo, como durante la campaña electoral otro de los temas de campaña como es el bloque oposición se asocia a conceptos como corrupción, desigualdades sociales o mafia.

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3.5. Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

Access to political information through search engines like *Google* and *Bing* or through digital networks such as *Twitter* or *Facebook* is an interesting area for research. In other words, it is the visibility of political information and the degree in which information is easily accessible (Phillips, Yang and Djasasbi, 2013; Giomelakis and Veglis, 2015; Gonzalo, Codina and Rovira, 2015). The proper strategies for *Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)* and *Search Engine Marketing (SEM)* in a coordinated political communication strategy by the political parties are essential requirements on an electoral campaign. Social SEO connects the social media and *the Search Engine Optimisation* through the content of information; also, it allows us to use social networks as a catalyst of the content (Alcocer, 2015).

The coordinated political communication strategy must have a central hub, which is the political party website where all content produced is collected (Giansante, 2015). Second, it is a group of several tools for contact with the target and to promote participation (Delany, 2011; Giansante, 2015). Finally, the tools used to extend the action scope and generate online discussion (Delany, 2011; Giansante, 2015). Mainly, it is relevant in a context of the permanent (electoral) campaign (Lilleker, 2006; Elmer, Langlois and McKelvey, 2012), where the political parties show continuing interest on spreading information without electoral campaign's time limitations. Nonetheless, the use of *SEO* and *SEM* depends on the communication strategies, the kind and the structure of the political parties and the socio-political context (Vaccari, 2013; Greaves, 2015; Borge and Esteve, 2017).

The online traffic that political parties' websites received is a consequence of the search for content by search engines. Generally, this part of the online traffic is the main source of online traffic. For that, a correct selection of keywords for *Google's* page results ranking allows us to ascertain the visibility of the websites of the electoral coalition *Barcelona en Comú*.

Citizens regularly use search engines as a starting point for information access, so they are essential elements to take into account in the content-user relationship (Vállez *et al.*, 2010; García-Carretero, Codina, Díaz-Noci and Iglesias-García, 2016). The visibility of web content does not depend only on the quality of the content. The visibility or access to information also depends on the position in the classification of the search results pages (Killoman, 2013). In this sense, the primary objective of *SEO* is to optimise the visibility in the results page in an organic way. The so-called organic traffic is independent of the advertisings (Baye *et al.*, 2015).

It is possible to differentiate two types of *SEO* factors: *On Page* and *Off Page* (Codina *et al.*, 2016). The factors that can be controlled by the author of the content are On-Page factors. By contrast, the visibility factors that cannot be controlled are the *Off Page*, for example, the input links from other websites and digital networks (Codina *et al.*, 2016). Another kind of traffic apart from *Google's* results page is the so-called social traffic (Codina *et al.*, 2016). The social truck comes from the use of a digital as a source to the website's accessibility, for example, Twitter and *Facebook* as traffic sources.

The evolution of political communication has given rise to the political parties websites such us essential element in political activity (Giansante, 2015). Hence, the websites are not a subsidiary element; they play a central communicative roll in the online campaign and are a connexion point between online and offline campaign (Gamir, 2016). For that reason, the delimitation between *online-offline* has been diluted and giving rise to different platforms, tools and information's exchange (Aguilar, 2016). So the use of various online tools is considered imperative in a proper communication strategy (Delany, 2011).

In the same line that the use of *SEO* tools for digital media analysis (García-Carretero *et al.*, 2016), the *SEO* tools for political communication analysis is still limited to the Academy research. The political parties' websites analysis and

systematic monitoring of the traffic not only provides information about the success of communication strategies but also allows researchers go in-depth about the audience and the different spaces where political consensus is possible (Giansante, 2015). In the following section, we explain the use of the SEMrush tool to political parties' communication study.

3.5.1. SEMrush tool: uses and indexes

SEMrush is one of the most popular and reputable tools used by the SEO/SEM experts, and it maintains a good position in specialised rankings (Lopezosa and Codina, 2018). The tool was created in 2008 as a tool for *SEO* and *IT*, and it has 29 databases (García-Carretero, Codina and Pedraza-Jiménez, 2016). SEMrush provides two main groups of indexes (ID) for web analysis. Following, the indexes of the tool used in this work are defined based on the website tool information and previous work (García-Carretero, Codina and Pedraza-Jiménez, 2016). We determine 22 ID from the tool according to our analysis. Nonetheless, the tool has more indexes, which not have been used.

The first group is related to web *Domain Analytics* (DA). The DA group of indexes are *General Overview*, *Organic Research*, *Backlinks*, and *Domain vs Domain*. It provides data of visibility of the domain, both in the past and in the present. *General Overview* is a summary of indexes that make up the domain. These ids are:

(ID1) *Organic Search*: the index provides information about the organic traffic of a website domain, the keywords, the keywords' ranking distribution and the organic competitors of the domain.

(ID2) *Paid Search*: the index provides information of paid search traffic (advertising) of the website domain and its cost, the text of the ads, the

keywords for which the domain appears in Google's paid search results, the distribution of the keyword ranking and the domain's payment competitors.

(ID3) **Backlinks**: the index provides information about the number of domain's backlinks, the relationship between the links *follow* and the *nofollow*, the reference websites, IP addresses and TLD.

(ID4) **Advertising Display**: the index offers information about the website domain on the Google's Display Network and includes the number of ads, publishers, samples of the text, media ads and of the landing pages.

(ID5) **Best Organic Keywords**: the index shows the keywords that generate more organic traffic on a website.

According to **Backlinks** group, we refer to the backlinks which a domain or URL receive. These indexes are:

(ID6) **Reference Domains**: includes information about the domains that are directed to the domain, to the root domain or the URL. It includes IP and country several links from the domain.

(ID7) **Reference IPs**: shows a list of IP addresses the backlinks that direction toward the domain, the root domain and URL of the website.

(ID8) **Domain Score**: measures the relevance of a domain using a 0-100 scale. The scale is based on the quality and volume of links that lead to the score of the domain. The higher the rating, the better the quality. It is calculated as *Google Page Rank*.

(ID9) *Type of Backlinks*: distributes the kind of backlinks according to the text, images, form and frame.

(ID10) *TLD Distribution*: offers information about the distribution of the reference domains according to the type of top-level domain.

(ID11) *Best Anchors*: this index is based on an anchor text cloud. The visualisation represents 50 main anchors text. The anchor texts that have been used most frequently appear in a larger font.

Finally, (ID12) *Domain vs Domain*: this index allows comparing up to five domains. It provides information on all the domains' keyword. It also offers information about the domain position, paid search, organic search and Google's Shopping. Besides, the data can be displayed in graphs.

The tool also allows the user to do a project, for this study are especially relevant *Site Audit* and *Social Media Tracker (SMT)*. *SMT* provides information about the social audience and the activity in digital networks such as Twitter. Another kind of project is Site Audit to study the quality of a website.

(ID13) *Site Audit*: it offers an audit of the quality of a website according to the total score of the site. It is based on the website problems (ID14), the warnings (ID15), the notices (ID16) and on a thematic selection (ID17).

(ID18) *Social Media Tracker*: provides information about the social traffic of the website. That is, the traffic directed to a website through digital networks such as Twitter and Facebook. The sub-indexes analyse the audience (ID19), the content (ID20), the activity (ID21) and the participation (ID22).

3.6. Semi-structured in-depth interviews

In this study, we have carried out in-depth, one-on-one and single-topic interviews (Ruiz-Olabuénaga, 2012). The application of this methodology after SNA, CA and SEO is a result of the requirement of a certain level of information and knowledge of the topic and object of study (Wengraf, 2001; Kelly, 2010). The susceptible profiles of been interviewing are the community managers of the six political parties of the electoral confluence. Eventually, in this research study, we do three interviews which follow an informed consent protocol. These anonymised profiles are considered adequate according to the information obtained from the other research methods applied. *Barcelona en Comú* political party centralised communication on Twitter. The knowledge attained from the first interview confirms that the critical communication group during the election campaign was *Barcelona en Comú's* communication commission. By doing so, we interview a member of the communication commission; a member of the communication commission who is also part of the *MLGB* and is part of *Barcelona en Comú*; and a member of the communication commission who is part of *EQUO*.

Thereby, the perspective of the semi-structured interviews (Flick, 2004: 89) is based on Miguel S. Vallés (2009). According to that, in this model of interviews, the questions depend on the responders' characteristics according to an ethnographic and biographic point of view (Vallés, 2009). This method allows us to obtain relevant, useful and essential information about the communicative dynamics of the political parties' case study (Brennen, 2013) collaboratively and actively (Fontana and Frey, 2005). We use the semi-structured interview, "with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the lifeworld of the interviewee, in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena" (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2008: 3). The qualitative interviews are focused on the meaning, the context, the relationships and the experiences (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014).

Therefore, although an interview is a normal conversation, it is a systematised methodology through a standardised method with a specific purpose (Kvale, 1996). The technique is useful to learn more about situations or events that can not be observed directly (Taylor and Bodan, 1992). The semi-structured interviews are a methodological tool with open-ended as a consequence of in-depth dialogue (Morrow, 2005; O’Sullivan, 2005; Kvale, 2007). Also, it is essential to combine this method with another kind of research –SNA and CA- because the interview is based on people discourse (Taylor and Bodan, 1992). Under the definitions above, we interview the community managers of the commissions or communication groups of the six political parties that form the electoral coalition *BComú*.

This conversation/interview is recorded through a standardised structure form (de Vaus, 2001). In our case study, we use a flexible script, but fundamental questions are included (semi-structured) related to the case study, but also it depends on “the social, economic, political and cultural context experienced” (Flick, 2004: 63). The script or guideline is useful when the researcher knows something about the interviewee and the object of study through the field research (Taylor and Bodan, 1992). Although the semi-structured model allows the researcher to redefine the questions, and it offers freedom (Wimmer and Dominick, 1996), they are based on a questionnaire previously prepared (Agirreazkuenaga, 2012). As the author affirms,

the interlocutor in this cases feels freer than in the interviews with a more closed structured, because the questions proposed allow adaptations at each moment, and so the interviews can be offered the opportunity of making several interpretations (2012: 144).

The methodological review of semi-structured interviews draws by Hanna Kallio, Anna-Maija Pietilä, Martin Johnson and Mari Kangasniemi point out five essential phases:

The first phase was to identify the prerequisites for using semi-structured interviews. The aim of this phase was to evaluate the appropriateness of the semi-structured interview as a rigorous data collection method in relation to the selected research question(s) (2016: 2959).

The second phase of the development was retrieving and using previous knowledge. The aim of this phase was to gain a comprehensive and adequate understanding of the subject, which required critical appraisal of previous knowledge and the possible need for complementary empirical knowledge (2016: 2959).

The appropriateness of interviews is based on the need to know the electoral communication strategies design due to the information obtained via the SNA and CA. The opinion leaders, the flow of communication –or multidirectional scheme–, and the message were analysed. Nonetheless, it is essential to ascertain if these results match with the political parties' intention.

The third phase of the development was formulating the preliminary semi-structured interview guide. The aim of this phase was to formulate an interview guide as a tool for the interview data collection, using previous knowledge on structural, logical and coherent forms (2016: 2959).

With semi-structured in-depth interviews guide's requirements, as the *section 3.6.1* shows, the question and groups of issues are included.

The fourth phase of the development was pilot testing the semi-structured interview guide. The aim of this phase was to confirm the coverage and relevance of the content of the formulated, preliminary guide and to identify the possible need to reformulate questions and to test implementation of it (2016: 2960).

The fifth and last phase of the development process was presenting the complete semi-structured interview guide in the study paper. The aim was produce a clear, finished and logical semi-structured interview guide for data collection (2016: 2961).

For the information analysis obtained by the interviews, we use *Dataminer Pro* software to group the analysis units and made categories (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011). The results are organised and presented in the section. The papers three and four include the information obtained by this methodology, and it was compared with the previous results (mixed-method).

3.6.1. Questionnaires for the semi-structured in-depth interviews

This section focused on the guide of semi-structured in-depth interviews. For that reason, it includes the guide and the definition or codebook protocol to codify the interviews' transcript through a database using *Filemaker Pro*. Nonetheless, some questions could not be categorised before the interviews because of the open and semi-structured character of the interviews.

Group 1. General information/descriptive questions

1.1. Personal involvement in the party/confluence: the category refers to the cause because of this person is involved in *BComú* electoral coalition. The category has several fields, such as:

- Social movements: if she/him is/was associated with a social movement
- Political parties: if she/him is/was associated with political parties
- Barcelona en Comú: if she/him started with *Barcelona en Comú*
- Others

1.2. Period of participation: the category is based on the term relationship between the interviewee and the political party. In this sense, several fields could be differentiated:

- From the beginning until now
- From the start until the council election

- During the electoral campaign
- Others

1.3. Motivation: the category is focused on the motivation of the interviewee to being in *Barcelona en Comú*. The category includes two fields:

- **Professional motivation:** if the relationship with *Barcelona en Comú* is based on a professional or occupational activity (such as graphic design).
- **Social/Political motivation:** if interviewee interest is based on personal motivation such as political or social interests.
- **Others**

Group 2. Structure of communication group (commission)/Professional roles

2.1. Structure of communication commission: this category of analysis is founded on the organisation of the communication group, the management and their dynamics. It is an open category as a consequence of an open question.

2.2. Communicative profiles: this category alludes to the different profiles that form the communication group. It is organised in fields that depend on communication activity:

- Social networks
- Video/image
- Coordinator (press release)
- Graphic design
- Organisational communication
- Others

2.3. The responsibility of each role: open category based on the role of each member of the communication group.

2.4. The relationship between the profiles: this category is an open question related to the communication group members and the professional relationship between them. For example, if there is a leader opinion or dominant voice.

2.5. Dynamics during the electoral campaign (activists versus institutions): an open question based on the communication strategies and communication dynamics of the communication group before *Barcelona en Comú* electoral coalition won the council election.

2.6. Dynamics at Barcelona Council (activists vs institutions): open question related to the communication strategies and communication dynamics of the communication group once *Barcelona en Comú* electoral coalition won the council election.

2.7. Coordination between the six groups (six political parties): it is an open question or category founded on the way to work, the differences and similarities between the communication groups of the six parties that form *BComú* electoral coalition.

Group 3. Tools and channels

3.1. Main channel during the campaign: this category is organised in:

- Television
- Newspaper
- Cybermedia
- Radio
- Digital networks
- Others

3.2. Relationship with the mass media: an open question. The interviewee should explain the different processes to produce and publish political electoral communication in mass media.

3.3. Media position according to their estimated relevance: in this category, the interviewee prioritises among different fields based on the kind of media. Also, an open question is included to go in-depth to the relevance of the digital network.

- Television
- Newspaper
- Cybermedia
- Radio
- Digital networks
- Others

3.4. Kind of tools (internal and external communication): the open question is related to the different new tools such as digital networks that the communication groups use not only to electoral communication but also to internal communication

3.5. Specific strategy/protocol for digital media: open question about the communication strategy and if there is a protocol or designed guide to the use of digital networks as an electoral communication tool.

3.6. Digital networks (parties and candidates) management: the category refers to different fields or answers options according to the control of candidates/politicians Twitter accounts during the electoral campaign. That is:

- **Themselves:** if they managed the accounts themselves.
- **Communication group:** if the communication group managed the Twitter accounts.

- **Both (candidates/communication group):** if it is managed by the candidates and by the communication groups and if it depends on the moment. Moreover, in this sense, a clear explanation of determinate in which moments.
- **Why six profiles (each party) instead of a confluence profile:** open question with the aim to know why, during the electoral campaign, the electoral coalition used six Twitter account (based on the six political parties) and why they did not use only one for the confluence.

Group 4. Communication strategies (the message).

4.1. Message definition: the open question-answer aims gathering information about how the electoral message and electoral themes were defined. Thus, the process, the decision-making, the frame, etc.

4.2. Message selection: this open question-answer related to the previous one (the message definition) according to the particular themes selection. For example, public transport, public housing, etc.

4.3. Different message-different media: open question to defined if, during the electoral campaign, the communication group's strategies were different. It depends on the communication channel (media is the message, McLuhan, 1987).

4.4. Coordination among the parties of the confluence: open question to know the relationship or coordinated strategies among the six parties that for the electoral coalition. In this sense, it is essential to ascertain the glaring differences about the homogeneous-heterogeneous message, the channels, meetings at the public space, etc.

4.5. Institutional message vs “the other campaign”: the question pretends to obtain information about the alternative elements or activist communication during the electoral campaign. That communication took place at the same time that the official or institutional communication. A few examples are the *Movimiento de Liberación Gráfica de Barcelona* or *Som Comuns*.

Group 5. Replies on social networks/multi-directional communication

The relevance of these (open) categories is to know why the political parties accounts did not reply to the user’s comments. Within the content analysis, we observed that on the conversations on Twitter, in a very few times, the users’ comments were answered. In those cases, the replies are from “anonymous” members of the communication groups. It is also important the way that the six political parties incorporated the arguments or questions of the users.

5.1. Replies management: who and why.

5.2. Replies identification (users/citizens + trolls): if they identify some users according to their answers.

5.3. Personal account/official account/candidates account: different answers depend on the user comment and the account holder.

5.4. Replies relevance (issues/arguments): different answer according to the significance of the issues/arguments for the electoral campaign.

5.5. Feedback: broad guidelines about the response policy.

CHAPTER IV

Results

Chapter IV. Results

The results of this research are included in different works –indexed research papers and international conferences– as a result of the compendium PhD dissertation modality. The levels of analysis and the objectives of each level have been organised over five publications.

The first article corresponds to the first level of analysis –the macro level– and it contains research based on exploring *Barcelona en Comú* communication network on *Twitter*. Through Social Network Analysis methodology, the research study responds that the objectives are listed below. The following table (*Table 14*) includes the paper and journal information.

- O1. Analyse the flow of communication and the relationship between the six political parties of the confluence on *Twitter* during the electoral campaign.
- O2. Study the multidirectional communication among the parties and users or citizens through the replies and comments in tweets spread by the political parties.
- O3. Identify the dominant issues proposed by political parties through the *hashtags* used on *Twitter*.

Table 14. PhD dissertation's first paper

1. Barcelona en Comú on Twitter. Analyzing the electoral communication of the confluence during the 2015 council election	
Authorship	Lucía García-Carretero and Laura Pérez-Altable
Journal	<i>El Profesional de la Información</i>
Language	English
Sent/ Accepted	08/03/217 07/06/2017
Published	September-October 2017
Indexing	JCR – WoS (2017) 1,318 Q3
Indexing	SJR-Scopus (2017) 0,652-Q1
Access	Open
Suggested citation	García-Carretero, Lucía and Pérez-Altable, Laura (2017). Barcelona en Comú on Twitter. Analyzing the electoral communication of the confluence during the 2015 council election. <i>El Profesional de la Información</i> , 26(5), pp. 871-883 eISSN: 1699-2407

As has been previously mentioned, the second level of analysis or micro level is based on content analysis organised in two steps. First, the study of the message of the six political parties' Twitter accounts. Secondly, the tweets spread by other relevant actors (according to the results of the first level of this dissertation) as @AdaColau. The objectives of this research study –included in the paper (Table 15) are:

O4. Discern the electoral communication strategy according to the message. In other words, find out the thematic selection the kind of message and the concordance between the text of the tweets and the *hashtags*.

O5. Analyse the use of Twitter by the parties of the confluence. In other words, know if the parties took advantage of the communication possibilities on *Twitter*.

O6. Deepen the kind of conversation among the six political parties and *Twitter* users.

O7. Analyse the message of other users both politicians and citizens, which set the

political message of the confluence during the electoral campaign

Table 15. PhD dissertation's second paper

2. From social movements to political parties. Barcelona en Comú's electoral message, uses and limitations on Twitter during 2015 council election	
Authorship	Lucía García-Carretero and Javier Díaz-Noci
Journal	<i>OBETS. Revista de Ciencias Sociales</i>
Language	English
Sent/	7/11/2017
Accepted	23/11/2018
Published	23/12/2018
SJR-Scopus (2017)	0,302-Q2
Access	Open
Suggested citation	García-Carretero, Lucía and Díaz-Noci, Javier (2018). From social movements to political parties. Barcelona en Comú's electoral message, uses and limitations on Twitter during 2015 council election. <i>OBETS. Revista de Ciencias Sociales</i> , 13(2), pp. 551-545, DOI: 10.14198/OBETS2018.13.2.03

In this respect, during the 2015 electoral campaign, another kind of communication has been observed (*Table 16*). In other words, this research study analyses an informal way of communication through, among others, images and video. That is the so called “*desborde*” or “the other campaign”, and it is related to political fandom (Coleman, 2003; Erikson, 2008; Madore, 2009; Sandvoss, 2013; Hernández-Santaolalla and Rubio-Hernández, 2017). That is, the phenomenon based on communication dynamics around political parties and candidates that articulates a close relationship between political parties and citizens (Sandvoss, 2013). The main objectives of this part of the analysis are:

O8. Analyse the ‘informal’ communicative elements of the electoral campaign such as @Somcomuns and the *Movimiento de Liberación Gráfica de Barcelona* –MLGB– created from outside, but incorporated into the institutional campaign of *Barcelona en Comú*.

O9. Deepen the internal structure of the communication group of Barcelona en Comú and the *#guerrillacomunicativa* to understand its internal and external communicative structure.

Table 16. PhD dissertation's third paper

3. La otra campaña de Barcelona en Comú: <i>Som Comuns, Movimiento de Liberación Gráfica y la guerrillacomunicativa</i>	
Authorship	Lucía García-Carretero and María-José Establés
Journal	<i>Dígitos. Revista de Comunicación Digital</i>
Language	Spanish
Sent/ Accepted	04/12/2018 02/04/2019
Published	No yet published
Indexing	MIAR 2018
Access	Open
Suggested citation	García-Carretero, Lucía & Establés, María-José (2019). La otra campaña de Barcelona en Comú: <i>Som Comuns, Movimiento de Liberación Gráfica y la guerrilla comunicativa</i> . <i>Dígitos. Revista de Comunicación Digital</i> (no yet published).

The third level of analysis understands digital networks in two ways (*Table 17*). First, the digital networks as a direct source of electoral information. Second, the digital networks as a “communication channel” as a potential intermediary between the users/citizens and political parties’ websites –the *hub* of online communication (Giansante, 2015)–. For that purpose, we use the *Search Engine Optimisation* tool *SEMrush* to study the political parties website from October 8th to 15th 2017, according to the concept of the permanent campaign (Lilleker, 2006; Elmer, Langlois y McKelvey, 2012).

O10. Ascertain the role of social networks as an online traffic provider of political parties websites.

O11. Study the keywords used for searching political parties websites.

O12. Analyse the visibility differences among the six political parties' websites according to the online traffic

O13. Explore the possibilities of the tool for the political parties websites analysis field.

Table 17. PhD dissertation's second conference paper

4. Visibilidad web y Comunicación Política: análisis de los sitios web de la coalición electoral Barcelona en Comú	
Conference date	June 2018
International Conference	VI Congreso Internacional de la Asociación Española de Investigación en Comunicación "Comunicación y Conocimiento"
Authorship	Lucía García-Carretero and Lluís Codina
Language	Spanish
Suggested citation	García-Carretero, Lucía & Codina, Lluís (2017). Visibilidad web y Comunicación Política: análisis de los sitios web de la coalición electoral Barcelona en Comú. In <i>VI Congreso Internacional de la Asociación Española de Investigación en Comunicación AE-IC 'Comunicación y Conocimiento'</i> (pp. 2318-2347). Salamanca (Spain). ISBN: 978-84-09-03393-5

Level 5. Mixed-methods approach (Macro-micro level)

To compare the results obtained by Social Network Analysis (*Level 1*), content analysis (*Level 2*) and the *Search Engine Optimisation* and coordinated strategy (*Level 3*) this research study includes several interviews to the community communication managers or communication commission or group members of the coalition (*Table 18*).

The objectives, which organise the last research step, are:

O14: Deepen the design and application of the electoral communication strategies of the coalition of parties.

O15: Compare the results obtained by the application of Social Network Analysis and the content analysis with the information collected from the political parties

by in-depth interviews.

Table 18. PhD dissertation's fourth paper

5. Medios sociales, nuevas organizaciones políticas y el método mixto: el caso de la comunicación electoral de 2015 de Barcelona en Comú	
Authorship	Lucía García-Carretero
Journal	<i>Hipertext.net Revista Académica sobre Documentación Digital y Comunicación Interactiva</i>
Language	Spanish
Sent/ Accepted	10/07/2018 15/10/2018
Published	November 2018
Indexing	CARHUS Plus+ 2014
Access	Open
Suggested citation	García-Carretero, Lucía (2018). El método mixto: una aproximación metodológica a través de la campaña a las municipales de Barcelona en Comú. <i>Hipertext.net</i> , 17, pp. 103-117. https://dx.doi.org/10.31009/hipertext.net.2018.i17.10

4.1. Publications: papers and conferences

4.4.1. Paper one. The network.

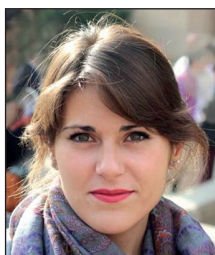
García-Carretero, Lucía and Pérez-Altale, Laura (2017). Barcelona en Comú on Twitter. Analyzing the electoral communication of the confluence during the 2015 council election. *El Profesional de la Información*, 26(5), pp. 871-883 eISSN: 1699-2407.



BARCELONA EN COMÚ ON TWITTER. ANALYZING THE ELECTORAL COMMUNICATION OF THE CONFLUENCE DURING THE 2015 COUNCIL ELECTION

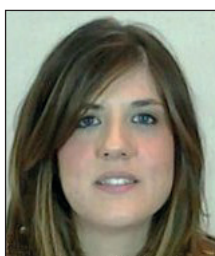
*Barcelona en Comú en Twitter. Análisis de la
comunicación electoral de la confluencia durante las
elecciones municipales de 2015*

Lucía García-Carretero and Laura Pérez-Altable



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Abstract

In recent years there has been a great deal of interest in digital networks as political communication tools. However, the use of social media depends on, among other things, the character of each political organization. The main objective of this research is to analyze *Barcelona en Comú's* digital communication on *Twitter* during the municipal election campaign from May 8 to May 22, 2015 in Barcelona. The methodology is based on a social network analysis (SNA) of all the tweets disseminated by the six political parties that formed the confluence. The investigation deepens our understanding of the communicative relationship between the six parties, and between the parties and the users, with the aim of analyzing the bi-directionality of the communicative process. We conclude that the party that generated the most electoral information on *Twitter* during the electoral campaign was *Barcelona en Comú*.

Keywords

Electoral communication; Political communication; *Barcelona en Comú*; Social network analysis; SNA; Social media; *Twitter*; Political Communication; Social networks.

Resumen

En los últimos años se ha producido un aumento del interés en las redes digitales como medio de comunicación política. Sin embargo su uso se encuentra determinado, entre otros factores, por la naturaleza y estrategias de cada partido político. Esta investigación analiza el uso que los partidos de la confluencia *Barcelona en Comú* llevaron a cabo durante la campaña de las municipales de 2015, del 8 al 22 de mayo, en la red digital *Twitter*. El método empleado ha sido el análisis de redes sociales de todos los tweets difundidos por los seis partidos políticos que forman la confluencia. Se profundiza en la relación comunicativa entre estos partidos, así como en la relación entre los partidos y los usuarios en la red digital analizando la bidireccionalidad del proceso comunicativo. El partido que generó más información electoral en *Twitter* durante la campaña fue *Barcelona en Comú*.

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Palabras clave

Comunicación electoral; *Barcelona en Comú*; Análisis de redes sociales; *Twitter*; Comunicación política; Redes sociales.

García-Carretero, Lucía; Pérez-Altable, Laura (2017). “*Barcelona en Comú on Twitter. Analyzing the electoral communication of the confluence during the 2015 council election*”. *El profesional de la información*, v. 26, n. 5, pp. 871-883.

<https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2017.sep.09>

1. Introduction

The political party *Barcelona en Comú* appeared in June 2014 as a consequence of the social, political, and economic context of a crisis in Spain. After the process of approval and evaluation, a confluence of six parties –*Barcelona en Comú, Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds, EQUO, Podem, Esquerra Unida i Alternativa*, and *Procés Constituent*– was founded under the same name *Barcelona en Comú*. The climate of distrust and political disaffection, institutional degradation, the widening of inequalities, and the decrease in government responsibility was made manifest by social movements in Spain, like the *Indignados movement* or the *Platform of Mortgage Victims (PAH)*, among others (Sampedro; Sánchez-Duarte, 2011; Royo, 2014; Roos; Oikonomakis, 2014). These movements that emerged out of the crisis (Della-Porta; Mattoni, 2014) introduced a different language and a variety of actions into the public sphere (Flesher-Fominaya; Montañés-Jiménez, 2014) and ‘gave roots to three different political parties –*Podemos, Ganemos*, and *Partido X*’ (Bosi; Giugni; Uba, 2016, p. 21).

“The political party *Barcelona en Comú* appeared in June 2014 as a consequence of the social, political, and economic context of a crisis in Spain”

Thus, *Barcelona en Comú* is part of the background which Sanz-Abad and Mateos-Martín (2014) define as the post-15M (after May 15, 2011) context and a part of Tarrow’s (1995) concept of political opportunity. In other words, the conditions that encourage or discourage political and social actors to form social movements or organizations. However, the relationship between these social movements and recent political parties is not clear because they do not align with any political or institutional organization (Roos; Oikonomakis, 2014). Nonetheless, movements turn into political parties as ‘movement states’ (McAdam; Tarrow, 2010) and *Barcelona en Comú* and *Podemos*, among others, inherited the practices, the tools, and most of the leaders of the *Indignados movement* (Borge; Santamaría, 2015). Hence,

“research should consider the different ways in which social movements and parties interact” (Piccio, 2015, p. 280).

However, the focus of this research is not to compare or find out the differences and similarities between Spanish social movements and new political parties. Instead, the aim of this investigation is to study the communication process and

the use of social media and digital tools by these new political organizations that were born after the crisis of 2008. Thus, we seek to agree or disagree with Haberer and Peña-López’s (2016, p. 480) statement:

“a crucial element of *Barcelona en Comú* is the extensive use of online forums for policy development, which permit as many people as possible to contribute to specific issues.”

In terms of digital communication, scholars differentiate between two main uses of *Twitter* as a political communication tool: one for the politicians and the other for the citizens (Zugasti; Sabés-Turmo, 2015; Tromble, 2016). Along the same lines, authors differentiate between the two net groups in *Barcelona en Comú*: one controlled by the political party and the other formed by the activists and supporters (Aragón; Volkovich; Laniado; Kaltenbrunner, 2015). Nevertheless, political parties, citizens, and other organizations have the imperative of sharing (Van-Dijck, 2013) and although

“politicians and government have been always complex [...] the increase in the complexity of communication challenges faced by those involved in early twenty-first-century” (Couldry; Hepp, 2017, p. 205).

“A confluence of six parties (*Barcelona en Comú, Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds, EQUO, Podem, Esquerra Unida i Alternativa*, and *Procés Constituent*) was founded under the same name *Barcelona en Comú*”

2. The counter-hegemony and social media in electoral campaigns

2.1. Hegemony and counter-hegemony

The political party is a complex social organism that is an expression of the collective, which is supported and partially recognized through action (Gramsci, 1971). According to this, and to the characteristics of the Spanish political system (Colomer, 2004), *Barcelona en Comú* and other new parties like *Podemos*, that have appeared in recent years in Spain, take part in the framework of left populism, more common in Southern than in Western European countries (Muis; Immerzeel, 2016). Notwithstanding the difficulty in defining what populism is (Laclau, 2005), the concept is understood as the denial of the left-right dichotomy, multiclass, and the participation of common people who demand equal politi-

cal rights against privileged groups (Germani, 2003). Moreover, populism can be a political style due to

“the effect of the mediatization of the political equating to a simplification of political discourse, it’s the reduction to neat us-against-them antagonisms and sound-bite solutions” (Moffitt; Tormey, 2013, p. 7).

After the Cold War, the previously positive connotations of ‘popular’ and ‘populism’ changed as a result of their association with the Soviet bloc (D’Eramo, 2013). Consequently, the left-right dichotomy and theory of the extremes won the war of position in political concepts and terms (Bourdieu, 1985; Gramsci, 1971). This theory legitimizes the political center and excludes hard left or right political positions, and this is one of the main reasons why left and right populist parties are understood as similar (D’Eramo, 2013). In this connection, the war of position between political parties in a democratic system is related to two positions or kinds of political parties: the hegemonic parties and the counter-hegemonic parties (Laclau; Mouffe, 2001; Laclau, 2005). Hegemony (the social, cultural, ideological, or economic influence exerted by a dominant group) is a relation or a political form susceptible to change, that is constantly being redefined because of its open and incomplete nature that is constituted by the antagonisms articulations and frontiers (Laclau; Mouffe, 2001).

“After the Cold War, the previously positive connotations of ‘popular’ and ‘populism’ changed as a result of their association with the Soviet bloc”

The articulation of the hegemony is between the historical bloc and/or hegemonic formations (Gramsci, 1971), which includes the Catalan and Spanish traditional parties, and the counter-hegemonic parties (Laclau; Mouffe, 2001), like *Barcelona en Comú*. This articulation is based on the relations among them and political communication in mass media. According to Mouffe (Carpentier; Cammaerts, 2006, p. 4), the social is always the result of a hegemonic articulation but, at the same time, it implies that there is always an outside. Thus, in line with Bart Cammaerts and Nico Carpentier:

“dominance and hegemony are again being reproduced, also on the Internet, but there are also counter-hegemonic spaces at the same time” (Carpentier; Cammaerts, 2006, p. 6).

Therefore, although online political communication research was initially positive about the democratic possibilities of counter-hegemonic parties (Larsson; Moe, 2013),

“research has continuously demonstrated that these more mundane and less demanding usage patterns are by far the most prevalent” (Bechmann; Lomborg, 2013)

and that, to a large extent, social media reproduces broadcasting and mass media logic (Graham; Broersma; Hazelhoff; Van’t Haar, 2013). In the same way, although *Twitter* can be an instrument for political parties to share information and connect to the people (Jackson; Lilleker, 2011), their

message is not outside the control of traditional communication channels (Broersma; Graham, 2012).

“As the counter-hegemonic have less coverage, social media can be understood as a channel to articulate the hegemonic by the new political parties”

2.2. The articulation of hegemony in social media

In Spain, the traditional media’s coverage of the electoral campaign is regulated by Spanish law according to the results of the previous election. Therefore, considering that television is the main political communication mass media in Spain (Sampedro, Sánchez-Duarte; Campos-Domínguez, 2014) and the counter-hegemonic have less coverage, social media can be understood as a channel to articulate the hegemonic by these new political parties. In order to focus on political and electoral communication, the mediatization theory states that mass media, particularly television, is the main communication channel for the citizens, and in a political framework too (Hepp, 2013; Hjarvard, 2013). Despite this, mass media and social media can coexist (Casero-Ripollés; Feenstra; Tormey, 2016; Chadwick, 2013; McNair, 2006). With regard to this, in electoral campaigns they

“do not abandon their traditional tactics and tools; they enrich them with the new logics and possibilities of digital media” (Casero-Ripollés et al., 2016, p. 382).

Barack Obama’s 2008 campaign is underscored as an example of the integration of social networks as a political communication tool (Jungheer, 2016) (Nielsen, 2012). Nevertheless, the United States should not be used as a typical case study because of the distance and differences between parties and the degree of sophistication (Vaccari, 2013). That said, cross-national comparisons of the use of *Twitter* during electoral campaigns are useful for understanding that tweeting behavior depends on the political and media conditions of each country (Graham; Jackson; Broersma, 2014). Recent studies have explored the use of *Twitter* as a political communication tool in the Spanish general election (Alonso-Muñoz; Marcos-García; Casero-Ripollés, 2016; Aragón; Kappler; Kaltenbrunner; Laniado; Volkovich, 2013; Campos-Domínguez; Calvo, 2017; López-García, 2016; Sampedro, 2011; Zugasti; Sabés-Turmo, 2015), regional election (López-García; Cano-Orón; Argilés-Martínez, 2016; Marín-Deñás; Díaz-Guerra, 2016; Pérez-Gabaldón; Nicasio-Varea, 2015), council election (Carratalá; Galán, 2016; Quevedo-Redondo; Portalés-Oliva; Berrocal-Gonzalo, 2016) and, among others, relevant political moments in Spain (Marcos-García; Alonso-Muñoz; Casero-Ripollés, 2016). In addition, some studies have explored the use of *Twitter* in other Southern European countries like Greece (Poulakidakos; Veneti, 2016) and Italy (Auriemma et al., 2015).

According to Bor (2014), it is possible to identify two ways of understanding political and electoral communication through digital networks. On the one hand, there is communication related to the diffusion of mass messages and

its presence in social media, and on the other hand, communication based on exchange, participation, and feedback (Bor, 2014). In this context, scholars have pointed out the relevance of *Twitter* as a fluid and opinionated channel of communication between politicians and the audience or citizens, but the power of mass media remains in the digital network (Lawrence; Molyneux; Coddington; Holton, 2014). The expectations of bidirectional communication on social media are not always met (Fernández, 2012) and they are also not a substitute for social or political practices and other methods of political communication (Coudry, 2015). It is important to note that this study is about political parties that used digital networks as the principal channel of communication for the counter-hegemony, although it

“is very different to concluding that the natural balance of politics overall has been changed by these new communication tools” (Coudry; Hepp, 2017, p. 209).

Barcelona en Comú party centralized the confluence’s electoral communication on *Twitter*

3. Goals and methods

3.1. Goals

In order to identify the electoral communication strategies and communication coordination between the six political parties that formed the *Barcelona en Comú* (BeC) confluence from May 8-22, 2015, it is necessary to answer some questions that have been unresolved by previous studies. First, the *Barcelona en Comú* party centralized the confluence’s electoral communication on *Twitter*. Then, according to the text of the tweets, an analysis of the main campaign issues revealed that BeC used *Twitter* to rally people to participate in public meetings or speeches in the urban area, election debates in the mass media, and other kinds of announcements for the campaign. Using this information, we can determine how the parties used hashtags to disseminate the campaign issues, which has not been address in previous studies. Finally, the purpose of this research is to understand the relationship between the parties and the users according to their replies and the two-way process of communication that *Twitter* enables. With this aim, we have organized our investigation into three objectives:

1. Analyze the flow of communication and the relationships between the six political parties in the confluence on *Twitter* during the electoral campaign.
2. Study the relationship between the party and the users on *Twitter* through replies and comments in tweets spread by the political parties.
3. Identify the dominant issues proposed by political parties through the hashtags used.

This article presents the results obtained by the application of network analysis to all of the tweets disseminated by the six political parties:

- *Barcelona en Comú* (@bcnencomu)
- *Podem* (@Podem_BCN)

- *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds* (@iniciativaBCN)
- *Esquerra Unida i Alternativa* (@EUiABCN)
- *Procés Constituent* (@pconstituentBCN) and
- *EQUO* (@Equobcn).

In order to complete the second objective of this research, secondary nodes or actors were analyzed. Thus, the ego net in the replies to the parties’ tweets. According to Pérez-Altable (2015), based on work by Borgatti, Everett, and Johnson (2013), the *Twitter* accounts of both political parties and users are the ego network, which means these nodes or actors are a part of the network this research is focused on. As Bellotti (2015, p. 3) has pointed out:

“network science starts from the observation of actors entangled in meaningful relations in contextualized environments.”

Accordingly, the official *Twitter* accounts of the six political parties are the nodes or actors on which we focused our attention, based on social networks analysis (SNA), in order to establish which node centralized the communication flow of the confluence and how the campaign’s information was spread. In addition, we explore the most popular hashtags (#) spread by the political parties in order to identify: 1) if the group of parties, the confluence, posted together during the electoral campaign; and 2) what were the words or hashtags that represent what they considered to be the most important issues of the electoral period. Thus, we can discover if the political parties were able to spread and manage their political program without mass media while leveraging the power of social media (Fenton; Barassi, 2011).

3.2. Data collection and network analysis

The empirical study presented in this paper employs the network analysis approach. In order to trace the *Barcelona en Comú* confluence’s network, we have analyzed all of the tweets disseminated through *Twitter* by the confluence on May 8-22, 2015, based on information collected from the official accounts of the parties. The *Twitter* data are particularly useful in terms of our research objectives as they allow us to determine the diffusion of information through the platform and the interaction between users. In that sense, social media are fundamentally driven by the interaction between users. Thus, communication is interactive and networked (Bechmann; Lomborg, 2013, p. 3). The number of emitted tweets was 1,253:

- 568 from *Barcelona en Comú* (BeC)
- 394 from *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds* (ICV)
- 152 from *Procés Constituent*
- 100 from *Podem*
- 28 from *Esquerra Unida i Alternativa* (EUiA) and
- 11 from *EQUO*.

Then, we organized the data in a two-step process. The first step was the collection of the data day-by-day during the campaign using the *Google Chrome* extension *Dataminer*.

Secondly, we developed a database using *FileMaker Pro* software that contained several categories for applying the content analysis technique collecting and organising the interaction among the network, with the aim of exploring the bidirectional process of communication on *Twitter*. By inte-

reaction, we mean the flow of information exchange among the nodes in the network, by replies or retweets. With this file, we generated a node list. In a node list, the first name in each row gives the node that is 'sending' a tie (the ego). The names that follow, in the same row, are the nodes receiving a tie (the alters) (Borgatti et al., 2013, p. 66). The software used to process the node list was *Ucinet*. The program allows for the measurement of the properties of the network as a whole and on the element level. Analyzing our data with *Ucinet*, we obtained degree centrality measures. Thus, we can identify the most central nodes in the network. According to Borgatti (2005, p. 62), based on Freeman (1979), degree centrality can be defined as the number of the incident upon a node. There are two types of degree centrality: in-degree and out-degree. In-degree centrality refers to the connections received by a node, meanwhile out-degree refers to the connections sent by a node (Freeman, 1979). In this study, connection refers to the retweets and mentions received/sent by a particular node. Thus, if a node has high in-degree centrality this means that this node receives a large number of retweets or/and mentions from other nodes. Conversely, if a node has a high out-degree value this means that this node sends a large number of retweets and/or mentions to other nodes within the network.

After analyzing our data, one way of conceptualizing networks mathematically was by using a graph (Borgatti et al., 2013, p.11). In our study, for the visualization of the network, we used *Gephi* software. In the graph, nodes are represented as points and arcs are represented by directional arrows between these points (Wasserman; Faust, 1994, p. 73).

4. Results

The composition of the digital network of *Barcelona en Comú* during the electoral campaign provides information about how the confluence disseminated their electoral communication via relationships between the six actors. Table 1, based on Graham, Jackson, and Broersma's (2014) work, illustrates how *Barcelona en Comú* was the party that disseminated the greatest number of tweets during the campaign. Also, according to the mean and SD data, *BeC* was the party of the confluence that produced the most consistent number of tweets per day. By contrast, the SD of the other five parties reveals that there were large differences in tweet dissemination during the campaign, especially in the cases of *Podem*, *EUiA* (1.59), and *EQUO* (1.91). Figure 1 shows that this imbalance was related to a large increase in dissemination on specific days. The highest dissemination of tweets by *ICV*, *Procés Constituent*,

Table 1. Frequency of tweets by party

	N	%	Mean	Median	SD
<i>BeC</i>	568	45.33	37.87	39	11.80
<i>Podem</i>	100	7.98	6.67	3	11.54
<i>ICV</i>	394	31.44	26.27	20	22.56
<i>Procés Constituent</i>	152	12.13	10.13	8	7.42
<i>EUiA</i>	28	2.23	1.86	2	1.59
<i>EQUO</i>	11	0.88	0.73	0	1.91
Total	1253	100	13.92	5	17.89

SD: standard deviation

and *EUiA* was related to campaign acts in the public sphere. Regarding the tweets from *Podem* and *EQUO*, the highest dissemination was related to political debates in the mass media.

“The climate of distrust and political disaffection, institutional degradation, the widening of inequalities, and the decrease in government responsibility was made manifest by social movements in Spain”

Second, as shown in Figure 2, the political party actors are represented by points organized by different colors and their own identification labels. Consequently, secondary actors corresponding to each political party on *Twitter* have the same color points without a label. Table 2 illustrates the value of the network's density. Reciprocity measures the likelihood of nodes in a network being mutually linked; that is to say, reciprocity evaluates the tendency of node pairs to form mutual connections between each other. The number of reciprocity edges is 204, which is 9.9% of the total (2,070). As

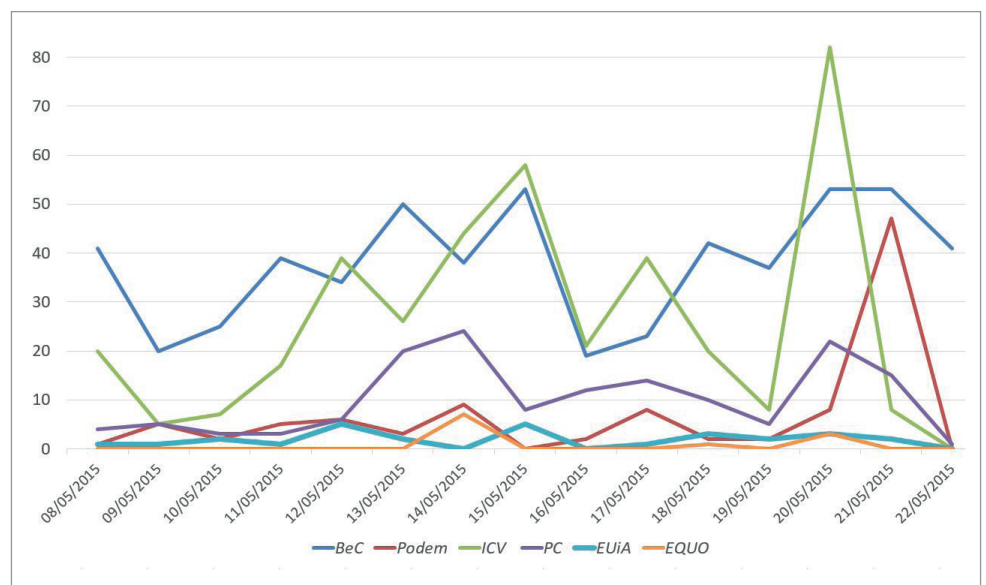


Figure 1. Party's tweet count during the campaign

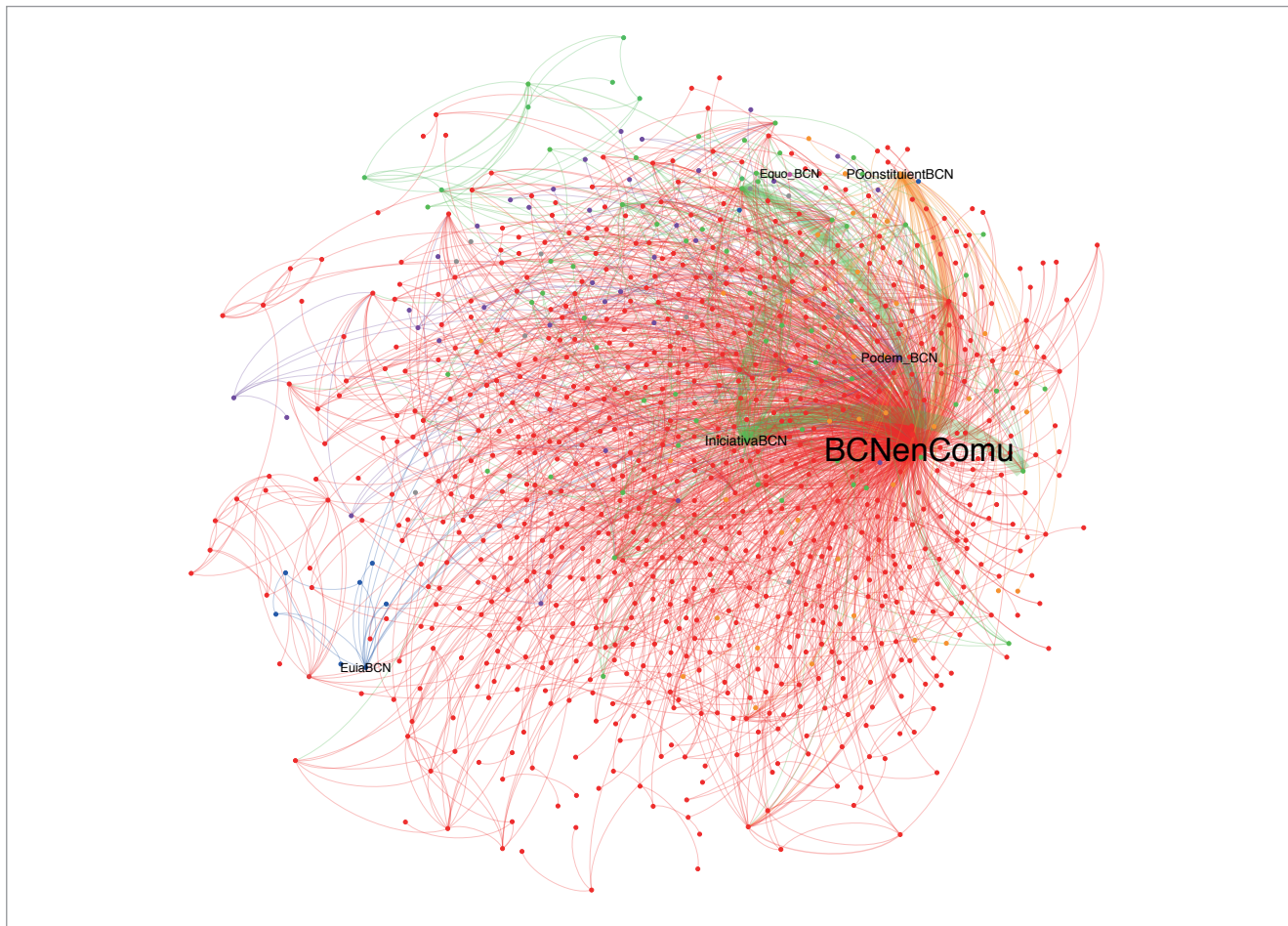


Figure 2. The *Barcelona en Comú* digital communication actors during the electoral campaign

Nodes key:

- Red = *Barcelona en Comú*
- Green = *Iniciativa per Catalunya*
- Blue = *Esquerra Unida i Alternativa*
- Purple = *Podem*
- Orange = *Procès Constituent*
- Pink = *EQUO*

a result, a significant number of unreciprocated interactions in the network indicates that there were a large number of relationships which were unbalanced. Our findings suggest also that lower values of reciprocity characterized networks centered on leaders or central nodes, which means there was an asymmetric distribution of power, showing that the network tended to be hierarchical.

As we can see from Figure 3, the distribution of the network was a decreasing function, resembling a power-law distribution. This result indicates that there were a few nodes that

managed considerable information, and many nodes that managed less information; a few very central nodes dominated the network. Consequently, the highly connected nodes at the tail of the power-law distribution played a key role in keeping the network together and in disseminating information. These nodes played the role of bridging the many small communities of clusters into an integrated network. Hence, the statement that *Barcelona en Comú* (party) centralized the confluence’s electoral communication was verified. On the one hand, @bcnencomu has the highest in-degree, which indicates that it was the main party generating new content or information on *Twitter*. On the other hand, the remaining parties have a low in-degree, which means that there was a high level of dissemination of information during the campaign.

As the results show, the ego net *Barcelona en Comú* centralized electoral communication on *Twitter*. Out of the total number of tweets disseminated, the party which received the highest number of mentions (in-degree) is @bcnencomu, followed by @iniciativabcn, and @podem_bcn. After this came @pconstituentBCN and eventually, @EUIABCN.

Table 2. Network measures

Network metrics	Value
Nodes	891
Edges	2,070
Density	0.003
Reciprocity	204 (9.9%)

By contrast, @Equobcn did not receive any mentions or replies. In relation to the number of answers or comments that the parties disseminated, the out-degree, the first political party was @iniciativa. In second was @bcnencomu and then @pconstituentBCN. Fourth, was @podem_bcn, followed by @EUIABCN. Last was @Equobcn.

So far, we have shown each party's profile according to users' activity (number of messages sent) and the attention received (in-degree). Considering these two variables, users' activity and attention received, we determined the efficiency of each party's activity. **Morales-Guzmán et al.** (2014) define user efficiency as the ratio between influence gained and effort expended. The fact that not all parties' accounts must employ the same amount of effort to accomplish the same level of interaction with other users implies that these accounts have an individual efficiency for their activity (**Morales-Guzmán et al.**, 2014, p. 5). In this paper, the term *user efficiency* refers to the ratio between the number of interactions (retweets and mentions) obtained by an account and the activity, i.e. the number of messages posted by that account. The equation to calculate user efficiency is written as (ibidem):

$$e = \frac{i}{a}$$

where *i* is the number of interactions gained by a political party's account and *a* is the number of messages posted by the account. The accounts whose $n > 1$ received more interactions than the number of messages sent are, therefore, more efficient in spreading information among the network. Alternatively, accounts with < 1 had to employ

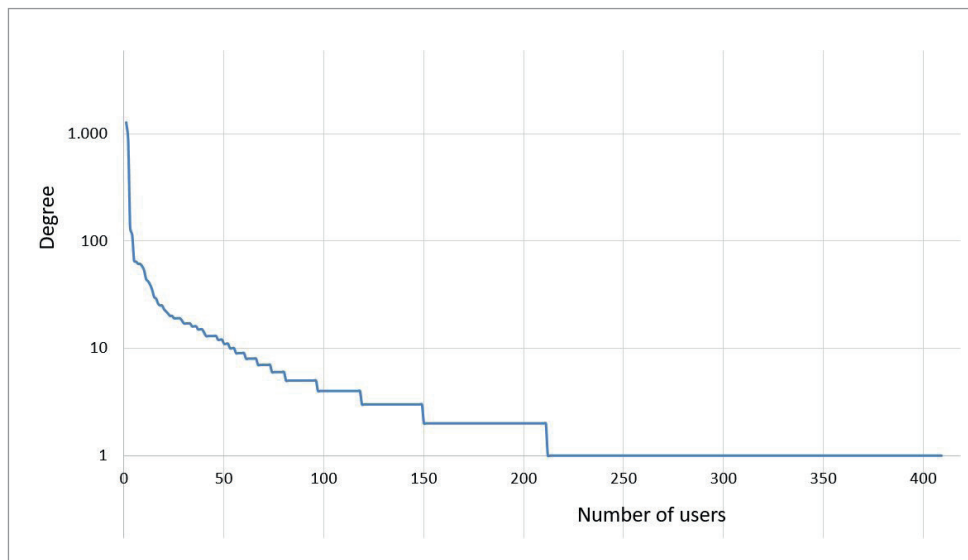


Figure 3. Degree centrality distribution

more effort to obtain the same outcomes. As can be seen from Table 3, in the case of the confluence there was only one efficient party: *BeC* (2.23). The rest of the accounts show low efficiency values.

Taking into account the classification proposed by **Padovani and Pavan** (2016, p. 360), we have divided the users into two main groups: *programmers*, which were the nodes in the top of the distribution, and *mobilizers*, which were the nodes in the bottom of the distribution. Programmer nodes were important in order to set the discourse of the network and define the framework of the conversation. On the other hand, mobilizers were the nodes that operated into the network, implementing the network's potential connections in different directions. Thus, programmer nodes received a high number of hyperlinks (in-degree), while mobilizer nodes sent many hyperlinks to other actors within the network (out-degree).

Table 4 shows programmers in the network. In general, programmer nodes were related to the confluence. This means that the discourse within the network was settled primarily by members of the party. Thus, the conversation was focused around the organization, specifically around the candidates, as we can see in the case of @adacolau, @g_pisarello, or @janetsanz.

Table 3. Efficiency of each party account

	Messages	%	Interaction (RT + Mention)	Efficiency (e)
BeC	568	45.33	1,266	2.23
Podem	100	7.98	26	0.26
ICV	394	31.44	58	0.15
Procès Constituent	152	12.13	6	0.04
EUIA	28	2.23	3	0
EQUO	11	0.88	0	0.11
Total	1,253	100	1,359	1.01

Table 5 reveals the mobilizer nodes in the network. The role of mobilizers was mainly played by the political parties, instead of the candidates, as was the case with the programmer nodes.

The campaign issues, according to the total of 128 hashtags disseminated, show (Figure 4) that the most common hashtags were spread in a cross-cutting way for the six parties. For example, the issues #Ada24M and #guanyarem24m, with an 0.714 of degree, followed by #Adaalcaldessa, #alaplaca20m, #jovai-galaplaca, and #municipalsbcn with an

quantitative value (0.143), some issues related with each party were #adacolauenlaser, #barceloneta, and #bcomu-gentcomu from @bcnencomu, #adaalcaldessa; and #barcelona from @iniciativabcn, #podembcn, and #nottip from @podem_bcn; and finally, #guanyaeuropa and #denunciemlaxenofobia from @EUiABCN. The party @EQUO did not use hashtags during the electoral campaign.

5. Conclusions

This research allows us to conclude that:

1) The party that generated the most electoral information on *Twitter* during the electoral campaign was *Barcelona en Comú*. The role played by the party was to set the issue agenda for the confluence. Additionally, the other five parties disseminated this information. Thus, *BeC* effectively used *Twitter* as an electoral communication channel because it maintained a differentiated strategy based on continuously balancing the dissemination of tweets. By contrast, the other five parties of the confluence used *Twitter* mainly to reproduce what was happening in both public and mass media spaces. In other words, *Twitter* was used as a channel of

‘communication between two entities that are spatially distant from each other, creating new first-order interactions’ and as a tool for ‘communication-at-a-distance’ (Couldry; Hepp, 2017, p. 81).

‘ @Bcnencomú and @AdaColau managed a lot of information ’

In this context, the articulation of the hegemony (Gramsci, 1971; Laclau; Mouffe, 2001) during the campaign played a part in social media, and also in other more traditional electoral communication venues. In our case study, we observed how *Twitter* can be used as a channel for covering political meetings (as the SD shows) and that it can be used as a way to articulate hegemony when mass media coverage is limited. Therefore, until *Twitter* is implemented in a more participatory way, mass media and social media will continue to contribute to the articulation of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic spaces at the same time (Carpentier; Cammaerts, 2006).

Second, the out-degree and in-degree values of the SNA allow us to conclude that the parties which did not use *Twitter* to its best advantage, as a bidirectional communication channel, were primarily *Esquerra Unida i Alternativa* and *EQUO*. By contrast, *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds* and *Barcelona en Comú* were parties that better exploited the bidirectional potential of *Twitter*. In accordance with the other actors (the users) who participated in *Twitter* replies during the campaign.

2) We also observed an increase in tweets from @bcnencomu. Thus, a 46.38% for the tweets give rise to conversations. Based on the above, *Barcelona en Comú* was the party that carried out the most effective use of *Twitter* and by using it as a channel for electoral communication during the electoral campaign, regardless of mass media logic (Martínez-Rodríguez, 2005; Carpentier, 2015; Aragón

et al., 2013; Zugasti; Sabés-Turmo, 2015). The low level of reciprocity between nodes in the network meant that most of the interactions were unreciprocated. This was a common feature which characterised networks centered on leaders or a central node, in line with the idea of ‘the myth of horizontality’ (Pavan, 2015, p. 917). This means that @Bcnencomú and @AdaColau managed a lot of information, while fewer nodes managed less information. The nodes with lower centrality values were usually nodes that did not have any connection with the central nodes. As can be seen from our findings, the nodes with higher centrality values were the official party accounts, as well as the candidates’ accounts. This means that the conversation was set by the organization, that is, from top to bottom. But the nodes with low centrality were essential in the process of diffusion. In a nutshell, we can conclude that the top-nodes were responsible for generating new information, since the bottom-nodes, the nodes in the tail of the distribution, were relevant to the spread of the information generated by the top-nodes which reached of wider audiences.

‘ The most common issue related to the text of the tweets was the call or agenda campaign which was mainly related to directive acts: when the speaker affirms or denies anything certainly ’

3) As aforementioned, a study based on content analysis was conducted previously. Based on issues with the previous study, in this research we analyzed the hashtags spread on *Twitter* with the aim of identifying the dominant issues proposed for all the parties of the confluence. The most common issue related to the text of the tweets was the call or agenda campaign which was mainly related to directive acts: when the speaker affirms or denies anything certainly (Austin, 1988; Searle, 1976). Thus, with this kind of tweet, the intention of the *Barcelona en Comú* confluence was to achieve its goal of recovering the public and institutional places. The power-law distribution of the network played an important role in this regard, facilitating the dissemination of these ideas in a more efficient way. The hashtags used by the parties for this cross-cutting issue were #Ada24M, #guanyarem24M, #alapaça20m, #jovaigalapaça, #adaalcaldessa, and #municipalsbcn. Even though, after the call or agenda campaign, the second and third most disseminated issues during the campaign were activism and citizen participation, and social inequalities, there were also indications that the hashtags used in these tweets were more related to the place of a public activity or the date than the content of the tweet. The hashtags #StMartiProencomu, #SarriaenComu, #Eixamplencomu, and #15M, related to activism, and #SantAndreucomu, #navasencomu, or #BTVe15, related to social inequalities.

6. Limitations and further research

The findings of this study provide information about the communication flow and the relationship on *Twitter* between the six parties that formed the *Barcelona en Comú* confluence. We believe this exploratory analysis offers a so-

lid foundation to deepen the electoral communication strategies of *Barcelona en Comú*.

Nevertheless, we found some limitations. For example, hashtags did not exactly define electoral issues and as a result there wasn't a clear connection between the hashtag and issue. Also, only *Barcelona en Comú* was efficient while the rest of the accounts presented low-efficiency values, although it is important to note that this approach does not provide enough information to know why this was the case. Hence, we believe that going into detail about the correspondence between the results obtained and a qualitative approach is necessary. Therefore, the next step in our research will include a detailed content analysis of the tweets and six in-depth interviews with the person(s) responsible for the parties' electoral communications. In addition, an interesting future study could be an in-depth look at how the parties integrated *Twitter* communications into their entire media campaign.

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4.1.2. Paper two. The institutional message

García-Carretero, Lucía and Díaz-Noci, Javier (2018). From social movements to political parties. Barcelona en Comú's electoral message, uses and limitations on Twitter during 2015 city council election. *OBETS. Revista de Ciencias Sociales*, 13(2), pp. 515-545.

**FROM SOCIAL MOVEMENTS TO POLITICAL
PARTIES. BARCELONA EN COMÚ'S ELECTORAL
MESSAGE, USES AND LIMITATIONS ON TWITTER
DURING 2015 CITY COUNCIL ELECTION**
**DE MOVIMIENTOS SOCIALES A PARTIDOS POLÍTICOS.
MENSAJE ELECTORAL, USOS Y LIMITACIONES DE
TWITTER POR PARTE DE BARCELONA EN COMÚ EN
LAS ELECCIONES MUNICIPALES DE 2015**

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Abstract

Twitter as an electoral communication tool is determined by the objectives and the character of each political organization. This article analyses the communication strategies of the political organization *Barcelona en Comú* on Twitter for a better understanding of the way in which new political forces work in a digital environment. The case study is based on qualitative content analysis with several categories related to the message and the digital network possibilities. The amount of 1,840 tweets from two groups of Twitter accounts was analyzed. First, the tweets disseminated by the six parties that form the electoral coalition *Barcelona en Comú*. Second, the tweets disseminated by politicians and members of communication commission of the parties. The results allow

us to conclude that one of the six parties centralised the communication of the *confluence*. Also, that the bidirectional communication process among parties and users took place in the second group of Twitter accounts.

Keywords: Social media; Twitter; Political Communication; Online Campaigning; Digital media; Barcelona en Comú.

Resumen

El uso de *Twitter* como herramienta de comunicación electoral se encuentra determinado por el carácter de cada organización política. Este artículo analiza las estrategias comunicativas electorales en *Twitter* de la organización política *Barcelona en Comú* con el fin de averiguar cómo las nuevas formaciones políticas actúan en el medio digital. El presente caso de estudio se basa en un análisis de contenido cualitativo centrado en diferentes categorías en relación al tema de campaña y a las posibilidades que la red digital ofrece. El universo de estudio son 1.840 *tweets* organizados en dos niveles de análisis. En primer lugar, los *tweets* difundidos por las cuentas de los seis partidos que forman la coalición electoral *Barcelona en Comú*. En segundo lugar, los *tweets* publicados durante la campaña por las cuentas de los candidatos y miembros de la comisión de comunicación. Los resultados muestran como uno de los seis partidos de *Barcelona en Comú* centralizó la comunicación durante la campaña. Asimismo, se confirma que el proceso de comunicación bidireccional en *Twitter* se llevó a cabo mediante los perfiles en la red social de políticos y miembros de los grupos de comunicación de los partidos.

Palabras clave: Medios sociales, Twitter, comunicación política, campaña online; medios digitales, Barcelona en Comú.

1. INTRODUCTION

This article seeks to analyze the electoral communication characteristics on Twitter of the electoral coalition *Barcelona en Comú* from 8th to 22nd of May 2015. The main purpose is to analyze the online communication strategy for a better understanding of the way in which new political forces, which appeared in a digital environment, use digital networks. More specifically, this research study is included in broader research based on a mixed-method approached (Edwards, 2010). The methodological design of this paper is based on a qualitative content analysis. This technique has been applied to two levels of Twitter accounts during the electoral campaign. In order to go in-depth into the first level (1,195 tweets), we analyze the six political parties of the electoral coalition. Also, we study a second level of analysis of 645 tweets spread by other relevant actors such as the politicians of the *confluence* (e.g. @AdaColau) and other users who set the electoral message on Twitter during the campaign (e.g. @3eses), based on the results of previous research (García-Carretero & Pérez-Altale, 2017).

The research interest in the use of Twitter as an electoral communication tool has increased substantially in last years (Fenton & Barassi, 2011; Vaccari, 2013; Bor, 2014; Jungherr, 2015; Campos-Domínguez, 2017). This has contributed to the debate on the potential of social networks as a communication channel in a hybrid media system (Chadwick, 2013), where offline and online forms of communication take place at the same time. Moreover, in political communication “older and new media [...] are on balance, more expansive and inclusive than those that prevailed during the twentieth century” (Chadwick, 2013, 210). The use of social media depends on parties’ characteristics and on their adaptation of the parties to the digital communication according to their goals, organization and power situation (Borge & Esteve, 2017). For that matter, a research based on the Spanish 2016 election, shows the media hybridization and differences among parties characteristics (López-Meri, Marcos-García & Casero-Ripollés, 2017). The use of social media offers both challenges and opportunities in online political communication (Borge & Esteve, 2017). In this process, the definition of the objectives, political agenda and the design of ideal communication strategies are essential features to influence citizens’ behavior (Maarek, 1997). Thus, “politicians are compelled to pay special attention to what circulates on social networks, to the issue raised and debated by the citizens, and to sense the pulse of public opinion now more unpredictable and volatile than ever before” (Mazzoleni, 2017: 7).

The Spanish social movements were born out of the economic crisis (della Porta & Mattoni, 2014; Casero et al., 2017) such as *The Platform of Mortgage Victims* (PAH, according to the Catalan/Spanish spelling) or *Indignados* movement (Royo, 2014) and introduced a different language and a variety of actions into the public scene (Sampedro & Sánchez-Duarte, 2011; Flesher & Montañés, 2014; Casero et al, 2017). The social movements against austerity (della Porta & Mattoni, 2014) also set a political opportunity for new political parties both in a national and supranational level (Mosca, 2014). In this context, new left-winged political parties arose in the framework of Mediterranean Europe as *Movimento 5 Stelle* in Italy, *Syriza* in Greece, or *Podemos* in Spain (Auriemma et al., 2015; Poulakidakos & Veneti, 2016). Spanish national party *Podemos* (*We can*) and other local and regional organisations so-called “*the commons*” that appeared at Post 15M context (Sanz & Mateos, 2014) crystallised the Spanish social protests in terms of political opportunities. For instance, the political organisations born in 2015 such as *Ahora Madrid* (*Now Madrid*) in Madrid, *En Marea* (*En Masse*) in Galicia or *Barcelona en Comú* (*Barcelona in Common*) in Barcelona (Lobera, 2015; della Porta, Fernández, Kouki & Mosca, 2017).

This research study assumes that *Barcelona en Comú* is a representative example and a case study (Yin, 2009) of movement parties against austerity in Europe and Western World (della Porta, et al., 2017). These are “political parties that have particularly strong organizational and external links with social movements” (della Porta et al. 2017: 4-5). *Guanyem Barcelona*, currently *Barcelona en Comú*, was formed in June 2014. Less than one year after its creation, this movement party (della Porta et al. 2017) joined with other five left political parties and formed the *confluence Barcelona en Comú*¹. The so-call *confluence* was formed by the parties *Barcelona en Comú* –new movement party–, *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds* and *Esquerra Unida i Alternativa* –left-wing minority parties–, *Podem* –the Catalan *We Can*–, *EQUO* –green party–, and *Procés Constituent* –a left-winged independence Catalan party–. These parties ran in the city council election of May 2015. Finally, on 24 May 2015 *Barcelona en Comú* won the municipal elections being elected with 11 seats. Nowadays, Ada Colau is the Mayoress of Barcelona, who used to be the spokeswoman of PAH social movement.

Nonetheless, the relevance of Spanish social movements is not only their political opportunity (Mosca, 2014; della Porta et al., 2017). Spanish social movements found in social media a complementary organization and communication channel in addition to mass media coverage (Linares & Pérez-Altable, 2015; Linares, 2017). Also, these new left-wing political parties inherited the communication practices, tools as digital networks and most of the leaders of social movements (Borge & Santamarina, 2015) given its lack of hegemony at the public sphere.

2. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT: FROM SOCIAL MOVEMENTS TO NEW POLITICAL PARTIES

In Spain, as in many other European countries (Auriemma et al., 2015; Poulakidakos & Veneti, 2016; della Porta et al., 2017), the economic crisis situation started between the end of 2007 and the beginning of 2008 (Carballo-Cruz, 2011; Orriols & Cordero, 2016). The financial and economic breakdown has produced, as many other results, a climate of distrust and political disaffection amongst wide layers of the population, singularly the youngest ones (Calvo, Gómez-Pastrana & Mena, 2011; Likki, 2012; Fernández-Planells, Figueras-Maz & Feixa, 2014). The economic crisis that concerned Spanish citizens and the

¹ The parties decided to call itself *confluence* because this word symbolized, according to *Barcelona en Comú*, the union among left parties. Nevertheless, the proper expression to define this group of parties is an electoral coalition of parties.

disaffection with the political system were essential features for the outbreak of protests (Castells, 2012; Alonso & Rovira, 2015; Gerbaudo & Screti, 2017). The best-known manifestation of social movements against austerity (della Porta & Mattoni, 2014) was the *Indignados* movement. In May 2011, massive concentrations took place in Spanish cities such as *Catalunya* and *Sol* squares in Barcelona and Madrid. Another example of the inequality rising (Roos & Oikonomakis, 2014) is the *Platform of Mortgage Victims (PAH)*, whose spokeswoman and activist was Ada Colau. Ada Colau is nowadays is the Mayoress of Barcelona. *The PAH* “found in the web 2.0 and social networks a useful tool to communicate and mobilize [...] and introduce their topics and frames in political and media agenda-setting” (Alonso-Muñoz & Casero-Ripollés, 2016: 26).

Moreover, this cycle of mobilizations as a consequence of multi-dimensional crisis “have also contributed to change in the Spanish political system” (della Porta et al., 2017: 46) and given roots for new political parties (Bosi, Giugni & Uba, 2016, López-García, 2017). These social movements broke “the social and political consensus established in the political transition” and led the political opportunity (della Porta et al., 2017: 45). As a consequence, “processes of movements' institutionalization have taken place with democratization waves throughout the world” (Doowon, 2006, in Piccio, 2016: 265). Between 2014 and 2015, political organizations like *Podemos* burst into the Spanish system because of social movements' political changes (Sanz & Mateos, 2014). Up until that moment, the Spanish political system was characterized by the alteration of two main parties in the Government (Orriols & Cordero, 2016). The relationship between social movements and parties can lead in a context where movements join electoral parties or coalitions (McAdam & Tarrow, 2010). The *Indignados* movement has not disappeared but diluted resulting in these new political organizations (Casero-Ripollés, Feenstra & Tormey, 2016). For this reason, is highly important to figure out how the social media practices of these organizations are more structured with organizational routines and formal communication channels (Mattoni & Treré, 2014).

3. SOCIAL MEDIA AND POPULISM AS COMMUNICATION STYLE

The six parties' communication strategies analyzed in this article are understood as *populist* communication style. As stated above, *Podemos* and the other local and regional movement parties as *Barcelona en Comú* (della Porta et al. 2017) are based on populist communication strategies (López-García, 2017), according to Ernesto Laclau's (2005) and Antonio Gramsci's (2009) work. In European populist atmosphere, the Spanish left-wing populism is interesting in a con-

text where right-wing populism is dominant (Casero-Ripollés, Sintés-Olivella & Franch, 2017). Despite the difficulty to define what populism is (Laclau, 2005), populism denies the left-right dichotomy, it is multiclass and demands equal political rights, social justice and participation of ordinary people against privileged groups (Germani, 2003). Nevertheless, the overcoming of the right-left binomial as well as the overcoming of the class struggle for this case study is questioned. According to the authors (Aalberg, Esser, Reinemann, Strömbäck & De Vreese, 2017; Block & Negrine, 2017), populism can be understood as a political (communication) style due to “the effect of the mediatisation of the political equating to a simplification of political discourse, it’s the reduction to neat us-against-them antagonisms and sound-bite solutions” (Moffitt & Tormey, 2014: 7). Many elements defined populist political communication style. For instance, the construction of “the people”, the anti-elitism and “the people” against “the elite” and, among others, the “crisis” as a central point in the shape of the message (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007; Moffitt & Tormey, 2014; Rooduijn, 2014).

In addition, this kind of political communication is related to the theoretical concept of mediatisation of politics (Strömbäck, 2008; Landerer, 2013; Mazzoleni, 2017). Mediatization is a “process of communicative construction of socio-cultural reality” (Couldry & Hepp, 2013: 196). Hence, mass media are relevant because “they have gained central position in most political routines, as election campaigns” (Mazzoleni, 2008: 3048). In this line, as Bennett and Iyengar (2008) pointed out, media are a part of the political governing process due to its macro-oriented or institutional approach to communication and the variations in the organization, regulation or structure of the media can be an influence to the citizens and the elites.

However, a review of the concept of mediatisation is necessary (Mazzoleni, 2008). This process of communication “cannot be understood without considering the larger context of a world of being integrated technologically, economically, and culturally” (Landerer, 2013: 240). In this sense, social media and mass media have some different characteristics that “makes them distinct engines of the digital public sphere where players engage in dialogical tugs-of-war in the power game” (Mazzoleni, 2017: 142). The so-called alternative or new media are also social spaces where “everyday space in the digital era is not just mediated but ‘networked’, that is, its action-possibilities are structured by hierarchical and differentiating work of informational networks” (Couldry & Hepp, 2017: 99). Political parties on social networks, particularly on Twitter, are able to spread and manage their political program without mass media despite the power of social media remains at social networks too (Fenton & Barassi, 2011). Nevertheless, it is interesting to ask whether the parties and

candidates take advantage of the –theoretical– lack of intermediaries in the communicative process. As Chadwick sets:

Power in political communication is relational. It is shaped by hybrid networks of social and technological actants whose agency derives from their independence with other social and technological actants in interactive exchanges (2013: 207)

This communication style contributes to “the power game” (Mazzoleni, 2017: 142) based on the articulation of hegemony and counter-hegemony relation (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001; Laclau, 2005). Hegemony is a type of relation or a political form, with an open and incomplete nature constituted by the antagonisms articulations and frontiers (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001). The constant redefinition of the hegemony is based on democratic struggles and the difficulty to articulate the system of relations (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001). In this context, political communication articulates this system of relations. The power relation in political communication is played by two differentiated groups of parties. On one hand, the traditional parties are considered the historical block (Gramsci, 2009) or the hegemonic formation (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001). On the other hand, the minor or new parties are the counter-hegemonic (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001).

Television is the main political communication mass medium in Spain (Sampedro, Sánchez-Duarte & Campos, 2014). Nonetheless, state television time during the Spanish electoral campaign depends on the previous election result according to the LOREG Act². Thus, in the state television coverage “major national and regionalist/nationalist parties have greater coverage in the traditional media than minor/news parties” (Aragón, Kappler, Kaltenbrumer, Laviado & Volkovich, 2013: 184). Nonetheless, the private television channels are not bound to Act enforcement. In this sense, “the digital landscape provides populist parties with the ability to determinate autonomously their own communicative strategies and then disseminate their discourse and narratives” (Casero-Ripollés et al., 2017). The starting point of this research is that the minor or new parties such as *Barcelona en Comú confluencia* articulate the hegemony in social media, assuming that mass media and social media can coexist (McNair, 2006; Chadwick, 2013; Casero-Ripollés et al. 2016).

4. TWITTER AS AN ELECTORAL COMMUNICATION TOOL

Political communication “is critical to the ongoing process of building society and it is considered as an activator that permits two-way communication

² Organic Act of General Electoral System/Ley Orgánica del Regimen Electoral General.

and participation among members of a society and between different societies” (Holba, 2010: 23). As a consequence, “is not a coincidence that the increased availability of news sources has been accompanied by increasing polarization” (Bennet & Iyengar, 2008: 720). Even if the most common example regarding online electoral communication is Barack Obama’s campaign in 2008 (Nielsen, 2012), there are some factors such as the technological development, the socio-political environment and the party characteristics that determinate the use of social media (Vaccari, 2013). As the author suggests, “the distance between the United States and other countries in this respect is even larger than in terms of the sophistication of the parties and candidates [...]” (Vaccari, 2013: 134). In summary and according to Couldry’s (2015) work, in this article digital networks are understood as a tool of political and social mobilization, protest, collective organization and action, but not as a substitute for social or political practice, and foremost, a substitute of other ways of political communication.

The first time that digital tools were capitalized by political parties in Spain was in 2004 and 2008 elections (Sampedro, 2011). Moreover, the use of Twitter as a political communication tool in Spain has been significantly higher since the Spanish protests between 2011 and 2013 (Aragón et al, 2013). Recent studies have explored the use of Twitter as a political communication tool in Spain in regards to council election (Carratalá & Galán, 2016; Quevedo, Portalés-Oliva & Berrocal, 2016), regional election (Pérez & Nicasio, 2015; López-García, Cano & Argilés, 2016; Marín & Díaz, 2016) and general election (Sampedro, 2011; Aragón et al, 2013; Zugasti & Sabés, 2015; Alonso-Muñoz, Marcos-García & Casero-Ripollés, 2016; Campos-Domínguez & Calvo, 2017; Casero-Ripollés et al., 2017; López-García, 2016). Also there are works related to the use of Twitter in relevant political moments in Spain (Marcos-García, Alonso-Muñoz & Casero-Ripollés, 2017). Scholars have especially focused on two uses of Twitter in political communication, one related to the politicians’ and other related to the citizens’ (Zugasti & Sabés, 2015; Tromble, 2016). One of these previous studies was done by Aragón, Volkovich, Laviado and Kaltenbrumer (2015). The authors argue that *Barcelona en Comú* has two different groups in Twitter: one controlled by the candidate and the political party and other made up of activists (Aragón et al., 2015).

The debate on the potential of social networks in political communication is common. “In the social sciences, there is much disagreement on the political possibilities offered by social media” (Fenton & Barassi, 2011: 180). In this line, it is necessary to differentiate what participation and interaction are. Participation is not only the access to media; it also requires a bidirectional process of communication (Carpentier, 2015). In addition, “different media practices

enable different forms of participation” (Fenton & Barassi, 2011: 180). Thereby, “the adoption of digital media candidates may simply have been premature because fully implementing innovations through complex organizations requires time” (Vaccari, 2013: 50). Only if social networks are based on dialogue and participation, they can be understood as the maximum expression of Web 2.0 (Zugasti & Sabés, 2015). Twitter is not only a tool to spread propaganda but also a tool to generate a space of debate between politicians or parties and citizens (Aragón et al., 2013). Nonetheless, digital networks do not provide any guarantee of the bi-directional communication process (López-García et al, 2016). Once the novelty of digital networks has been overcome, it is considered essential to reflect on their multi directionality and their 'democratizing power'.

5. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The main objective of this research study is to deepen on the electoral communication characteristics on Twitter of the *confluence Barcelona en Comú*. For that purpose, we analyze the corpus of tweets disseminated by the six parties that formed the *confluence Barcelona en Comú* during Barcelona city council election. Thus, the 1,195 tweets disseminated from 8th to 22nd of May 2015 by the parties *Barcelona en Comú* (BeC), *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds* (ICV), *Procés Constituent* (PC), *Podem* (P), *Esquerra Unida i Alternativa* (EuiA) and *EQUO* (E). In a previous research (García-Carretero & Pérez-Altamira, 2017) we explore the *confluence* behaviour on Twitter and both the interaction between the parties and with the users using explorative social network analysis (SNA). We observed that there is another group of users who also set the electoral message. For that reason, in addition, we analyse 645 tweets disseminated by @AdaColau, @G_Pisarello, @Laiortiz, @janetsanz, @3eses and @jaumeasens. In agreement with Edwards, we consider that “SNA represents a specific opportunity to mix methods because of its dual interest in both the ‘structure’ or ‘form’ of social relations (2010: 4-5). In brief, we use qualitative content analysis with the aim “to supplement its procedures for mapping and measuring networks with more qualitatively sensitive forms of analysis” (Edwards & Crossley, 2009: 40).

Firstly, this article attempts to identify (O1) the electoral communication strategy according to the message. In other words, find out the thematic selection, the kind of message and if the text electoral message corresponds to the hashtag used. As it has been mentioned, this research study presents the results of qualitative content analysis with the aim of making inferences from the text (Krippendorff, 2013). Previously, a pre-test was made in order to define the

content analysis categories. Taking into account the speaker(s), the receiver(s) and the message (Colle, 2011), we used a thematic analysis (Bardin, 2002) to know the campaign issues on Twitter and the context or frame of those issues (Goffman, 1986). Being in agreement with Van Gorp's constructionist approach, the concepts "become frames when someone applies them for their defining capacity" (2010: 88). Several political communication studies use frame analysis (Gitlin, 1980; Entman, 2004; Lakoff, 2004). Thus, we refer to collective action frames, which "organize experience" and "guide action" (Benford & Snow, 2000: 614). Consequently, we attempt to know how *Barcelona en Comú* relates their main campaign issues, the cause of the problems, consequences and solutions (Entman, 1993). With the purpose of finding the intention of political parties' communication out, we use the speech acts of Austin (2003) and Searle (1976). We refer to the categories (1) directive, acts when the speaker affirms or denies anything certainly; (2) commissive, when the speaker is committed to future action; (3) expressive, when the speaker express emotions; (4) declaration, act when the speaker is committed to change the reality; and (5) assertive, acts that commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed. However, in agreement with Searle (1976), every expression has an illocutionary force but does not necessarily has propositional content. In addition, verbs are not the only sign of illocutionary force (Alarcón, 2008) and it is possible that several tweets do not have a verb. We use the classification of Lobera (2010) to deepen digital participation. According to the author, there are five sorts of digital participation related to their use and the kind of the social network or online tool used by the political parties. Nevertheless, in this investigation the communication channel is Twitter, so we classify the tweets in connection with their use: (1) information, (2) communication, (3) deliberation, (4) enquiry/decision making and (5) creative action (Lobera, 2010).

Secondly, we analyze (O2) communication possibilities related to the use of Twitter by the six parties in relation to the images, videos or links. Besides, we explore some Twitter possibilities, for example, the number of *likes* or *favorites* (*Fav*), *retweets* (*RT*) and the hashtags (*#*) used by the political parties.

Thirdly, according to the replies to the parties' tweets, (O3) we analyze the kind of conversation between the political parties of the *confluence* and Twitter users. The aim is to find out whether is a bidirectional communication between parties and citizens during the electoral campaign. In this sense, several authors have noticed the limitations on the use of digital networks as a bidirectional communication channel (Graham, Broersma, Hazelhoff, Van't Haar, 2013; Jungherr, 2015) because the power, economic and political offline structures prevail (Lilleker, Koc-Michalska & Schweitzer, 2011). To analyze

the users' replays we focus in the classification proposed by Freelon (2010) and further expanded by López-García and Valera-Ordaz (2015). Also, ascertain if the replies of the users introduce a new issue (micro issue) and if political parties participate in the conversations generate as a consequence of their tweets. We also investigate the users' comments. In accordance with this taxonomy (Freelon, 2010, López-García & Valera-Ordaz, 2015), there are three models of conversations, thereby three models of democracy (*Table 1*).

Finally, following the previous social network analysis (García-Carretero & Pérez-Altale, 2017), this article also analyses (O4) the message of other users both politicians and citizens, which set the political message of the *confluence* during the electoral campaign. Hence, this article goes in-depth into two levels of the electoral campaign on Twitter analyzing the different electoral issues. On one hand, we analyze the Twitter accounts of the six political parties or

Table 1. Three models of online democratic communication

Model of democratic communication	Definitional variables	Sub variables
Liberal individualistic	Monologue Personal revelation Personal showcase	
Communitarian	Ideological homophile Mobilization Community identification	Focused opposite Opposite Neutral Favorable Positive Focused positive
Deliberative	Arguments Reciprocity Discursive freedom	No answer/Don't know Hard language Reply with arguments Neutral language Hard language Hard language with speakers

López-García & Valera-Ordaz (2015) basing on Freelon (2010)

Table 2. Main users on Twitter setting *Barcelona en Comú* message

Position	Twitter account	Node	Level	N	Tweets/day	In-degree
1	@benencomu (BeC)	MN	First	570	37.87	1,263
2	@adacolau	SN	Second	66	4	880
3	@g_pisarello	SN	Second	22	1.33	132
4	@laiaortiz	SN	Second	51	2.8	115
6	@janetsanz	SN	Second	117	14.26	64
7	@3eses	SN	Second	317	19.4	61
8	@jaumeasens	SN	Second	72	3.33	61
9	@iniciativabcn (ICV)	MN	Second	334	22.33	58
17	@podem_bcn (P)	MN	First	100	6.66	26
113	@pconstituentbcn (PC)	MN	First	152	10.13	4
126	@euiabcn (EUiA)	MN	First	38	1.86	3
549	@equobcn (E)	MN	First	11	.88	0
				1840		

main nodes (MN) and politicians' accounts or secondary nodes (SN). On the other hand, we focus on other Twitter accounts (also SN) that set the message. Table 2 shows ten different actors or nodes in the top of the classification, but we also include the other political parties' account of the *confluence* although with the lower range of in-degree. The lower range of in-degree indicates the connections received by a node (Freeman, 1979).

6. FINDINGS

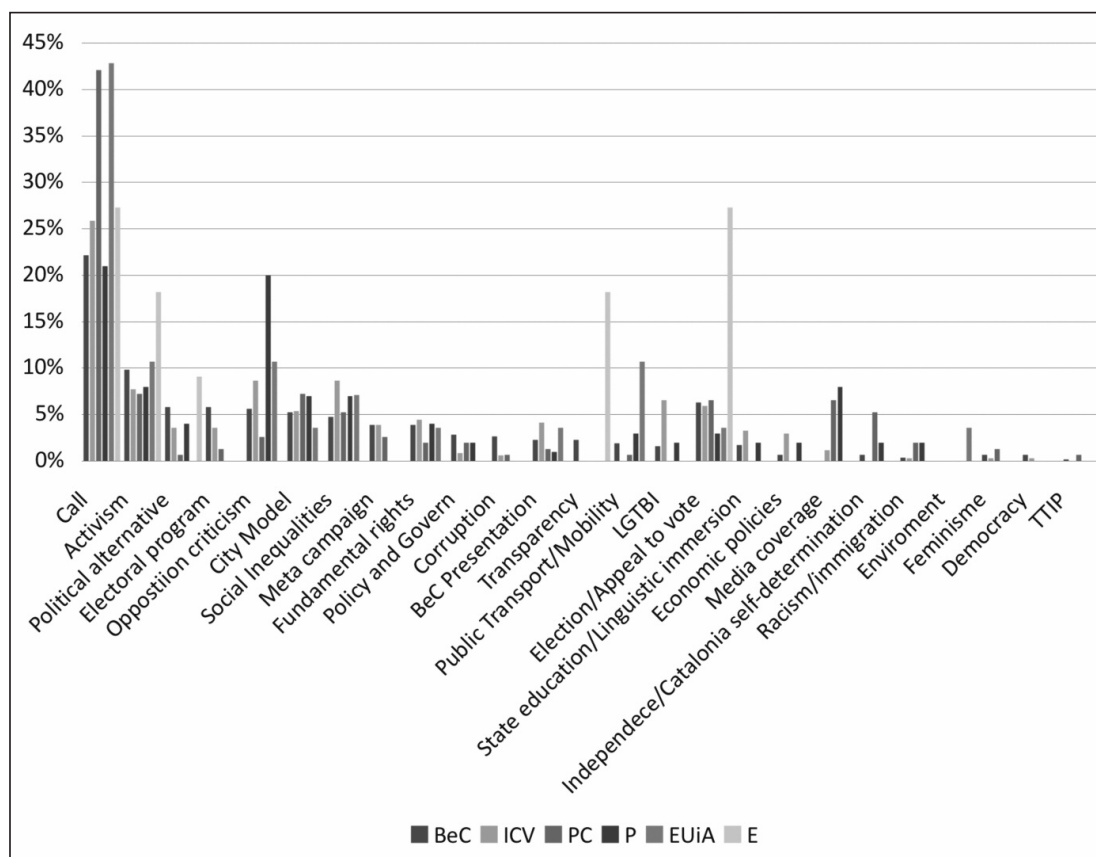
6.1 First level of analysis: political parties

6.1.1 The message

Before specifying the thematic selection during the electoral campaign, it needs to be emphasized that the six parties of the *confluence* disseminated a big amount of electoral issues (Figure 1). First of all, the main common issue disseminated by the six parties is a *call* for public meetings or speeches at the urban area, election debates in the mass media and another kind of announcement of the

campaign (BeC=22.18%; ICV=24.77%; PC=42.10%; P=21%; EUiA=42.85%; E=27.27%).

Figure 1. Electoral issues disseminated by the six parties



As it has been observed, *activism or citizen participation* was the second common issue placed by the six parties (BeC=9.86%; ICV=7.76%; PC=7.23%; P=8%; EUiA=10.71%; E=18.18%). Subsequently, *social inequalities* and *election and appeal to vote* were the third and the fourth main issues during the electoral campaign. The *social inequalities* issue was disseminated by ICV (8.65%), P (7) and EUiA (7.14%) while *election and appeal to vote* was more relevant for the thematic selection of BeC party (6.33%), PC (6.57%) and EQUO (27.27%).

In this research, we consider that some issues are more relevant during the electoral campaign than others. The tweets related to proposals and objectives for a future management of the municipal council are relevant. As *Figure 1* notes, some of these issues are the *electoral program and the ethical code*, the tweets based on the *election and the appeal to vote* and what the confluence of parties of BeC is (*presentation*). *Electoral program and the ethical code* was spread only for BeC (5.83%), ICV (3.58%) and PC (1.31%). The rest of the parties did not refer to this issue. Regarding the *presentation of the confluence*, the only

party that did not spread this issue was EQUO. In contrast, it was disseminated by ICV (4.17%), BeC (2.28%), PC (1.31%), Podem (1%) and EUiA (3.57%). Also, some tweets are based on the issue *political situation and the necessary change* and *political alternative* and place *Barcelona en Comú confluence* as the actor of this process: BeC (5.83%), ICV (3.58%), Podem (4%), PC (0.65%) and EQUO (9.09%).

Another characteristic of the electoral campaign is the attack on the opposition and the negative campaign (Auter & Fine, 2016; Gross & Johnson, 2016). In this line, the parties used the *opposition criticism* issue, especially to criticise the social inequalities as a consequence of their political management (BeC=5.63%; ICV=8.65%; P=20%; PC=2.63%; EUiA=10.71%). In addition, it has been possible to differentiate a group of issues in which social content predominates. So, during the electoral campaign, the *confluence* focused on *public education and linguistic immersion, Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Bisexuals and Intersex, racism and immigration, Spanish historic memory or feminism and inequality*.

In order to determine the efficiency of each electoral issue, we used the equation proposed by Alfredo Morales-Guzmán, Javier Borondo-Benito and Rosa M. Benito (2014):

$$e = \frac{i}{a}$$

According to the authors, efficiency is the ratio between influence gained and the effort of the political parties spreading the electoral message (Morales-Guzman et al, 2014; García-Carretero & Pérez-Altable, 2017). For this paper, 'i' is the number of interactions understanding interactions as the *retweets + likes* that a tweet received, and 'a' understood as the number of tweets disseminated by the parties about an electoral issue.

Table 3. Efficiency of electoral campaign issues

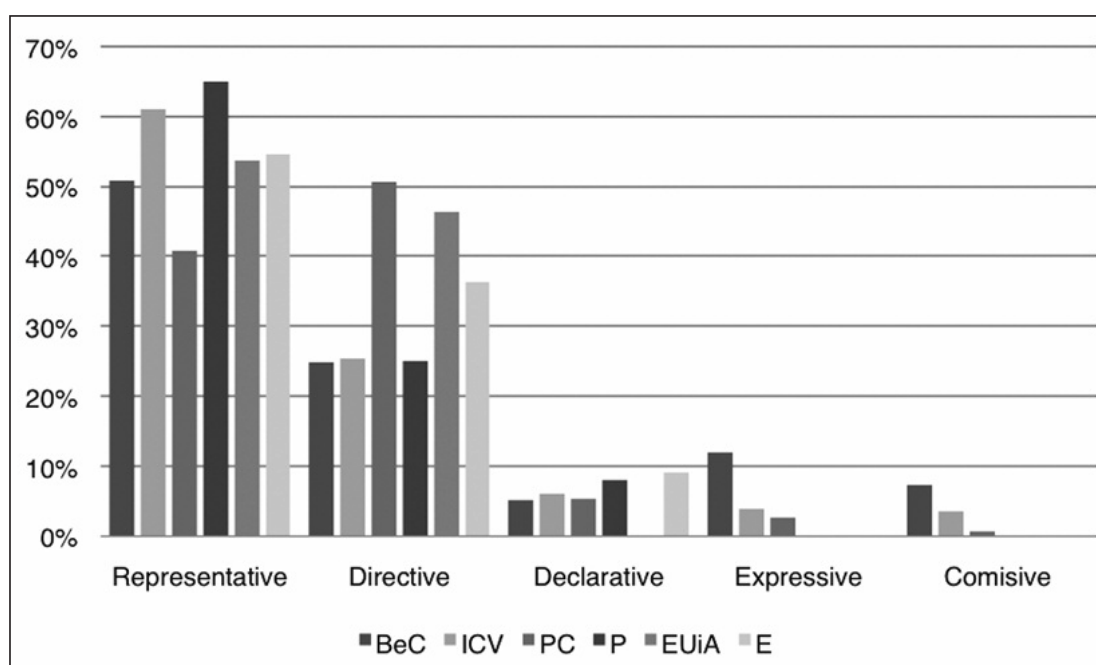
	BeC	ICV	P	PC	EUiA	E
Call	4,8	4,1	9,3	6	0,5	6,3
Activism/Citizens participation	40,4	2,2	9,8	10,3	1,5	1,5
Social inequalities	51,2	4,2	11,4	11,7		
Election/Appeal to vote	24,3	4,6	6,3	9	6,3	6,3
Electoral program	34,7	3,7		2		
Opposition criticism	67,4	9,9	17,3	11,8		

e>1= efficient; e<1= no efficient

As can be seen from *Table 3*, most of the main campaign issues –according to the number of tweets spread about this issue and the engagement received– are efficient, excluding EUiA. Highlights especially the participation received in the tweets based on criticism of the opposition

Once the campaign issues have been identified, we explain the intention of the political party according to the speech acts classification. According to the *confluence* strategy, in five of the six political parties (*Figure 2*) the assertive acts, in other words, a way to commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed (Austin, 2003; Searle, 1976), predominates (BeC=50.79%; ICV= 61.07%; E=54.54%; P=65%; EUiA=53.57%). However, PC affirms or denies anything certainly, according to directive acts definition in 50.65% of the tweets.

Figure 2. Speech acts of political parties' tweets



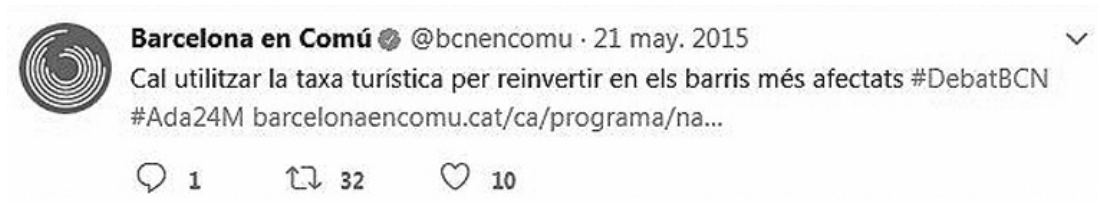
Lastly, regarding the framing of the tweets, the intention of *Barcelona en Comú* when disseminated tweets of call, was only to attract its target audience to a framing as a fight to recover the public places by the work of the neighbors and the “*common*” people. The appeal to vote, a directive act too, is framed as the only possibility or the force driving a real change, the hope for a future and the governance of the majority that is the citizenship. The tweets related to the electoral program show categorically that the program is a plan, agreement, stimulus or priority to dignify the policy and to combat social inequalities. Besides, it has observed that the intention of the *confluence Barcelona en Comú* when

spreading tweets related to the activism issue was to assert that the citizenship is the protagonist and it is characterized by the political participation, the neighborhood fights and, because of that, the governments must consider it. In the same line, the political change or alternative is defined as a consequence of the activism or a powerful citizenship, which marks a break with previous policy and promotes a change comprehended as a democratic revolution.

6.1.2 Twitter possibilities

According to the categories of Twitter possibilities, in BeC electoral communication the use of images (60.84%) besides of videos (4.76%) predominates and the use of hashtags (86.24%) is a usual practice. In respect of links used, only a 16.57% do not have. In ICV images (35.62%) prevail over videos (2.09%), whereas both are not dominant. Links were added to in a 19.76% of the tweets and the hashtags in a 74.55% of the cases. In PC electoral communication, we find that images (66.44%) are most common in the messages than videos (11.84%), hashtags are used in an 87.5% and link complete the information in a 66.44% of the cases. Then, the use of images (43%) predominates in Podem's tweets over the use of videos (6%). Hashtags are included in a 77% of the tweets and the links in a 19%. Basing in EUiA's messages, on one hand, images (39.28%) are more common than those with videos (7.14%). On the other hand, links to complete the text of the tweets are present in 28.57% of them. Finally, we observed that all EQUO's tweets include hashtags, 9 of them link videos and 81.81% images. During the electoral campaign, 128 hashtags were disseminated by the six political parties of the *confluence*. Some hashtags such as #Ada24M, #guanyarem24m or #guanyarembarcelona were disseminated in a crosscutting way for the parties of the *confluence*. In this sense, the thematic content between the hashtag and the text electoral issue is not necessarily the same. Nevertheless, the use of the hashtags followed a coordinated strategy because allow the users to find information related to an act or event through the general and cross-cutting hashtag as *Image 1* shows.

Image 1. Use of hashtags



Regarding the typology of digital communication (Lobera, 2010), it has been observed that in BeC party, *communication* (82.53%) is the dominant kind of participation, followed by *information* (15.87%), *enquiries and decision-making* (1.23) and *deliberation* (0.35%). By contrast, this political party did not use Twitter like a *creative action* channel on any occasion. In the same line, in ICV tweets predominated the *communication* (85.97%), following *information* (13.43%) and *deliberation* (0.29%). On the contrary, there is no case of *enquiries and decision-making* and *creative action*. In PC, also predominates the use of *communication* (73.31%) besides of *information* (23.68%). However, the other three kinds of digital communication –*deliberation, enquiries and the decision-making, creative action*– do not appear. In the same line, Podem's digital participation is organized in *communication* (82%), *information* (17%) and *deliberation* (1%). Regarding EUiA, we observe that the two kinds of communication were *communication* (71.42) and *information* (28.57%). Lastly, most of the tweets of EQUO are *communication* (90.90%) and the remaining are basically *information* (9.09%).

The dissemination of information in Twitter –being dissemination understood in terms of retweets and likes– shows that all the tweets belonging to the Twitter of BeC have been retweeted and also all of them have been marked as a favorite (99.64%). In the case of ICV, we found 80.23% tweets with retweets and 61.37% with likes. Procés Constituent diffusion is organized in an 85% of the tweets retweeted and a 61.84% of the tweets liked. Podem tweets have been retweeted in all the cases and an 89% has been marked as a favorite. In Esquerra Unida i Alternativa, the diffusion is organized in a 64.28% tweets retweeted and a 50% liked. By contrast, the diffusion of EQUO was limited by 72.72% of tweets are retweeted and a 54.54% of tweets are liked.

6.1.3 Bidirectional communication process

In general terms, the six parties gave no answer in the conversations arising out of their tweets (*Table 3*). However, there are significant differences between parties. In the case of BeC, we observed that about half of the tweets disseminated have replies, concretely a 46.38% of them. Users always participate, although the political party answers to the users in a 12.16% and mass media only appeared in one tweet (0.38%). In these conversations, the users introduce a new issue different of party's issue in a 26.99%. The results of ICV point out that the number of replies or conversations generated around its tweets is limited. Thus, an 8.65% of the tweets have replied and a 37.93% of that introduced new issues. Users or citizens' political agents discuss in the conversation in all the cases and the political party responds in a 17.24% of the cases while

mass media do not take part. During the electoral campaign, only a 10,52% of the tweets from PC were replied and, in these conversations, other issues are introduced in an 18,75. The 17 of the electoral tweets from Podem are replied and only the users have participated in all of them. The digital participation is organized in an 82% of communication, 17% of the information and a 1% of deliberation. Only one of the replies introduced a micro issue. Finally and by contrast, there is only one tweet from Esquerra Unida i Alternativa which has a reply, it does not introduce a micro issue and it belongs to the user. In this line, any tweet from EQUO generates replies.

Table 3. Replies and actors on Twitter

Tweets with replies (%)	BeC	ICV	PC	P	EUiA
Yes	46.38	8.65	10.52	17	3.57
No	53.61	91.34	89.47	83	96.42
N Replies	1197	90	27	20	1
Micro issue (%)	BeC	ICV	PC	P	EUiA
Yes	26.99	37.93	18.75	1	
No	73	62.06	81.25	99.99	
Political actors (%)	BeC	ICV	PC	P	EUiA
Users/Citizens	100	100	93.75	100	100
Mass media	0.38				
Political parties	12.16	17.24	6.25		

Table 4 shows the categories and subcategories of three different models of democracy (Freelon, 2010; López-García & Varela, 2015). The replies generated on BeC and ICV tweets were a majority in Deliberative Model (BeC/A=2.5%; BeC/R3= 36.95%; BeC/DF=9.63%; ICV/A=2.22%; ICV/R=49.99%; ICV/DF=12.21%). However, the deliberative model does not necessary guarantee that the arguments of the replies were substantiated arguments. In the case

Table 4. Kind of conversations according to the three models

Political conversations (%)	BeC	ICV	PC	P	EUiA
Individualistic model	12.65	23.33	40.74	35	100
Monologue (M)	12.19	22.22	40.74	35	100
Personal revelation (PR)	0.25				
Personal show case (PS)	0.91	1.11			
Community model	38.48	14.33	33.32	60	
Ideological hemophilia (IH)					
Focussed opposite	4.92			10	
Opposite	11.19	11.11	3.70	40	
Neutral/No atribuible	5.01	3.33	18.51	10	
Favourable	12.19		11.11		
Focused favourable	3.59			5	
Community identification (CI)	1.42				
Mobilization (M)	0.16				
Deliberative model	48.63	64.42	44.42		
Arguments (A)	2.50	2.22			
Reciprocity (R)					
NA/DN					
Formally replied	20.05	33.33	11.11		
Reply with arguments	16.45	16.66	7.40		
Discursive freedom (DF)					
Neutral language	1.69				
Hard language	4.67	6.66	7.40		
Hard language speaker	2.67	3.33	3.70		
Exceptions	0.60	2.22	14.81		

of PC and EUiA parties, Individualistic model predominates over the rest of models (PC/M=40.74%; EUiA/M= 100%). By contrast, the replies of Podem party were within the Community Model (P/IH=65%).

6.2 Second level of analysis

In accordance with the secondary actors, we analyzed the Mayoress' Twitter account (@AdaColau), the Deputy Mayor's accounts Gerardo Pisarello's (@g_pisarello), Laia Ortíz's (@laiaortiz), Janet Sanz's (@janetsanz) and Jaume Asens (@jaumeasens)'s. Finally, we analyse the communication commission member Sergio Espín (@3eses) profile. With regard to the electoral issue, we observed many tweets with the same issue than political parties account. For example, the *opposition criticism* or negative campaign was relevant in the case of @janetsanz (30.77%) and @jaumeasens (31.94%). Nevertheless, @adacolau, @janetsanz, @jaumeasens introduced new issues. In particular, the politicians of *Barcelona en Comú confluence* provided personal details (e. g. Image 2, Image 3) in responding to users questions.

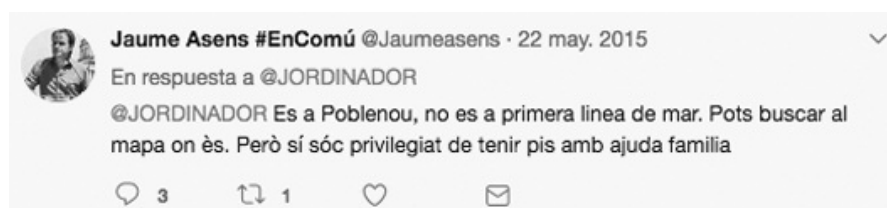
Furthermore, politicians used Twitter as a bidirectional communication channel to a greater extent than the replies in political parties accounts (@jaumeasens=52.7%; @janetsanz=52.13%; @adacolau=40.9%; @g_pisarello=13.63%; @laiaortiz=9.8%).

In this line, it should be pointed out that more than the half of the tweets disseminated by @3eses, member of *Barcelona en Comú* communication commission, are replies to other issues (69.4%). In this case, most of the electoral

Image 2. Ada Colau's tweet



Image 3. Jaume Asens' tweet



issues were in line with political parties messages (81.7%). The three main electoral issues were the *opposition criticism* (22.08), the response to the *criticism of the candidate Ada Colau* (14.82%), and tweets related to the *electoral campaign organization* (9.46%). These two last issues from @3eses would be pointed out. First, because the main characteristic of his communication on Twitter was the roll to respond the users/citizens criticism with arguments like the link to the electoral program or another kind of information. At the same time, his replies show more freedom of speech (*Image 4*) because he was not a politician. Also, @3eses introduced information about *the meta-campaign* or how the *confluence* organized the communication.

Image 4. Tweet from @3eses



8. CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The results of our case of study allow us to conclude that the political party *Barcelona en Comú* (BeC) centralized the electoral communication of *Barcelona en Comú confluence* on Twitter. Not only according to the number of tweets disseminated, but also in communication strategic terms. BeC guided the issues as we observed in the tweets and re-tweets of the other five parties. The references of the five parties to BeC in their tweets were also common. Also, this political party carries out the most effective communication in Twitter in relation to the rest of the parties of the electoral coalition. As we aforementioned, the parties disseminated a big amount of issues but the corresponding number of tweets for each issue is not a very high number. Twitter was mainly used as a *call* for public or media acts, as retransmission channel for public meetings or speeches at the urban area, election debates in the mass media. In the same way that recent researches warned of the use of Twitter for the diffusion of their proposals (López-Meri, Marcos-García & Casero-Ripollés, 2017) or how the new parties were just as prolific on Twitter as the traditional ones (Gómez-Calderó). This was mainly related to directive speech acts (Searle 1976, Austin, 2003). To sum up, the main functions of Twitter as an electoral communication tool by the *confluence* were as a “notice board” and as a tool for live coverage. The results show that the main sort of digital participation (Lobera, 2010)

was communication. In other words, the exchange of information. Although the citizens/users were the main political agent that participated. The replies which generated dialogue (López-García & Valera, 2015) were not assertive, so the interaction was limited to positive or negative comments. In the same line, in the argumentative replies, the quality of these arguments was superficial. For all those reasons, we agree with Carratalá and Galán's (2016) affirmation that citizen platforms or new parties do not maintain the level of participation and interaction. That confirms the thesis of mass media logic because the most common kind of participation was *communication*, instead of deliberation or enquiry/decision-making. Political parties did not exploit the potential or communication possibilities of Twitter in this sense, and their strategies are based on an hybrid logic (Alonso-Muñoz et al., 2016; López-García, 2016). In conclusion, the use of Twitter by the *confluence Barcelona en Comú* is limited as one way communication with the exception of the politician and the members of the communication group.

The most outstanding result from the message is the construction or framing of the electoral issue. In this sense, *Barcelona en Comú* built itself as an "alternative", "the common people" against "the others". As well, the electoral victory was constructed as the recovery of the public institutions and spaces, because they were stolen by "the others". For that, we conclude that *Barcelona en Comú* used a populist style of communication (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007; Taggart, 2000; Moffit & Tormey, 2016). In this case of study, the parties situated themselves in the left, so left-right dichotomy that according to Laclau (2005) populism denies is not clear in this case study. By contrast, we found simple and direct solutions based on the struggle between the elites and the people, the crisis or breakdown and the "others" (Moffit & Tormey, 2016). In line with the negative campaign (Auter & Fine, 2016; Gross & Johnson, 2016) the opposition parties were identified emphatically with a negative frame. This frame was based on corruption, cowardice, privatization, with "revolving doors" –the direct relation from politicians to companies– and humans' rights attack. The opposition parties were presented as the cause of social inequalities, which are a structural problem in Barcelona, and a priority of *Barcelona en Comú*. However, this negative campaign is more obvious and direct in the politicians' accounts.

Social media could be a channel to play the democratic struggle or the articulation of the hegemony (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001; Laclau, 2005). However, it has been observed that the mass media logic is represented in their electoral communication (Bennet & Iyengar, 2008; Chadwick, 2013; Vaccari, 2013; Couldry & Hepp, 2017). In this regard, two kinds of strategies were differen-

tiated. On one hand, the parties used Twitter to disseminate their content but they didn't use it as a bidirectional communication or a co-participation channel (Martínez, 2005; Aragón et al., 2013; Carpentier, 2015; Zugasti & Sabés, 2015). Except in very few cases, the parties did not answer the users' interventions, ignoring that the more parties and politicians interact through networks, the more part of a community users/citizens feel (Jivkova-Simova, Requeijo-Rey & Padilla-Castillo, 2017). On the other hand, we observed a second group formed by the politicians and people who took part in communication group that answered the users. This second group used Twitter as a bidirectional tool of communication so, accordingly to Aragón et al. (2015), *Barcelona en Comú* had two groups of actors on Twitter. One controlled by the party and other controlled by activists.

Although this study provides key features of the communication strategies and our objectives defined were responded, we consider that future research is necessary to complete the study of *Barcelona en Comú* electoral campaign. The analysis of this political coalition raises many questions that should be deepening in further research. The bidirectional process of communication took place among users, such as @3eses and citizens. Nevertheless, the communication commission members did not explicitly identify itself as members of the *confluence*. That suggests that the role played by these actors during the electoral campaign was as "citizens". The not so much coordinated communication strategy among the six political parties, with different Twitter accounts; makes us wonder what the internal organization of communication groups was. For all of this, we are aware that further research should consider semi-structured interviews with the community managers of the six parties.

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BREVES NOTAS BIOGRÁFICAS

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La otra campaña de Barcelona en Comú a través del fandom político: *Som Comuns, Movimiento de Liberación Gráfica y la guerrilla comunicativa*

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Resumen

La activista de la *Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca* Ada Colau ganaba la alcaldía de Barcelona en mayo de 2015. Esto supuso la irrupción en la escena política de nuevos ‘partidos-movimientos contra la austeridad’ mediante las denominadas ‘ciudades del cambio’, capitalizando el descontento social de los movimientos sociales. El uso de las redes digitales como herramienta de comunicación política, unido a la naturaleza del partido político y el rápido proceso de configuración de la formación, dieron lugar a que la campaña electoral se caracterizase por la relevancia de la comunicación *online* y por una organización descentralizada en términos comunicativos.

Esta investigación analiza la comunicación llevada a cabo por los perfiles de *@somcomuns* y el *Movimiento de Liberación Gráfica de Barcelona* durante la campaña a las elecciones municipales de 2015. En primer lugar, desde la perspectiva del activismo fan y del *fandom* político, se analizan los elementos de ‘la otra campaña’ de *Barcelona en Comú* a estas elecciones. En segundo lugar, se

profundiza en el análisis de la estructura del grupo de comunicación de *Barcelona en Comú*, con el objetivo de entender qué lugar ocupan los activistas comunicativos de 'la guerrilla comunicativa' o el 'desborde'. Mediante la realización de entrevistas semiestructuradas en profundidad, se ha observado la transformación, adaptación y difusión del contenido de campaña por parte de los fans activistas otorgándole un nuevo significado. Finalmente, en este artículo se reflexiona cómo la estructura descentralizada del grupo de comunicación de *Barcelona en Comú* favoreció la integración de 'la otra campaña' en la estrategia electoral.

Palabras clave: comunicación electoral, comunicación online, *fandom* político, activismo, nuevos partidos políticos

Abstract

Ada Colau -who used to be the spokeswoman of the social movement Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca, PAH (Platform of Mortgage Victims)- won the municipality of Barcelona in 2015. This was a point of inflexion in which the "anti-austerity parties-movements" broke into the institutional political scene through the "cities of change", capitalizing on the social discontent of the social movements. The use of social media as political communication tools, together with both the nature of this political party and the fast process of its configuration, resulted that the election campaign was characterized by the relevance of online communication and a decentralized organization in communicative terms.

This research analyzes the communication processes that were carried out by the profiles of @somcomuns and *Movimiento de Liberación Gráfica de Barcelona (MLGB, My Life is Getting Better)* during the campaign to the local elections of 2015. First, from the perspective of fan activism and political fandom, the elements of 'the other campaign' of *Barcelona in Comú* are analyzed in those elections. Secondly, the analysis of the structure of the communication group of *Barcelona en*

Comú is deepened, with the aim of understanding the place occupied by the communicative activists of 'the communicative guerrilla' or the 'overflow'.

By conducting semi-structured interviews to the fan activists, it has observed that the remixes, adaptations and dissemination of campaign contents have produced new meanings. And, finally, this article reflects on how this decentralized structure of the communication group of *Barcelona in Comú* provided the integration of 'the other campaign' in the electoral strategy.

Keywords: electoral communication, online communication, political fandom, activism, new political parties

La otra campaña de Barcelona en Comú a través del fandom político: *Som Comuns, Movimiento de Liberación Gráfica y la guerrilla comunicativa*

1. De la crisis a la oportunidad política: el caso de Barcelona en Comú

Ada Colau, activista de la *Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca*, ganaba la alcaldía a la ciudad de Barcelona en mayo de 2015. Un punto de inflexión en el que los denominados nuevos partidos-movimientos contra la austeridad (della Porta y Mattoni, 2014; Feenstra, Tormey, Casero-Ripollés y Keane, 2017) como *Barcelona en Comú* irrumpían en la escena política institucional española a través de las ‘ciudades del cambio,’ capitalizando el descontento social de movimientos sociales como el 15M (Sampedro y Sánchez-Duarte, 2011; Roos y Oikonomakis, 2014; Lobera y Sampedro, 2014).

La crisis económica que comenzó en España a finales de 2007 (Carballo-Cruz, 2011; Orriols y Cordero, 2016) –tal y como ocurrió en otros países europeos (Auriemma et al., 2015; Poulakidakos y Veneti, 2016; della Porta et al., 2017)– dio lugar a un ciclo de desafección política debido al empeoramiento de las condiciones de vida de los españoles. Según los autores, un caldo de cultivo idóneo para el estallido de protestas y manifestaciones (Castells, 2012; Alonso y Rovira, 2015; Gerbaudo y Screti, 2017). Todo ello, se materializó en mayo de 2011 con el movimiento social 15M y, posteriormente, con las diferentes mareas ciudadanas que surgieron (Feenstra et al., 2017). Algunas de las principales demandas de estos movimientos sociales versaban, entre otras, sobre una mayor participación ciudadana en la política –considerando insuficiente la emisión del voto una vez cada cuatro años–; la crítica al sistema bipartidista; la lucha contra la corrupción de la clase política y la necesidad imperiosa de recuperación de derechos sociales limitados con la crisis económica (Sampedro y Sánchez-Duarte, 2011).

Entre las principales acciones de estos movimientos encontramos la llamada a la acción sin la intervención de intermediarios tradicionales (medios de comunicación); la recuperación del espacio público; intervenir en la agenda política y pública; el uso de internet y las redes digitales para la comunicación interna y externa y, especialmente relevante en este trabajo, la oportunidad política para la aparición de nuevos partidos políticos a través del proceso de institucionalización de los movimientos sociales (della Porta y Pavan, 2017; Pavan, 2017).

Desde su aparición en 2014, *Barcelona en Comú* se ha caracterizado por el uso de las redes digitales como herramienta de comunicación política, tanto en su organización interna como externa y, muy especialmente, durante la campaña electoral a las municipales de mayo de 2015. La propia naturaleza del partido político –formado por activistas de movimientos sociales y miembros de partidos políticos contra hegemónicos o minoritarios (Laclau y Mouffe, 2001; Laclau, 2005; Gramsci, 2009)–, una organización descentralizada en términos comunicativos (Aragón et al., 2015) y el rápido proceso de configuración de la formación política dio lugar a que la campaña se caracterizase por una gran relevancia de la comunicación *online* en diferentes formas y registros (García-Carretero y Pérez-Altale, 2017, García-Carretero y Díaz-Noci, 2018; García-Carretero, 2018).

2. Comunicación política, *fandom* político y campañas electorales

Para profundizar en esta campaña electoral y, concretamente, en estas formas y registros –a la que nos referiremos como ‘la otra campaña’–, en este trabajo se abordan diferentes aspectos de la comunicación política incorporando una perspectiva vinculada al activismo fan y, más concretamente, al *fandom* político.

Conceptos clásicos como la americanización y profesionalización de la política (Mancini, 1999; Sussman y Galizio, 2003) se entienden desde la perspectiva de Gerald Sussman y Lawrence Galizio (2003), la cual define la profesionalización de

la política como un fenómeno basado en la economía política global y transnacional y su extensión al trabajo político. Uno de los ejemplos más utilizados para explicar el desarrollo de la comunicación política, especialmente aquella que se lleva a cabo a través de internet, es la campaña electoral de Barack Obama en 2008 (Nielsen, 2012). No obstante, en el desarrollo de las campañas electorales entran en valor factores como el desarrollo tecnológico, el contexto social y político, las características de cada partido y el uso por parte de estos de los medios sociales (Vaccari, 2013). Por lo tanto, a la hora de analizar campañas electorales en general, y campañas electorales *online* en particular, es necesario tener en cuenta las características o diferencias contextuales.

Las características de las campañas electorales (Norris, 2000) y las diferentes etapas de esta comunicación evolucionan en la medida en que lo hace el sistema de medios (Mazzoleni, 2010). Algunos autores afirman que una nueva etapa o subetapa en la era postmoderna de la comunicación electoral (Norris, 2011) surge como consecuencia de la diversidad de canales comunicativos, especialmente de la consolidación de internet (Lilleker, Tenscher y Štětka, 2015). En la misma línea, Pippa Norris sitúa como centro de esta evolución la profesionalización de la comunicación política directamente relacionada con el uso las redes digitales (Norris, 2000). Así, nos referimos a una campaña hipermedia (Römmele y Scheneidmesser, 2016) basada en el sistema de medios híbrido (Chadwick, 2013). La campaña hipermedia se basa en la campaña mediatizada (Römmele y Scheneidmesser, 2016) y en el uso por los partidos políticos tanto de los medios sociales como de los medios de comunicación tradicionales (Lilleker, Tenscher y Štětka, 2015). En este sentido, encontramos dos tendencias que organizan a los partidos políticos en función del tipo de comunicación. Por un lado, los partidos que se adaptan a la hibridación, como los ya existentes antes de la consolidación de internet como canal de comunicación política y electoral y, por otro lado, las organizaciones que son genuinamente híbridas (Chadwick, 2007) como sería el caso de *Barcelona en Comú*.

Además del uso de internet como canal comunicativo mediante la hibridación, este trabajo se articula en torno a la concepción de las redes digitales como un canal de comunicación que permite a nuevos partidos y partidos minoritarios adquirir mayor visibilidad puesto que, teóricamente, no requieren de los *mass media* como intermediarios (Cammaerts, 2015). Asimismo, se entiende que esta articulación de la hegemonía o guerra de posiciones (Gramsci, 2009) se lleva a cabo mediante un estilo de comunicación populista (Canovan, 1999, 2002; Jagers and Walgrave, 2007; De Smet, 2016) enfocada en la construcción cultural a través del sistema educativo y, especialmente, a través del sistema mediático (Cammaerts, 2015).

El populismo, además de recurrir al ‘bien común’ lo que supone el paso de una ciudadanía pasiva a una ciudadanía activa (Méry y Surel, 2002; De Smet, 2016), destaca por la relevancia otorgada a los líderes políticos centrándose en su carisma (Tudoroiu, 2014; McDonnell, 2015). Nuevos partidos políticos como *Barcelona en Comú* o, en el ámbito nacional, *Podemos*, son lo que son, en gran medida, por sus líderes políticos (Feenstra et al, 2017).

El tercer aspecto al que nos referimos de la comunicación política, aunque no es exclusivo de este campo de investigación, es el *fandom* político. Las características de *Barcelona en Comú* mencionadas con anterioridad invitan a referirnos al *fandom político* como una extensión del activismo fan. En concreto, el activismo fan o *fan activism* no se vincula únicamente a la política, sino que puede mantener cierto vínculo con un amplio espectro de materias como son, por ejemplo, las campañas para la renovación de series de televisión o las demandas de los fans para que se representen en sus shows favoritos minorías sociales, étnicas o sexuales desde una perspectiva positiva (Guerrero-Pico, 2017; Establés y Guerrero-Pico, 2017; Guerrero-Pico, Establés y Ventura, 2018). En este orden de cosas, entendemos que el activismo fan centrado en temas políticos sería una forma más de activismo promovido por algunos sectores dentro de los *fandoms*. De este modo, este tipo de expresión popular llevada a cabo por los fans no se entiende

como una simple unión entre el interés político y la cultura fan, sino que se trata de un activismo activo, aunque no sea para fines estrictamente entendidos como políticos (Earl y Kimport, 2009). En otras palabras, consideramos que el *fandom* político se puede definir como el conjunto de esfuerzos llevados a cabo por usuarios, ciudadanos o fans con el fin de abordar temas y asuntos políticos –no solo durante la campaña electoral– mediante la participación y estrategias basadas en la cultura popular (Brough y Shresthova, 2012; Establés-Heras, 2016) y, en el caso concreto de nuestro trabajo, con un rol central de las redes digitales.

Así, a la hora de referirnos al *fandom* político para nuestro caso de estudio, es necesario tener en cuenta la vinculación con los movimientos sociales y activistas de *Barcelona en Comú*. Más allá de la profesionalización de la política y analizando parte de sus consecuencias en relación al fenómeno *fandom*, resulta relevante la afirmación de Paolo Mancini,

The “digital citizen” prefigures the possibility of direct interactions among citizens, leaders, and officials, which, bypassing the mediation of the political parties in favor of technical skills already developed in the fields of research and business, further undermine the parties’ role and importance (1999: 236).

Los fans políticos, también denominados *political junkies* (Coleman, 2003), hacen referencia a aquellos usuarios o segmentos del público que demuestran especial interés o atención a la información política y a la actualidad política (Wilson, 2011). Este interés se basa en una relación con los políticos y la política en términos afectivos (Erikson, 2008; Madore, 2009; Sandvoss, 2013). En esta línea, Stephen Coleman profundiza en que estas relaciones o compromisos con lo político no son tratados como el *fandom* habitual, sino que pueden analizarse de manera independiente ya que representan un campo amplio de estudio. Por ello, nos referimos a un espectro concreto de la cultura fan (Sandvoss, 2005). Los fans y el activismo político se están diluyendo en medios cada vez más participativos

mediante el entretenimiento (Brough y Shresthova, 2012). De esta manera, es posible superar el tradicional concepto de participación política –vinculado a la forma en la que los ciudadanos aceptan y promulgan una agenda política concreta– para avanzar hacia una definición de participación ciudadana que se basa en grupos de jóvenes más vinculados con el interés personal, las redes sociales y el activismo cultural que con el gobierno en si (Brough y Shresthova, 2012; Hills, 2015).

Estos fans políticos se apropian del contenido y elementos políticos difundidos, tanto de los medios de comunicación como de partidos y políticos, compartiéndolos, adaptándolos, transformándolos y dándoles un nuevo sentido y significado (Madore, 2009; Wilson, 2011; Sandvoss, 2012). Esto muestra de manera aún más evidente con la mediación de internet y las redes digitales. A través de este proceso de redefinición de la información política mediante el *fandom*, donde los usuarios son prosumidores (Toffler, 1980), los propios usuarios con sus mensajes más dinámicos y visuales pasan a formar parte del *politainment* (Nieland, 2008; Sayre y King, 2010; Schultz, 2012) y los políticos se convierten en *celebrities*.

Las campañas virtuales e internet como medio/canal de comunicación política y electoral dieron lugar a una comunicación centrada, especialmente, en la respuesta de los usuarios, los cuales toman decisiones políticas basadas más en el afecto y lo emocional o proximidad/distancia ideológica renovando o modificando el pensamiento político tradicional (Erikson, 2008). En este aspecto, el *politainment* y la política o políticos *celebrities* (Madore, 2009; Oliva, Pérez-Latorre y Besalú, 2015) generan una respuesta de admiradores/votantes que actúa activamente en el flujo de comunicación política (Gray, 2007) especialmente en periodos electorales.

Víctor Hernández-Santaolalla y Maria del Mar Rubio-Hernández (2017), basándose en Castells (2009) y Maarek (2011), relacionan el *politainment* con la exposición, cada vez mayor, de la vida privada de los políticos; y el fenómeno *fandom* en política, con dos aspectos clave de la política contemporánea. En primer

lugar, el protagonismo que han alcanzado los medios de comunicación con la consiguiente importancia de internet y, en segundo lugar, la personalización política (Hernández-Santaolalla y Rubio-Hernández, 2017). Así, en palabras de Cornel Sandvoss:

communication and debates, especially online, appear to offer political supporters membership to the ‘interpretative communities’ (see Jenkins, 1992) of particular fan cultures. These were frequently identified as central in building and maintaining support for a given political candidate party (2012: 72).

Destaca el papel llevado a cabo por la red digital *Twitter* como elemento clave en el desarrollo del *fandom* político. Por ejemplo, en el seguimiento de debates políticos y el aumento de la visibilidad de candidatos como es el caso de los *garzoners* en la campaña a las generales de 2015 y 2016 (Hernández-Santaolalla y Rubio-Hernández, 2017).

De igual modo, Jonathan Dean (2012) advierte la importancia de mantener presente la vinculación entre el *fandom* y la política populista, basándose en Canovan (1999) y en la relación entre la desafección política y el *fandom*, donde destacan trabajos como el de Matthew Flinders (2012) y Gerry Stoker (2006).

En concreto, en el caso de nuestro objeto de este artículo, podemos diferenciar dos tipos de activismo *fandom* que encajan con los esfuerzos llevados a cabo desde dentro y fuera de la organización *Barcelona en Comú* durante la campaña electoral a las municipales de 2015. Por un lado, grupos de fans que están movilizados mediante objetivos políticos y sociales (como el programa electoral de *Barcelona en Comú*) y, por otro lado, activistas que pueden ser o no ser fans que transforman la cultura y el contenido pop con fines políticos y electorales (Brough y Shresthova, 2012).

3. Diseño de la investigación

3.1. Objetivos

Este trabajo se enmarca en una amplia investigación que analiza la comunicación en *Twitter* durante la campaña a las elecciones municipales de 2015 de Barcelona en Comú (García-Carretero y Pérez-Altable, 2017; García-Carretero y Díaz-Noci, 2018; García-Carretero, 2018). En trabajos anteriores, se han identificado elementos comunicativos como videos o imágenes que los perfiles oficiales de los partidos políticos incorporan durante la campaña, pero que provienen de otros usuarios o autores. La identificación de esos usuarios –la cuenta de *Twitter* de @Somcomuns y los perfiles en redes sociales del *Movimiento de Liberación Gráfica de Barcelona (MLGB)*- nos hacen plantearnos cuestiones como, por ejemplo, de dónde surgen estos perfiles o quién los constituye. Asimismo, nos invita a profundizar en el contexto y tono de estos elementos –más allá del mensaje electoral- que escapan de una estética formal e institucional. Por ello, tomando los ejemplos encontrados de @Somcomuns y el *MLGB*, este trabajo busca:

-En primer lugar, analizar los elementos de ‘la otra campaña’ de *Barcelona en Comú* a las elecciones de 2015. Es decir, el perfil de *Twitter* @Somcomuns y el *Movimiento de Liberación Gráfica de Barcelona*.

-En segundo lugar, profundizar en la estructura del grupo de comunicación de *Barcelona en Comú* con la finalidad de entender qué lugar ocupan, dentro del mismo, los activistas comunicativos de ‘la guerrilla comunicativa’ o el ‘desborde’.

3.2. Metodología

Para la consecución de los objetivos planteados, el método seleccionado es la entrevista semiestructurada en profundidad. Este método cualitativo resulta útil

cuando se tiene cierto grado de conocimiento sobre el objeto de estudio y sobre el tema de investigación (Wengraf, 2001; Kelly, 2010). En la entrevista semiestructurada, la información se obtiene desde el punto de vista biográfico y etnográfico (Vallés, 2009) y nos permite obtener datos sobre las dinámicas comunicativas de los partidos políticos de manera activa y colaborativa (Fontana y Frey, 2005; Brennen, 2013). Esta conversación informal sigue un guion flexible, pero en el que se incluyen las cuestiones más relevantes (de Vaus, 2001) y permite reorientar la entrevista en función de las respuestas del entrevistado (Wimmer and Dominick, 1996).

Los perfiles susceptibles de ser entrevistados, puesto que se parte de la premisa de que *Barcelona en Comú* es conocedor de este tipo de comunicación, son miembros del grupo de comunicación de la organización durante la campaña electoral de 2015. En el inicio de esta investigación se contactó con seis las personas, una de cada partido político de la organización, especialmente activas en la gestión de redes. Finalmente, se pudieron realizar tres entrevistas que siguieron un protocolo ético de consentimiento informado firmado por parte de los participantes. Estos perfiles, aunque anónimos debido al acuerdo establecido en el consentimiento informado, se consideran suficientes para este estudio ya que cuentan con: una persona del *MLGB*, una del grupo motor o comisión de comunicación de *Barcelona en Comú* y otra ajena al mismo intensificó su actividad y vinculación en la comisión de comunicación durante la campaña electoral. Esto último, como mostraremos más adelante, es lo que desde la organización denominan ‘guerrilla comunicativa’ o ‘desborde’.

La siguiente tabla (*Tabla 1*) muestra las categorías incluidas en el guion de las entrevistas semiestructuradas relevantes en esta investigación.

Tabla 1. Guion entrevista semi estructurada en profundidad.

1. Información contextual	
Vinculación con <i>Barcelona en Comú</i>	-Movimientos sociales -Partidos políticos -Otros
Periodo de participación	
Motivación	-Social/política -Profesional -Otros
2. Estructura del grupo de comunicación	
Estructura de la comisión de comunicación	
Definición de perfiles	-Redes sociales -Video/imagen -Diseño gráfico
Relación entre los perfiles	
Responsabilidades	
Dinámicas durante la campaña	
Coordinación entre los diferentes grupos	
3. Herramientas y canales de comunicación	
Canal de comunicación principal (uso)	
Canal de comunicación según relevància	
Estrategia para cada canal	
Redes digitales (protocolo)	
4. El mensaje	
Definición del mensaje	
Selección del mensaje	
Tipos de mensaje	-Institucional -Informal (la otra campaña)

4. Resultados: la “otra campaña” de *Barcelona en Comú*

4.1. *Som Comuns*

Los ciberactivistas de *Som Comuns* se definen a sí mismos como el colectivo de activistas en las redes sociales –entre otras, *Twitter*, *Facebook* y *YouTube*– de *Barcelona en Comú*. El acceso y participación en este grupo de ciberactivistas se pudo llevar a cabo durante la campaña –y en la actualidad– por medio de

inscripción online mediante formulario (*Imagen 1*), a través del canal de *Telegram* (*Imagen 2*) y mediante los perfiles en sus redes digitales *Twitter* y *Facebook*.

Imágenes 1 y 2. Cómo participar en *Som Comuns*



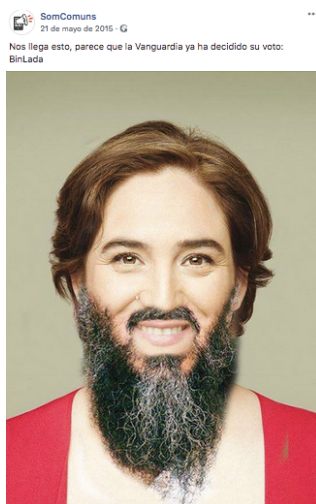
Fuente: *Som Comuns* en *Twitter* y *Facebook*

Estos ciberactivistas generan y comparten materiales e ideas mediante las redes desde 2015 hasta la actualidad, ya que lo que surgió como una plataforma de acompañamiento y refuerzo a la campaña institucional, se ha mantenido en el tiempo para reforzar la imagen de Ada Colau como alcaldesa de Barcelona.

“esta segunda (cuenta de *Twitter*) es más libre a nivel de contenido, de interacción, más desde el punto de vista activista, de expresión y de cómo cuentas las cosas, manteniendo la esencia de activismo y movimiento social [...] desde *Som Comuns* el lenguaje es más libre, [...]” (Entrevista 1).

Som Comuns compartió contenido audiovisual de carácter dinámico e informal durante la campaña electoral, lo que convirtió a Ada Colau en una candidata más humanizada y cercana. Por ejemplo, las imágenes 3 y 4 muestran dos casos diferentes. La imagen de Ada Colau con barba responde a una noticia publicada en *La Vanguardia* -campaña negativa (Auter y Fine, 2016; Gross y Johnson, 2016)- que vinculaba a la alcaldesa de Barcelona con Bin Laden. La pieza titulada ‘Les cartes d’amor i odi de Bin Laden’ aseguraba que uno de los libros encontrados a Bin Laden era de Noam Chomsky, uno de los apoyos internacionales de Ada Colau en las municipales de 2015. Por lo tanto, concluía en la existencia de relación entre ambos. Esta imagen responde con humor a una crítica o ataque llevado a cabo por un medio de comunicación. La respuesta al medio de comunicación fue compartida por la candidata a alcaldesa.

Imagen 3. @Somcomuns: BinLada



La siguiente imagen (*Imagen 4*) muestra una de las estrategias principales de @somcomuns durante la campaña electoral. Siendo una perfil en las redes independiente, a priori, alejado del perfil de las cuentas oficiales de la organización política, participó activamente en los eventos oficiales de campaña.

“La finalidad era crear hegemonía en las redes y que pudiera trascender a la prensa. Porque al final la prensa y la tele siguen siendo dominantes como canal de comunicación electoral y política” (Entrevistado 2).

Durante un debate electoral entre los alcaldables a la ciudad de Barcelona en la televisión *Betevé*, la cuenta de *Twitter* difunde un meme Xavier Trias, candidato por de *Convergència i Unió* como respuesta con el fin de *trolea* las palabras del candidato, incorporando otro tono a la estrategia de crítica a la oposición (Auter y Fine, 2016; Gross y Johnson, 2016).

Imagen 4. @somcomuns: meme como crítica a la oposición



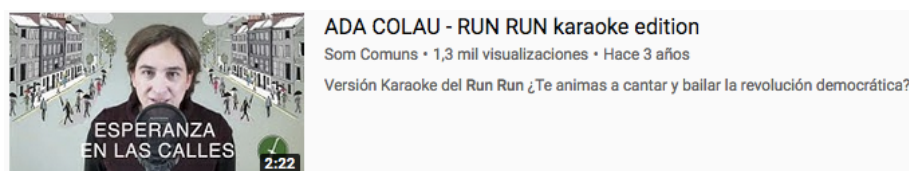
Otro de los elementos característicos de la campaña a las municipales de 2015 de Ada Colau, aunque antes del periodo legal de campaña electoral pero justificado teóricamente por la campaña permanente (Lilleker, 2006; Elmer, Langlois y McKelvey, 2012) fue la canción del *Run Run* (Imagen 5). No obstante, el video original mantiene su autoría y no forma parte de *Som Comuns* como tal, ya que fue un elemento de campaña creado por @ivanlagarto como simpatizante/fan de Ada Colau y su propuesta política. El video fue redefinido por *Som Comuns* ya que crearon una versión karaoke y politono para el móvil del *Run Run* (Imagen 6).

Imagen 5. El Run Run



Fuente: cuenta de YouTube de Ivan Lagarto

Imagen 6. El Run Run versión karaoke de @somcomuns



4.2. *Movimiento de Liberación Gráfica de Barcelona (MLGB)*

El *Movimiento de Liberación Gráfica de Barcelona (MLGB, My Life is Getting Better)*, según su propia descripción, es un grupo de tipógrafos, ilustradores, realizadores y humoristas gráficos que participaron en la campaña a las municipales en Barcelona y mantuvieron conexión con sus homólogos en Madrid (*MLGM*), manteniendo de forma visual la conexión entre las alcaldesas Ada Colau y Manuela Carmena. El *MLGB*, bajo el lema “*Si som capaços d’imaginar una altra Barcelona, som capaços de transformar-la*”¹ fue el encargado de realizar el material gráfico para las redes sociales y el diseño de gran parte de la cartelería electoral. Aunque este material se incorporó en gran medida a la campaña electoral de *Barcelona en Comú*, su relevancia radica en ofrecer diferentes diseños a la organización mediante iniciativa propia, los cuales podían ser aceptados o rechazados por el grupo responsable durante la campaña.

¹ Si somos capaces de imaginar otra Barcelona, somos capaces de transformarla.

“La mayoría de nosotros veníamos de diferentes movimientos sociales y ya estábamos implicados en las luchas de la ciudad de una manera u otra. Personalmente, venía de hacer activismo creativo, hacíamos acciones de calle, ya fueran de gráfica, de intervención en el espacio público con murales, con performance, etc.” (Entrevistado, 2).

Para relacionar la labor llevada a cabo por el *Movimiento de Liberación Gráfica* con la comunicación electoral institucional difundida en el perfil oficial de *Twitter* de *Barcelona en Comú*, nos centraremos en campañas concretas.

El primer ejemplo está relacionado con el cambio de nombre de *Barcelona en Comú*. En agosto de 2014, *Guanyem Barcelona* (actualmente *Barcelona en Comú*) procedía a la inscripción de la marca-partido -en todas las lenguas cooficiales- en el registro de partidos políticos, ya que hasta la fecha figuraba como plataforma ciudadana. La variación ‘Ganemos’ ya había sido inscrita por alguien ajeno a la organización por lo que tuvieron que cambiar de nombre. Esta campaña giró en torno a la frase ‘Guanyem una Barcelona en Comú’ y el *hashtag* en redes sociales *#BarcelonaenComú*. Para que las consecuencias con el problema de *naming* fueran lo menos negativas posibles para la marca-partido, el *MLGB* llevó a cabo una campaña en la que explicaba el cambio de nombre de cara a la campaña electoral. La *Imagen 7* muestra como el *MLGB* retomó esta campaña ahora sí, durante la campaña electoral, para llevar a cabo el llamamiento al voto.

“En ese momento tenemos que hacer el cambio de nombre de Guanyem Barcelona porque nos lo roban. Era *Guanyem Barcelona*, e *Iniciativa*, etc. Al mismo tiempo que se traza lo de la confluencia se hace el cambio de nombre. Había un caos. Lo entiendo bien porque vengo del mundo del marketing, había un problema de *naming* gravísimo. Y los diseñadores, los que veníamos de publicidad insistíamos en ello” (Entrevistado 2).

En segundo lugar, encontramos la difusión de convocatoria a actos. El último gran acto de campaña de la coalición electoral *Barcelona en Comú*, celebrado en Plaça Catalunya el 20 de marzo de 2015 se difundió en las cuentas oficiales *Twitter* con el *hashtag* #jovaigalaplaca. Simbólicamente, *Barcelona en Comú* volvía a la plaza en la que tuvo lugar la acampada del 15M en mayo de 2011. Como muestra la *Imagen 8*, el *MLGB* incorpora el *hashtag* de la campaña oficial y otro elemento de ‘la otra campaña’ como es el *Run Run* en una misma imagen.

Imágenes 7 y 8. Ejemplo campaña *MLGB*



Fuente: cuenta de *Facebook* del *MLGB*

En relación a la campaña alternativa y el presente ejemplo de activismo *fan*, observamos como a través de imágenes y de la ‘reapropiación’ de uno de los carteles electorales de la oposición. En el cartel electoral de Xavier Trias (*Imagen 9*), se puede observar uno de sus lemas de campaña ‘El meu alcalde creu en les persones’². Los activistas gráficos reformulan el mensaje construyendo la frase ‘El meu alcalde creu en les persones amb calés’³ y lo publicaron en sus redes sociales.

² ‘Mi alcalde cree en las personas’

³ ‘Mi alcalde cree en las personas con dinero’.

Imagen 9. MLGB: crítica a la oposición



4.3. La guerrilla comunicativa

Otro de los ejemplos de este trabajo es la guerrilla comunicativa o ‘desborde’. Es decir, el equipo de simpatizantes que participaron en la campaña a las municipales de 2015 y resulta útil, a su vez, para entender y profundizar en la organización interna y en el grupo de comunicación de *Barcelona en Comú*.

Barcelona en Comú, como partido-movimiento (della Pota y Mattoni, 2014) o como partido político resultado de la institucionalización de movimientos sociales (della Porta y Pavan, 2017; Pavan, 2017), conserva características propias de movimientos sociales, como es su organización interna, al menos en el grupo de comunicación durante el periodo de análisis. El grupo de comunicación, conocido como ‘comisión de comunicación’, se organizó durante la campaña electoral de 2015 en dos grandes grupos. En primer lugar, en un grupo constante y comprometido desde el origen de *Barcelona en Comú* en 2014, organizado en función de diferentes tareas comunicativas (redes, diseño, prensa).

“La comisión se organizaba, básicamente, por meritocracia. El/la que más se implicaba acababa cogiendo más responsabilidad y un cargo más de organización con la capacidad de decir a los demás miembros de la comisión

qué tiene que hacer o qué no tiene que hacer. Nos organizábamos en reuniones amplias en las cuáles se intentaba dar espacio a todo el mundo para que participara. Había repartición de tareas en función de la implicación” (Entrevistado 2).

“Somos horizontales, ya nos organizábamos con asambleas por eso encajamos tan bien con Barcelona en Comú. No tenemos jerarquías” (Entrevistado 3).

El segundo grupo, el ‘desborde’, es consecuencia de una llamada desde la comisión de comunicación a ampliar recursos humanos para ejecutar y llevar a cabo la campaña a las municipales. De esta forma, en el espacio destinado a la elaboración y ejecución de las estrategias comunicativas convivían un grupo fijo de participantes y grupo variable en función de interés y disponibilidad. Lo que pone de manifiesto los esfuerzos de la organización política para integrar a sus simpatizantes durante la campaña electoral, especialmente a los activistas fan en el grupo de comunicación.

“No todos los miembros twitteaban o posteaban. Podrían haberlo hecho. No se ponían restricciones. Pero la gestión se hacía a través de chats que sigue existiendo y es el mismo que tenemos desde el inicio. Había varios responsables [...] no había un solo *community manager*. De hecho ahora solo hay un CM pero en ese momento todos podían participar. Era voluntario” (Entrevistado 1).

“En la campaña, como desde EQUO tampoco íbamos a hacer nada específico, nos unimos a Barcelona en Comú. Fui a su local y me presenté diciendo que además de ser de EQUO quería colaborar con la comunicación durante la campaña. Durante otoño invierno, en las primeras reuniones fui participando en todas las cosas que se hicieron desde BComú como el código ético, las asambleas, etc. En enero y febrero estuve más desinvolucrado [...]. Las cuatro últimas semanas antes de las elecciones pedí mis vacaciones para involucrarme en la parte de comunicación” (Entrevistado 3).

5. Conclusiones

‘La otra campaña’ llevada a cabo para las elecciones municipales de Barcelona en 2015 a través de *Som Comuns*, el *Movimiento de Liberación Gráfica de Barcelona* y la guerrilla comunicativa o ‘desborde’ supuso la transformación y adaptación del contenido de medios de comunicación –BinLada- y de los partidos políticos - #alaplça20M- a través del activismo fan. La identificación de estos grupos de activistas políticos y la información aportada a través de las entrevistas semiestructuradas nos permiten concluir que, durante la campaña a las municipales, las cuentas oficiales en redes sociales de *Barcelona en Comú* convivieron con otros perfiles basados en la cultura fan (Sandvoss, 2005), los afectos (Erikson, 2008) y el contenido pop con fines políticos (Brough y Shresthova, 2012).

El análisis de varios de los ítems @Somcomuns y el *Movimiento de Liberación Gráfica de Barcelona* vislumbra cómo a mediante el humor, el contenido audiovisual y el grafismo, *Barcelona en Comú* redefinió elementos de la comunicación política clásica como la campaña negativa y la crítica a la oposición (Auter y Fine, 2016; Gross y Johnson, 2016), y otros más recientes como la espectacularización de la política (Norris, 2000, 2011) y los políticos/candidatos *celebrities* (Madore, 2009; Oliva, Pérez-Latorre y Besalú, 2015) como Ada Colau. Esto último, vinculado a la concepción del populismo como un estilo de comunicación política que sitúa a su líder Ada Colau como el epicentro de esta comunicación (McDonell, 2015; Feenstra et al., 2017).

En este sentido, *Soms Comuns* se puede considerar como un claro ejemplo de que las campañas de afectividad y activismo fan (Guerrero-Pico, 2017; Establés y Guerrero-Pico, 2017; Guerrero-Pico, Establés y Ventura, 2018) se pueden aplicar a movimientos sociales y comunicación política. Casos como los *milifans* (Hills, 2015) o los *garzoners* (Hernández-Santaolalla y Rubio-Hernández, 2017), al igual que la guerrilla comunicativa de *Soms Comuns*, muestran un alto grado de

coordinación de los fans, ya que aprovechan todas las herramientas digitales a su alcance para poder apoyar a sus candidatos políticos. Además, esta relación entre las técnicas de movilización de las comunidades de fans y campañas electorales, acercan a la política a ciertos colectivos jóvenes, a través del sistema híbrido de medios (Chadwick, 2013) y la mediación de internet y las redes digitales.

Asimismo, el estudio de la estructura del grupo de comunicación de *Barcelona en Comú* con la finalidad de entender qué lugar ocupan, dentro del mismo, los activistas comunicativos de ‘la guerrilla comunicativa’ o el ‘desborde’ nos ha permitido observar en profundidad y de manera crítica las relaciones entre *fandom*, política y populismo (Sandvoss, 2012, 2013; Dean, 2017) en el objeto de estudio. Los esfuerzos llevados a cabo durante la campaña de los activistas fans a través de ‘la otra campaña’ formaron parte activa de la campaña en redes sociales y se integraron en la campaña debido a la estructura descentralizada del grupo de comunicación de *Barcelona en Comú*.

No obstante, para futuras investigaciones, resulta una interesante materia de estudio averiguar, en qué medida, los elementos de ‘la otra campaña’ han sido integrados en el grupo o comisión de comunicación de *Barcelona en Comú*. Esto supondría cierta evolución del contenido transformado, adaptado y compartido (Madore, 2009; Wilson, 2011; Sandvoss, 2012) por @somcomuns, el *MLGB* y el ‘desborde’ desde el activismo fan, a su integración en el propio partido. Por ello, resulta necesario profundizar en cuestiones como la autenticidad de las obras transformativas de los ciudadanos/fans/activistas o los mecanismos para influir en la toma de decisiones de los votantes y/o de los partidos políticos.

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Visibilidad web y Comunicación Política: análisis de los sitios web de la coalición electoral *Barcelona en Comú*

Resumen

Desde comienzos del siglo XXI, se ha incrementado el interés por las posibilidades de la comunicación digital como canal y fuente de comunicación social y política (Bor, 2014, Fenton y Barassi, 2011, Mazzoleni, 2017, Vaccari, 2013). El acceso a la información política a través de buscadores como Google o Bing y de redes digitales como Twitter o Facebook, es decir, la visibilidad o grado en el que una información es accesible (Giomelakis y Veglis, 2015, Gonzalo, Codina y Rovira, 2015, Phillips, Yang y Djamasbi, 2013), se presenta como una interesante materia de estudio. Sin embargo, su uso está determinado, entre otros factores, por las estrategias comunicativas, la naturaleza de cada partido político y por el contexto socio político (Borge y Esteve, 2017, Greaves, 2015, Vaccari, 2013). Así, el presente caso de estudio se centra en el análisis de la comunicación digital de los seis partidos políticos que conforman la confluencia Barcelona en Comú, fuerza de Gobierno en el Ayuntamiento de Barcelona desde mayo de 2015. Esto es, Barcelona en Comú, Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds, Podem, Esquerra Unida i Alternativa, Procés Constituent y EQUO. La investigación parte de la tesis de que los partidos surgidos en los últimos años tras la aparición de diversos movimientos sociales (della Porta y Mattoni, 2015, della Porta, Fernández, Kouki y Morca, 2017) han incorporado de manera significativa nuevas formas de comunicación política aprovechando las posibilidades que Internet ofrece como canal comunicativo (Campos-Domínguez y Calvo, 2017, Casero-Ripollés, Sintés-Olivella y Franch, 2017, López-García, Cano y Argilés, 2016). Así, se profundiza en la relevancia de las redes digitales de los partidos políticos no sólo como fuente de información política en sí mismos, sino también como posible canal intermediario entre los usuarios y las webs de los partidos políticos. Por ello, los objetivos de análisis son, en primer lugar, averiguar cuál es la principal fuente de tráfico de las webs de los partidos políticos con la finalidad de determinar el lugar que ocupan las redes digitales corporativas en el acceso a la información política. En segundo lugar, determinar cuáles los conceptos o palabras clave principales (anclajes) empleadas para la búsqueda de los sitios web de los partidos. En tercer lugar, determinar qué tipo información política recibe mayor interés por parte de los usuarios. Asimismo, averiguar si existen diferencias significativas entre los sitios web objeto de estudio, con el fin de determinar si llevan a cabo estrategias comunicativas digitales coordinadas. Para la consecución de estos objetivos, se ha empleado la herramienta de análisis SemRush. Esta herramienta proporciona, mediante una amplia selección de indicadores, información relativa al Search Engine Optimization (SEO) y Search Engine Marketing (SEM) de los dominios de las webs corporativas. Además, permite determinar cuál es la principal fuente de acceso a la información política de la confluencia por parte de los usuarios. Por tanto, se considera que la aplicación de esta clase de herramientas no proporciona información valiosa para nuestros propósitos, sino que representa también una aplicación metodológica novedosa.

Palabras clave: Comunicación política, Search Engine Optimization, Search Engine Marketing, Barcelona en Comú

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1. Introducción

Desde comienzos del siglo XXI, se ha incrementado el interés por las posibilidades de la comunicación digital como canal y fuente de comunicación social y política (; Fenton y Barassi, 2011; Vaccari, 2013; Bor, 2014; Mazzoleni, 2017). Los canales de acceso a este tipo de información se han multiplicado con la aparición de la web 2.0 (Klinger y Stevansson, 2014; Curran, Fenton y Freedman, 2016). No obstante, aunque la televisión continúa siendo el principal medio de comunicación política en España (Sampedro, Sánchez-Duarte y Campos, 2014), la incorporación a las estrategias comunicativas de los *social media* proporciona información política de manera más directa, limitando la intermediación de medios, periodistas y líderes de opinión (Aragón, Volkovich, Laviado y Kaltenbrunner, 2015) y dando lugar a una posible "crisis" de los intermediarios tradicionales (Aguilar, 2016).

El acceso a la información política a través de buscadores como *Google* o *Bing* y de redes digitales como *Twitter* o *Facebook*, y por tanto, la visibilidad o grado en el que una información es accesible (Phillips, Yang y Djamasbi, 2013; Giomelakis y Veglis, 2015; Gonzalo, Codina y Rovira, 2015), se presenta así como una interesante oportunidad de estudio. Unas adecuadas estrategias de *Search Engine Optimization* (SEO) y *Search Engine Marketing* (SEM) en el marco de las estrategias comunicativas online de los partidos políticos se considera un requisito indispensable en el diseño de campañas electorales. Especialmente, teniendo en cuenta el avance hacia la campaña permanente (Lilleker, 2006; Elmer, Langlois y McKelvey, 2012), según la cual los partidos políticos mantienen un interés constante en la difusión de información política y electoral sin la limitación temporal de la campaña. Sin embargo, su uso está determinado, entre otros factores, por las estrategias comunicativas, la naturaleza de cada partido político y por el contexto socio político (Vaccari, 2013; Greaves, 2015; Borge y Esteve, 2017).

Así, la presente investigación se centra en el análisis de la comunicación digital de los seis partidos políticos que conforman la coalición electoral *Barcelona en Comú*, fuerza de Gobierno en el Ayuntamiento de Barcelona desde mayo de 2015. Es decir, las páginas web de *Barcelona en Comú* (BeC), *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds* (ICV), *Podem* (P), *Procés Constituent* (PC), *Esquerra Unida i Alternativa* (EUiA) y *EQUO* (E). Se parte de la reiterada constatación de que los partidos surgidos en los últimos años, tras la aparición de diversos movimientos sociales (della Porta y Mattoni, 2014; della Porta, Fernández, Kouki y Morca, 2017), han incorporado de manera significativa formas de comunicación política que aprovechan las posibilidades de Internet como

canal comunicativo (López-García, Cano y Argilés, 2016; Pérez-Altable, 2016; Campos-Domínguez y Calvo, 2017, Casero-Ripollés, Sintés-Olivella y Franch, 2017; Linares, 2017).

El objetivo principal de esta investigación es el análisis de las características del uso de las redes digitales de los partidos políticos, no sólo como fuente de información política en sí mismos, sino también como hipotético canal intermediario entre los usuarios y las webs de los partidos políticos. Para ello, se parte de la hipótesis de que las páginas web de los partidos ocupan un lugar relevante dentro de su estrategia de comunicación política.

Se da la circunstancia, común a todos los sitios web, que el tráfico que obtienen de los buscadores (léase *Google*) procede de las búsquedas que han efectuado los internautas previamente. Este tráfico produce, cada vez más, una parte significativa del tráfico total. Por lo tanto, si conocemos las palabras clave por la cuales un sitio obtiene posiciones relevantes en la página de resultados de *Google*, sabremos cuál es su perfil de visibilidad. O, dicho de otro modo, sabremos para qué palabras clave este sitio está bien posicionado. Con el fin de profundizar en las estrategias comunicativas, interesa a los autores determinar qué términos de búsqueda funcionan mejor para el posicionamiento de las respectivas webs y por tanto, qué términos de búsqueda facilitan el acceso a información política para los partidos políticos objeto de estudio. Además, mediante un análisis comparativo de las páginas web de los partidos políticos que forman la coalición *Barcelona en Comú*, esta investigación examina las diferentes webs de cada partido de la confluencia con, el fin de determinar las diferencias y similitudes entre estos partidos en relación a la comunicación digital.

Creemos que, de este modo, podemos hacer diversas aportaciones de interés no solamente para los estudiosos de la comunicación, es decir, para los comunicólogos, sino también para los comunicadores. Además, entendemos que nuestra aportación puede ser útil a otros grupos de investigación porque pueden aplicar la metodología que hemos utilizado, y que creemos que es novedosa, en cuanto implica la aplicación de herramientas de análisis de posicionamiento que no se había utilizado anteriormente con esta finalidad.

2. Presentación del objeto de estudio: de Guanyem Barcelona a Barcelona en Comú

Guanyem Barcelona, actualmente *Barcelona en Comú*, surge en junio de 2014. Forma parte de los denominados como partidos-movimiento (*movement party*) contra la austeridad surgidos tras el ciclo de crisis económica en diferentes lugares, los cuales conservan características, demandas e incluso activistas/políticos que provienen de diferentes movimientos sociales (della Porta, Fernández, Kouki y Mosca, 2017).

Durante los meses posteriores a su formación, la plataforma ciudadana comenzó un proceso de autodefinición y colaboración con otros agentes políticos con el fin de crear un compromiso ético consensuado que implicase a todas las entidades y, de esta forma, marcar la línea de actuación para avanzar juntos hacia las elecciones municipales de Barcelona de 2015. En octubre de 2014, el código ético, de elaboración abierta y consensuada, el cual sintetizaba los puntos clave de una confluencia, fue validado por *EQUO*, *Esquerra Unida i Alternativa*, *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds*, *Podem* y *Procés Constituent*. Su validación dio a la creación de la confluencia a principios de 2015. Simultáneamente, llevaron a cabo la recogida de 30.000 firmas para aprobar *Guanyem Barcelona* como partido político, tanto de forma presencial como a través de su página web. Mediante un video difundido a través de su canal *YouTube* «*Sense tu no és possible, signa per guanyar Barcelona*» la plataforma política invitaba a los ciudadanos a participar. Este aspecto, entre muchos otros, muestra el uso de la Web 2.0 como herramienta de comunicación política por parte de *Barcelona en Comú* (*Figura 1*), ya que emplearon su página web para la participación ciudadana y la validación de propuestas.

Imagen 1. Ejemplo de validación a través de la web

Firma el manifiesto:

Para apoyar podéis validar la propuesta llenando el siguiente formulario. El proceso de validación se cerrará el 15 de septiembre. Durante este plazo, nos hemos propuesto recoger al menos 30.000 firmas electrónicas, de las cuales la mitad como mínimo tienen que ser de Barcelona ciudad.

Nombre completo **DNI-NIE**

Correo electrónico **Actividad**

Provincia **Ciudad** **Barrio**

Quiero que mi nombre no se muestre
 Quiero mantenerme informado via correo electrónico sobre la plataforma Guanyem Barcelona

Da tu apoyo

Para validar tu correo electrónico te hemos enviado un mail con un enlace que tendrás que clicar. Repasa tu carpeta de spam si no lo has recibido en las siguientes horas.

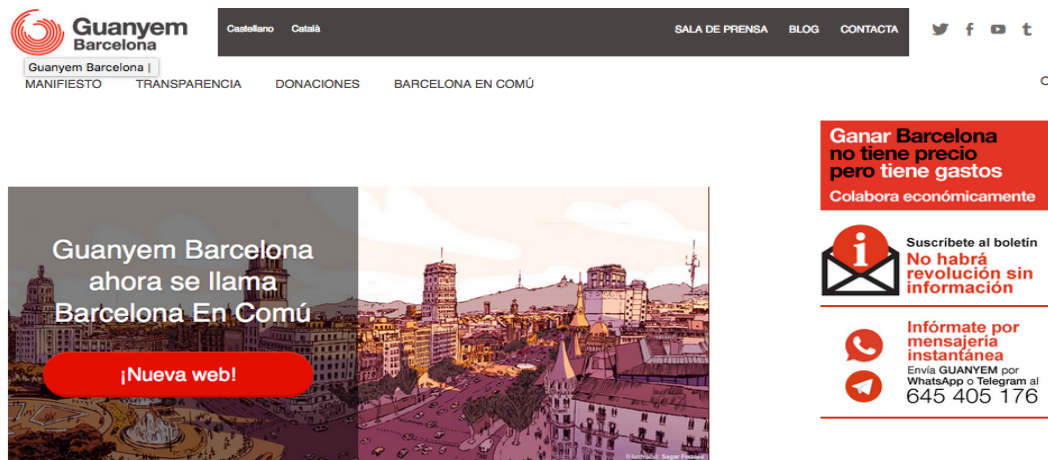
Fuente: guanyembarcelona.cat/es/

En agosto de 2014, cuando procedían a la inscripción de la marca en castellano y en las lenguas cooficiales en el registro de partidos políticos –la formación estaba inscrita desde junio como asociación–, “Ganemos”, la versión en español, ya había sido registrado por alguien ajeno al partido.⁵ Esto supuso la modificación de su sitio web, de sus perfiles en las redes sociales y de parte de las estrategias de marca trazada hasta la fecha. Tras dos negativas del Ministerio del Interior, cuando ya habían redirigido su marca hacia el nuevo nombre de *Barcelona en Comú*, este autorizó el empleo de *Guanyem Barcelona* para presentarse a las municipales. Empero, tras los cambios realizados, el problema de *namings* y el nuevo trabajo de asociación del partido a una web (*Imagen 2*) y perfiles en las redes digitales, tanto el partido como la confluencia mantendrían el nombre de *Barcelona en Comú*.⁶

⁵Guanyem estudia canviar de nom després del segon veto d'Interior. Recuperado 25 abril 2015, desde http://cat.elpais.com/cat/2015/01/22/catalunya/1421936139_720089.html

⁶Interior autoritza ara Guanyem a fer servir el nom per a les eleccions. Recuperado 25 abril de 2015, desde http://cat.elpais.com/cat/2015/02/20/actualidad/1424443398_886491.html

Imagen 2. Cambio de página web



Fuente: guanyembarcelona.cat/es/

Finalmente, el 24 de mayo de 2015, *Barcelona en Comú* se convertía en la fuerza más votada en las elecciones a la alcaldía de Barcelona con 11 concejales de un total de 41, aunque con la necesidad de pactar con otros partidos para poder gobernar.

3. Medios sociales y comunicación política

Los motores de búsqueda son utilizados regularmente por los ciudadanos como punto de partida hacia al acceso de información, por lo que son un elemento imprescindible a tener en cuenta en la relación contenido-usuario (Vàllez et al., 2010; Prat, 2012; Baye, de los Santos y Wildenbeest, 2015; García-Carretero, Codina, Díaz-Noci e Iglesias-García, 2016). La visibilidad del contenido web no depende de la relevancia o de la calidad intrínseca del mismo, sino del acceso a esta información por parte de las audiencias potenciales, el cual a su vez, es una función de su posición en la clasificación de las páginas de resultados de los buscadores (Killoran, 2013).

El objetivo principal del posicionamiento en buscadores o *Search Engine Optimization* (SEO) es optimizar la visibilidad de un sitio, incrementando el llamado tráfico orgánico. Es decir, el tráfico que no depende la publicidad (Baye et al., 2015). Concretamente, son los llamados *Factores SEO* los que determinan la visibilidad potencial de los sitios web, ya sean factores que pueden controlarse por parte del autor de la información, en nuestro caso los partidos políticos (factores *On Page*), o ya factores que escapan en su mayor parte a su control, como la obtención de enlaces

entrada, procedentes de otras páginas web o redes digitales (factores *Off Page*) (Codina et al., 2016).

No obstante, el acceso a las páginas web no solo depende del tráfico proporcionado desde la página de resultados de buscadores como *Google* (Codina et al., 2016). Una parte del tráfico suele estar vinculado, entre otros, al tráfico social, es decir, tráfico que corresponde a las visitas que recibe un sitio web desde las redes digitales, especialmente *Twitter* y *Facebook* (fuentes de tráfico). De este modo, la evolución de la comunicación política, ha dado lugar a que los sitios web de los partidos políticos sean considerados un elemento fundamental en la actividad política (Giansante, 2015). Y, por tanto, "las páginas web de los partidos y candidatos han evolucionado desde su concepción como "folleto" complementario y subsidiario de la campaña offline hasta su actual condición interactividad y de centralidad respecto a la campaña online" (Gamir, 2016: 102).

Como ya advertía hace casi una década Gianpietro Mazzoleni (1999), Internet está modificando la forma en que partidos e instituciones atienden las necesidades comunicativas de los electores o ciudadanos siendo este proceso más directo ya que no cuenta con la intermediación de los *mass media*. Por ello, la delimitación entre lo *online* y lo *offline* se ha desdibujado en el diseño estratégico de difusión de contenidos, dando lugar a un espacio en el que tienen lugar diferentes formas de comunicación, plataformas y flujos comunicativos (Aguilar, 2016). Es por ello, que las diferentes herramientas online se consideran elementos imprescindibles de una correcta estrategia comunicativa, no solo en términos de comunicación política (Delany, 2011).

Así, en una estrategia completa y coordinada es necesario (1) crear un núcleo central o *hub* de comunicación, normalmente la página web, que actúe de eje vertebrador, "donde se recoge todo el material producido y a partir del cual se desarrolla la actividad de comunicación" (Giansante, 2015: 111). En segundo lugar, son necesarias las herramientas de contacto con simpatizantes y público objetivo para mantenerlos informados y promover su participación e implicación, sobre todo mediante correo electrónico y redes digitales (Delany, 2011; Giansante, 2015). Por último, las herramientas destinadas a favorecer o ampliar el radio de acción y generar el debate online, como las redes digitales *Twitter* y *Facebook* (Delany, 2011; Giansante, 2015). Sin embargo, hemos de cuestionarnos si en esta comunicación directa, sin los intermediarios tradicionales, tiene lugar un feedback real o comunicación bidireccional, la co-participación (Martínez, 2005).

Por su parte, Sampedro afirma que tras las elecciones españolas de 2004 y 2008, el papel jugado por las TIC supuso el inicio de un proceso cuya principal consecuencia ha sido "la

institucionalización de las nuevas herramientas de la comunicación política por las burocracias electorales” (2011: 11). No es sorprendente que los últimos años, sean numerosos los estudios que versan sobre comunicación política y/o electoral y las posibilidades que Internet ofrece desde el punto de vista comunicativo. Tanto en el estudio de páginas webs de partidos políticos (Norris, 2003; Campos-Domínguez, 2011; Gamir, 2016), como en relación a las redes digitales durante campañas electorales de diferente carácter (Sampedro, 2011; Aragón et al, 2013; Pérez y Nicasio, 2015; Zugasti y Sabés, 2015; Carratalá y Galán, 2016; López-García, Cano y Argilés, 2016; Marín y Díaz, 2016; Quevedo, Portalés-Oliva y Berrocal, 2016; Campos-Domínguez y Calvo, 2017; Casero-Ripollés et al., 2017; García-Carretero y Pérez-Altable, 2017) o en momentos políticamente relevantes (Marcos-García, Alonso-Muñoz y Casero-Ripollés, 2017).

No obstante, como ya ocurría con la aplicación de herramientas de análisis SEO al estudio de cibermedios (García-Carretero et al, 2016), la aplicación de las mismas al análisis de comunicación política desde la Academia es todavía limitada. El estudio de los sitios web de partidos y políticos y un seguimiento continuado y sistemático (*social media monitoring*) no solo aporta información sobre el éxito de las estrategias comunicativas, sino que además permite profundizar en el público, en espacios para conseguir consenso y contribuir positivamente a la calidad de la actividad política (Giansente, 2015). Por ello, en el siguiente apartado se profundiza en la información que la herramienta *SEMrush*, una de las más utilizadas por parte de estudiosos y analistas del SEO de todo el mundo, aporta para la investigación de páginas web de partidos políticos.

4. Diseño de la investigación

Esta investigación se enmarca en una tesis doctoral cuyo principal objetivo es el estudio de las estrategias comunicativas en el espacio online de la coalición política *Barcelona en Comú*. Al tratarse, principalmente, del análisis de redes digitales, se considera que este estudio permite completar nuestra investigación, ya que nos permite analizar las diferentes fuentes de tráfico que dirigen a los usuarios/ciudadanos a las páginas web de los partidos políticos. Así, los objetivos en torno a los que se organiza esta investigación son:

O1. Determinar si las redes digitales desempeñan algún rol como proveedoras de tráfico a los sitios web de los partidos analizados.

02. Determinar cuáles fueron las principales palabras clave utilizadas durante el periodo examinado para la búsqueda de los sitios web de los partidos políticos.

03: Determinar si para el periodo seleccionado existen diferencias entre los respectivos perfiles de visibilidad de cada partido a través de su sitio web.

04: Explorar las posibilidades de las herramientas de análisis de posicionamiento para su aplicación a los sitios web de partidos políticos.

Una vez planteados los principales objetivos de esta investigación, para su consecución, se emplea la herramienta de análisis *SEMrush*, “una de las más utilizadas por los profesionales del sector SEO/SEM, y una de las mejor reputadas, contando con un destacado panel de usuarios de diversos sectores económicos” (Lopezosa; Codina, 2018). *SEMrush* está considerada de forma unánime como una de las principales herramientas de análisis SEO, siendo mencionada en casi todos los rankings de tal tipo de productos.

SEMrush permite monitorizar datos web tanto a tiempo real, como en periodos anteriores. Dados los acontecimientos sucedidos en Cataluña durante el mes de octubre de 2017 y meses posteriores, como la *Declaración Unilateral de Independencia* (DUI) y la aplicación del Artículo 155 de la Constitución Española, se considera oportuna la aplicación de la herramienta *SEMrush* a la semana comprendida entre el 8 y el 15 de octubre de este año. Así, se analizan la página web de *Barcelona en Comú* (*barcelonaencomu.cat*), de *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds* (*iniciativa.cat*), de *Procés Constituent* (*procesconstituent.cat*), de *Podem* (*podembcn.cat*), de *Esquerra Unida i Alternativa* (*semprealesquerra.cat*) y de *EQUO* (*equocatalunya.cat*).

4.1 Mapeo y definición de indicadores de visibilidad

La herramienta *SEMrush* proporciona dos grupos amplios de indicadores para el análisis web organizados en torno (1) al análisis del dominio y (2) a la analítica de palabras clave. *SEMrush* permite además (3) la creación de proyectos y, para esta investigación, en este grupo de indicadores resulta relevante la opción *Social Media Tracker*. *Social Media Tracker* (SMT) aporta información sobre la audiencia social y la actividad en redes digitales como, *Twitter* o *Facebook*. Además, entre las diferentes opciones de proyectos encontramos *Site Audit*, una auditoría de la calidad de los sitios web. En el siguiente apartado, se procede a la definición de los indicadores mediante la información proporcionada por trabajos anteriores (García-Carretero; Codina; Pedraza-Jiménez, 2016) y definidos por la propia herramienta.

4.1.1 Análisis del dominio

El grupo de indicadores que forman parte del análisis del dominio se organiza en (a) visión general, (b) investigación orgánica, (c) backlinks, (d) ranking y (e) dominio vs dominio.

En cuanto al informe de (a) **visión general**, aporta datos sobre la visibilidad, tanto en tiempo real como en el pasado, del dominio objeto de estudio. Actúa a modo de resumen sobre los **indicadores** (ID) que conforman la investigación del análisis del dominio. Los que proporciona son los siguientes:

- **Búsqueda orgánica (ID1)**: este indicador aporta información sobre el tráfico orgánico del dominio, las palabras clave por las que el dominio aparece entre los 10 mejores resultados de búsqueda de *Google*, la distribución del ranking de palabras clave y los competidores orgánicos del dominio.
- **Búsqueda de pago (ID2)**: esta sección incluye información sobre tráfico de pago (publicidad) del dominio y el coste del mismo, el texto de los anuncios, palabras clave por las que el dominio aparece en los resultados de búsqueda de pago de *Google*, la distribución del ranking de palabras clave y los competidores de pago del dominio.
- **Backlinks (ID3)**: proporciona información sobre el número de backlinks del dominio, la relación entre los enlaces follow y nofollow, sitios web de referencia, direcciones IP y TLD.
- **Publicidad Display (ID4)**: ofrece información sobre la presencia del dominio en la Red de display de *Google* e incluye el número de anuncios y editores, muestras de anuncios de texto y de medios además de las páginas de aterrizaje promocionadas.
- **Mejores palabras clave orgánicas (ID5)**: muestra las palabras clave que más tráfico orgánico generan en un sitio web.
- **Distribución de las posiciones orgánicas**: muestra la clasificación de palabras clave orgánicas que dirigen hacia el sitio web de acuerdo a los 100 mejores resultados de búsqueda orgánica de *Google* agrupados en relación al ranking del dominio.

- **Mapa de posicionamiento de la competencia:** aporta información sobre fortalezas y debilidades de la presencia de dominios de la competencia en los resultados de búsqueda orgánica. Su visualización se basa en el tráfico orgánico de los dominios y en el número de palabras clave por las que aparecen clasificados en *Google*.
- **Mejores anclajes:** clasificación de los mejores anclajes (texto que forma el enlace) a un sitio web en relación a las palabras que actúan como anclaje y el número de dominios y backlinks.
- **Follow vs nofollow:** los enlaces follow (también llamados *dofollow*) son los enlaces naturales u orgánicos, es decir, los que proceden de una decisión editorial. Los enlaces nofollow, en cambio, se identifican con enlaces que proceden de anuncios o de algún tipo de compra de enlaces o acuerdo, es decir, no son de procedencia editorial y se asimilan a la publicidad o acciones de promoción.
- **Backlinks type:** un backlink es un enlace de entrada, por tanto se trata de considerar los tipos de enlace de entrada que recibe el dominio.
- **Dominios de referencia:** clasificación de acuerdo al dominio raíz, los backlinks, la IP y el país. Se trata de los dominios (no las páginas) de los que proceden los enlaces. Un mismo dominio puede enviar enlaces de diferentes páginas. Cada enlace puede proceder de una página distinta, pero todos proceden del mismo dominio.
- **-Páginas indexadas:** clasificación de las principales páginas de un sitio web en relación a su título y su URL, el dominio y los backlinks.
- **Páginas de aterrizaje:** páginas a las que se dirigen los últimos anuncios de display del dominio.
- **Anuncios de texto de muestra:** presenta el texto de anuncios como ejemplo utilizados para la promoción del dominio mediante la Publicidad de Display.

En cuanto al informe de (b) **investigación orgánica**, proporciona información sobre el tráfico orgánico del dominio del cibermedio o URL a través de un ranking de las principales palabras clave o la media del tráfico mensual. Se complementa con otros subindicadores como el indicador posición, cambios de posición, competencia, páginas o URL. De este informe, forman parte los

indicadores posiciones, palabras clave, tráfico, coste del tráfico, funcionalidades SERP, cambios de posición, competidores, páginas, subdominios y URL.

- **Posiciones:** mide las posiciones en las que el dominio de un cibermedio se sitúa en relación a los mejores resultados de búsqueda orgánica de *Google* y las palabras clave con las cuales se clasifica. El dominio de un cibermedio puede obtener diferentes posiciones para una misma palabra clave.
- **Palabras clave:** número de palabras clave que atraen a los usuarios al sitio web a través de los 100 mejores resultados de búsqueda orgánica de *Google*.
- **Tráfico:** número de usuarios que se espera que visiten el sitio web en el siguiente mes, calculado sobre el tráfico orgánico promedio mensual anterior y suponiendo que se mantenga relativamente igual.
- **Coste del tráfico:** precio estimado de palabras clave orgánicas en *Google Adwords*.
- **Funcionalidades SERP:** complemento que permite ver si *Google* muestra algún resultado de motor de búsqueda especial para las palabras clave por las que se clasificó el dominio analizado. También aporta información sobre el porcentaje de palabras clave que activan cada funcionalidad SERP para que aparezca en los resultados de búsqueda.
- **Cambios de posición:** muestra los cambios en el conjunto de palabras clave que sitúan el dominio de un cibermedio entre los 20 mejores según las búsqueda orgánica de *Google*. Incluye información sobre las palabras clave nuevas, pérdidas, mejoradas o en declive para una periodicidad de los últimos 30 días, los últimos 6 meses, el último año o todo el periodo.
- **Competidores (ID6):** mide los dominios de otros cibermedios contra los que compite el dominio del cibermedio objeto de análisis y se calcula a través de los datos de la búsqueda orgánica de *Google*.
- **Páginas (ID7):** aporta información sobre todas las páginas del ranking del dominio del cibermedio entre los 20 principales resultados de *Google*. Ofrece datos en % del tráfico originado por cada página y el número de palabras clave que atraen a los usuarios a una determinada página del cibermedio.

- **Subdominios (ID8):** incluye todos los subdominios del ranking del dominio analizado en los 100 mejores resultados de búsqueda orgánica de *Google*.
- **URL:** mide las posiciones que la URL de determinado cibermedio obtiene en relación a los 20 mejores resultados de la búsqueda orgánica de *Google*. Asimismo, ofrece información sobre las palabras clave por las que la URL del ciber medio está clasificada.

En relación al grupo de indicadores sobre (c) **backlinks** ofrece un resumen de los backlinks que se dirigen al dominio, dominio raíz o URL del cibermedio objeto de análisis. Muestra información sobre el tipo de backlink y la distribución de dominios de referencia por país y TLD. Sus indicadores son:

- **Total de backlinks:** número de enlaces que dirigen a la URL objeto de estudio.
- **Dominios de referencia (ID9):** incluye información sobre los dominios que se dirigen al dominio de un cibermedio determinado, al dominio raíz o a la URL. Incluye las direcciones IP y país y el número de enlaces procedentes del dominio.
- **IPs de referencia (ID10):** indica a través de una enumeración de direcciones IP de donde proceden los backlinks que dirigen al dominio, al dominio raíz y a la URL del cibermedio.
- **Puntuación del dominio (ID11):** mide la importancia de un dominio utilizando una escala de 0 a 100 basada en la calidad y el volumen de enlaces que dirigen al dominio objeto de estudio. Cuanto mayor es la puntuación, mejor es la calidad del dominio. Se calcula de la misma manera que el *Page Rank* de *Google*.
- **Puntuación de confianza:** mide el de confianza de un determinado dominio mediante una escala de 100 puntos donde cero es un sitio de nula confianza y 100 un sitio de máxima confianza. Si la puntuación de confianza del sitio es considerablemente inferior a la puntuación del dominio, esto puede ser un signo de que la primera se infló de manera artificial. Los backlinks de estos sitios pueden traer consigo penalizaciones de *Google*.
- **Tipos de backlinks (ID12):** Distribuye el tipo de backlink en relación a si es texto, imágenes, forma y marco.
- **País:** Los 5 países que más backlinks envían al dominio analizado según los dominios de referencia.

- **Distribución TLD:** Ofrece información sobre la distribución de los dominios de referencia en función del tipo de dominio de nivel superior.
- **Mejores anclajes (ID13):** Consiste en una nube de texto de anclaje que representa visualmente los 50 principales textos de anclaje utilizados para enlazar un dominio analizado. Los textos de anclaje que se han utilizado más frecuentemente aparecen en una fuente más grande.

En el conjunto de indicadores relativo a rankings (c), encontramos:

- **Ranking SEMrush:** enumera los sitios web más populares clasificados por tráfico orgánico que proviene de los 100 mejores resultados de búsqueda orgánica de *Google*.
- **Ganadores y perdedores:** muestra los cambios en el número de palabras clave, tráfico y estimaciones de presupuesto de los sitios web más populares en los 100 mejores resultados de la búsqueda de pago de *Google*.
- **Ranking de tráfico:** lista de los sitios web más populares según el número de usuarios que visitan el sitio web.

Finalmente, (d) **dominio vs dominio** permite comparar hasta cinco dominios. Aporta información de todas las palabras clave para cada dominio, incluidas palabras clave comunes y exclusivas y aquellas que son exclusivas de las palabras clave del primer dominio comparado. También ofrece información sobre las posiciones de los dominios en los resultados de búsqueda de pago, orgánica y de *Shopping* de *Google*. Además, los datos se pueden visualizar en gráficos.

4.1.2 Analíticas de palabras clave

En el segundo gran grupo de indicadores sobre palabras clave, encontramos información sobre coincidencia de la frase, palabras clave relacionadas con el historial de anuncios, así como las herramientas Keyword Difficulty y Keyword Magic Tool.

- **Coincidencia de frase:** mide las consultas concretas vinculadas a una palabra clave o varias (frases).
- **Palabras clave relacionadas:** informa sobre las palabras clave que tienen un enfoque

- temático similar o relacionado al de la palabra objeto de estudio. Lleva a cabo un seguimiento de los datos sobre los comparadores potenciales con mayor una frecuencia mayor que la mensual.
- **Historial de anuncios:** muestra el tiempo que un anuncio ha sido utilizado por el dominio durante el último año y sus posiciones en resultados de pago.
- **Keyword Difficulty:** permite a los usuarios estimar lo difícil que sería alcanzar las posiciones de los competidores en la búsqueda orgánica con una palabra clave en particular. Se mide en una escala de 1 a 100 en tanto por ciento. La métrica se basa en la competencia entre dominios que están en el ranking por palabras clave de los 100 mejores resultados en la búsqueda orgánica de Google.
- **Keyword Magic Tool:** esta subherramienta aporta información mediante o una o varias palabras clave en relación a grupos de palabras semánticamente relacionadas y analiza palabras clave en métricas actualizadas.

4.1.3 Proyectos

En último lugar, la herramienta permite la creación de proyectos que capturan información sobre el tráfico de un sitio web desde su fecha de creación. Con la creación del proyecto, se obtiene información relativa a:

- **SiteAudit:** ofrece una auditoría de la calidad del sitio web a través de información detallada sobre la puntuación total del sitio según los problemas encontrados, las advertencias y avisos, así como una puntuación temática. Se organiza en varios indicadores como la puntuación total (*ID15*) del sitio web, los errores (*ID16*) de la web y advertencias (*ID17*) y avisos (*ID18*).
- **Position Traking:** aporta información sobre la tendencia de visibilidad, el tráfico estimado, la posición promedio y el ranking de palabras clave seleccionadas con anterioridad.
- **On Page SEO Checker:** sugiere ideas de optimización para el sitio web.
- **Social Media Tracker:** Aporta información sobre el tráfico social de una página web. Es decir, el tráfico dirigido a una página web mediante redes digitales como *Twitter*, *Facebook* o

Instagram a través de indicadores como audiencia (ID19), actividad (ID20), participación (ID21) o ranking de contenido (ID22).

- **Backlink Audit:** auditoria de backlinks de acuerdo a indicadores como dominios de referencia, el total de backlinks o backlinks tóxicos.
- **Link Building:** aporta información para mejorar la posición de un sitio web a través de backlinks de calidad.
- **PPC KeywordTool:** rastrea contenido en sitios externos como publicaciones o artículos.
- **Ad Builder:** ayuda a crear textos/palabras publicitarias que atraigan a los usuarios.
- **Organic Traffic Insights:** posibilita la conexión con *Google Analytics* para descubrir palabras clave y ver el tráfico orgánico para cada una de ellas.
- **Content Analyzer:** ofrece información sobre el contenido de un sitio web en relación a sus páginas, las veces que se ha compartido el contenido y los backlinks. Además, ofrece la opción de conectar con la *herramienta Google Analytics*.

5. Aplicación de indicadores a las páginas web de los partidos políticos

Como se ha mencionado anteriormente, la coalición electoral *Barcelona en Comú* está formada por seis partidos políticos, cada uno con su página web y perfiles en las redes digitales correspondientes. Es decir, *Barcelona en Comú*, *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds*, *Esquerra Unida i Alternativa*, *Podem*, *Procés Constituent* y *EQUO*. Los resultados obtenidos de la aplicación de la herramienta SEMrush a los diferentes sitios web de la coalición se organizan en tres grandes grupos: análisis del dominio, analítica de palabras clave y tráfico social.

Tabla 1. Indicadores generales del análisis del dominio

Partido político	ID1	ID2	ID3	ID4	ID5	ID6
BeC	253	0	4.7K	0	(911) Adriá Alemany; programa electoral; Ayuntamiento Barcelona; “ero”; elecciones Barcelona	(585) barcelona.cat; wikipedia.org; lavanguardia.com; bcn.cat; elpais.com
ICV	12	0	18.3K	0	(27) Verds; Sant Joan Despí; cinema pisa; ley Wert, sentarse in English	(435) semprealesquerra.cat; icveuia.cat; institutcorbera.cat; blocinscorbera.blogspot.com; percatalunya.cat
EUiA	3	0	60	0	(50) esquerra unida catalunya; izquierda unida catalunya; renfe regionales catalunya; servicios sociales viladecans; ambulatorio viladecans	(66) Viladecans.cat; izquierda-unida.es; wikipdia.org; cadenaser.com; elconfidencial.com
P	12	0	47	0	(12) ccm activa; ccmmadrid; oficina ccm madrid; bcn.cat oferta pública; autonomía obrera	(15) barcelona.cat; diba.cat; amb.cat; arenysdemar.cat; barcelonactiva.cat
PC	24	0	3.2K	0	(33) arcadioliveres.blog; teresa forcades; ajuntament de figueresborsa de treball; biblioteca ubbellvitge; el convidat tv3	(37) barcelona.cat; cristianismejusticia.net; documentalarcadioliveres. blogdpot.com; wikipedia.org; youtube.com

E	0	0	43	0		
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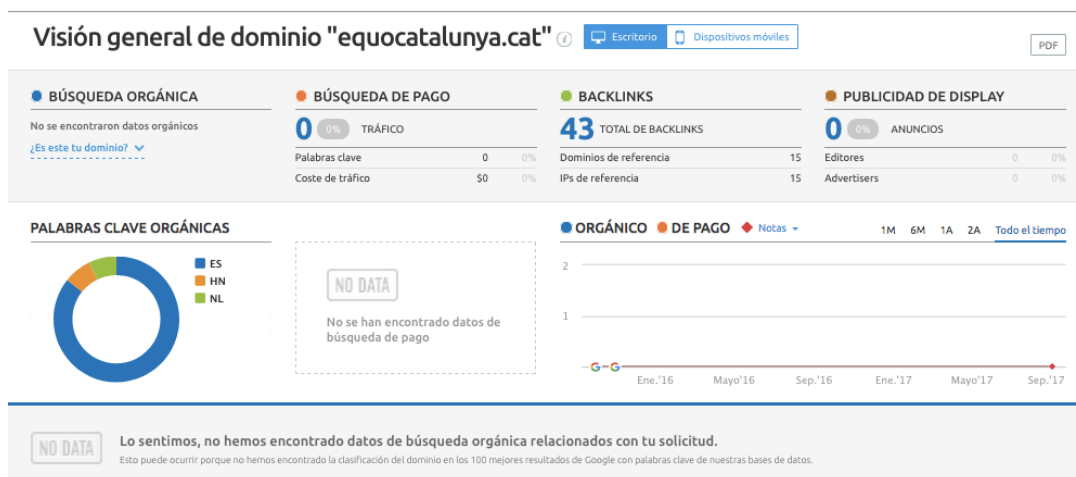
(ID: identificador del indicador. ID1: búsqueda orgánica; ID2: búsqueda de pago; ID3: backlinks; ID4: publicidad de Display; ID5: mejores palabras clave orgánicas; ID6: principales competidores orgánicos).

El primer grado de análisis de los sitios web de la coalición electoral *Barcelona en Comú* (Tabla 1) vislumbra que, para todos los casos, el tráfico únicamente proviene de búsqueda orgánica (ID1, ID2). Por ello, el indicador de publicidad de Display (ID4) es igual a cero. En segundo lugar, observamos que el número de backlinks, en otras palabras, los enlaces que reciben desde otros sitios web, oscila considerablemente entre unos partidos y otros.

Las palabras clave (ID5), elemento fundamental en el proceso de búsqueda y, por consiguiente, en el posicionamiento de un sitio web, también varía considerablemente de un partido de la confluencia a otro. Destaca BeC con 911 en detrimento de PC con 11.

En el caso de EQUO (E), no se han obtenido parte de los resultados del análisis. Esto, se debe a que la página web tiene activada la *metatag* (o metaetiqueta) *noindex* para el índice de los motores de búsqueda. Es decir, de forma intencionada o por error, la página evita que el robot de Google rastree, en este caso, la página principal del sitio web de EQUO, aunque otros sitios web sí que pueden enviar enlaces (Imagen 3).

Imagen 3. Página web de EQUO: "noindex"



La Tabla 2 (ver anexos) muestra las páginas y los subdominios entre los principales resultados de búsqueda orgánica de Google para cada sitio web del bloque electoral. Así, se observa las páginas de cada página web y los subdominios de cada sitio que más tráfico recibieron durante el periodo

de análisis. Como mencionábamos anteriormente, el *noindex* de la página web de *EQUO* impide la captura de información para estos indicadores para este partido político.

A continuación (*Tabla 3*), se muestran los resultados obtenidos del análisis de los dominios de referencia, IPs de referencia, la puntuación total del dominio y los tipos de backlinks de cada sitio web a excepción de *EQUO*.

Tabla 3. Análisis del dominio

Partido político	ID9	ID10	ID11	ID12
BeC	416	447	14	17
ICV	641	655	16	20
EUiA	26	26	2	0
P	16	15	4	4
PC	296	302	11	15

(ID9: dominios de referencia; ID10: IPs de referencia; ID11: puntuación del dominio; ID12: tipos de backlinks).

Asimismo, en relación al análisis de backlinks (*Tabla 4*), encontramos mejores anclajes y las palabras más utilizadas como anclaje, es decir, los textos de anclaje utilizados para enlazar al dominio de cada partido político que conforma *Barcelona en Comú* y las palabras utilizadas más frecuentemente en textos de anclaje.

Tabla 4. Anclajes y palabras clave

Partido político	ID13	ID14
BeC	barcelona en comú; [2]; barcelona en commun publie la version en français de sa guide municipaliste; https://barcelonaencomu.cat/	en; Barcelona; comú; 2; per; guide; propostes
ICV	donacions; Empty Anchor; treball digne, pensió digna; http://www.iniciativa.cat...adia_ajuts_consensuat.pdf ; eduardmendilucefradera	donacions; iniciativa; icv; per; catalunya; verds; treball; digna; pensió; digne

EUiA	esquerra unida i alternativa; Empty Anchor; semprealesquerra.cat/la-destitucio; eua; euia	i; esquerra; alternativa; unida; a; per; el
P	podem; podemos Barcelona; podemos; podem Barcelona; podembcn	podem; podemos; barcelona; bcn; asamblea; -; visit; website; spain's
PC	http://www.procesconstitu...adhesions//lista-adherits; manelnogueron; procésconstituent a catalunya; procésconstituent; http://www.procesconstituent.cat	constituent; procés; manel; nogueron; a; catalunya; wiki; pc; democràcia
E		equo; catalunya; perquè; página; 2014; noves; són; del; n; tret

(ID13: mejores anclajes; ID14: palabras anclaje).

Asimismo, el siguiente gráfico (*Tabla 5*) ofrece los resultados de la auditoría de cada sitio web, es decir, información sobre la calidad del sitio de acuerdo a la puntuación total, los problemas encontrados, las advertencias y avisos, así como una puntuación temática.

Tabla 5. Auditoría de los sitios web de *Barcelona en Comú*

Partido político	ID15	ID16	ID17	ID18
BeC	65%	21	904	3
ICV	73%	143	238	8

EUiA	73%	77	1.455	0
P	58%	218	768	54
PC	58%	524	1.349	45

(ID15: puntuación total; ID16: errores; ID17: advertencias; ID18: avisos).

En cuanto al tráfico social (*Tabla 6*), esto es, el tráfico que llega al sitio web a través de perfiles de los seis partidos políticos en Twitter y *Facebook*, se ha observado que para todos los partidos objeto de análisis hay una mayor actividad en Twitter que en *Facebook*.

Tabla 6. Tráfico social

Partido político	ID19		ID20		ID21	
	Twitter	Facebook	Twitter	Facebook	Twitter	Facebook
BeC	83.264	49.486	373	28	32.658	9.347
ICV	16.861	9.748	201	12	7.914	661
EUiA	2.379	1.031	2	0	10	0
P	18.241	9.905	140	16	168.567	2.239
PC	26.292	24.161	7	6	398	455
E	1.702	1.044	3	0	40	0

(ID19: audiencia; ID20: actividad; ID21: participación).

En relación al contenido publicado en las redes digitales por los seis partidos que conforman la coalición electoral *Barcelona en Comú* durante el periodo seleccionado, la herramienta SEMrush

muestra los post de *Facebook* o los tweets con la mejor tasa de interacción (*ID22*). Así, durante la semana de noviembre seleccionada para el análisis, el contenido con mayor interacción de *Podem* (Fb), *Procés Constituent* (Tw) y *EQUO* (Tw) está relacionado con la campaña a las elecciones del 21 de diciembre. Así, en el contenido relativo a la situación política durante el periodo de análisis –Declaración Unilateral de Independencia y Artículo 155- destaca la información difundida por *Barcelona en Comú* tanto en *Twitter* como en *Facebook* y por *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds* en *Twitter*. Otros temas en el *top content* de estas redes sociales son la violencia machista (*Podem-Twitter*), cambio climático (*ICV-Twitter*) o actos como asambleas generales (*Procés Constituent-Facebook*) y fóruns político y social (*EUiA-Facebook*). Por el contrario, durante el periodo de análisis ni *Esquerra Unida* ni *EQUO* difundieron contenido en *Twitter* y *Facebook* respectivamente.

Imagen 4. Ejemplo de *Top Content* de Barcelona en Comú



Datos desde 08/11/2017 hasta 15/11/2017

6. Conclusiones

Dada la compleja y variada naturaleza y formas que puede adoptar la comunicación política, no solo por la convivencia de los espacios *offline* y *online*, sino también por la variedad de canales comunicativos que ofrece la Red, una estrategia coordinada debe contener, como mínimo, un núcleo comunicativo central (la página web) y herramientas de interacción a través de las cuáles generar debate y diálogo con el público y posibles votantes como las redes digitales (Delany, 2011; Giansante, 2015).

De esta forma, de acuerdo con el núcleo comunicativo basado en las páginas web de los partidos políticos, los factores *On Page* propios de la *Search Engine Optimization*, son esenciales ya que son gestionados por el productor del contenido la página web mediante enlaces o palabras clave

(Codina et al, 2016). De esta forma, a continuación retomamos los objetivos iniciales para presentar el núcleo de nuestras conclusiones:

Objetivo 1. Determinar si las redes digitales desempeñan algún rol como proveedoras de tráfico a los sitios web de los partidos analizados

Un aspecto relevante a lo largo de este trabajo, ha sido determinar la relevancia de las redes digitales no solo como herramienta de diálogo con los ciudadanos (fuente de información en sí mismas), sino también como canal hacia otro medio, el núcleo de la estrategia comunicativa o página web. En este sentido, de acuerdo al primer objetivo de esta investigación que analiza el rol de las redes digitales como proveedoras de tráfico a las webs de los partidos que forman *Barcelona en Comú*, podemos concluir que existen grandes diferencias entre los partidos de la coalición electoral. Como hemos observado, existe una relación directa entre el tráfico social de cada partido político y el tráfico total orgánico de sus webs. En los casos en los que las páginas web reciben mayor cantidad de tráfico orgánico, como es el caso de BeC y PC, el rol de las redes digitales, según el análisis realizado, también aumenta. En cuanto a las diferencias de uso de *Twitter* y *Facebook* en relación a la naturaleza de cada red social, se observa que, en términos generales, la participación de los usuarios es mayor en el caso de *Twitter* que de *Facebook*. Así, para nuestro caso de estudio se cumple la tesis de los autores de que la relevancia de *Twitter*, más allá de su relación con la lógica de los mass media, reside en ser un canal de comunicación fluida (Lawrence, Molyneux, Coddington y Holton, 2014). Por el contrario, *Facebook* crea un compromiso activo y facilita la reflexión y la conexión interpersonal (Williams y Gulati, 2012).

Objetivo 2. Determinar cuáles fueron las principales palabras clave utilizadas durante el periodo examinado para la búsqueda de los sitios web de los partidos políticos.

La relevancia de las palabras clave en el SEO está directamente vinculada al acceso a información política. Esto es, que toda recuperación o acceso a información a través de buscadores se basa en palabras clave y, en este sentido, cuanto más específicas sean las palabras clave, menor competencia tendrán los partidos políticos para que la visibilidad de su información sea mayor. Además, para optimizar la clasificación de una página web y que aparezca en un sitio destacado en la búsqueda, desde el punto de vista de la búsqueda orgánica y no de pago, se recomienda que las palabras clave aparezca en el título, texto de la publicación y en los metadatos (Moz, 2015). Así, en segundo lugar, al tratar de determinar cuáles fueron las principales palabras clave para la búsqueda de los sitios web de los partidos políticos, podemos concluir que las principales palabras

clave empleadas por los partidos políticos siguen una lógica natural e intuitiva para los usuarios. En todos los casos, se han empleado como palabras clave los términos que conforman el nombre de cada partido político. Asimismo, se han empleado otras palabras como “propuestas”, “Barcelona” o “Catalunya”, relativas al territorio o información política y/o electoral.

Objetivo 3: Determinar si para el periodo seleccionado existen diferencias entre los respectivos perfiles de visibilidad de cada partido a través de su sitio web.

En tercer lugar, el análisis realizado con la herramienta SEMrush mediante un total de 21 indicadores, relativos tanto al análisis del dominio como backlinks o tráfico social para determinar si en el periodo seleccionado existen diferencias entre los respectivos perfiles de visibilidad de cada partido a través de su sitio web, nos permite afirmar que desde el 8 hasta 15 de noviembre de 2017, la visibilidad de los sitios web de los partidos que conforman la coalición electoral *Barcelona en Comú* es heterogénea. Teniendo en cuenta, además, que se han encontrado restricciones en el acceso a la información debido a la mencionada etiqueta *noindex* con la que cuenta el sitio web de EQUO.

En este sentido, de acuerdo con los autores, el uso del medio social en comunicación política depende de las características y de la adaptación de cada partido al contexto, a sus objetivos y al situación de poder en la escena política (Borge y Esteve, 2017). Como hemos mencionado en trabajos previos (García-Carretero y Pérez-Altale, 2017) todos estos partidos tienen en común ser partidos alternativos o contrahegemónicos (Laclau y Mouffe, 2001) de izquierdas. No obstante, BeC surgió en el escenario digital. Ello, unido a la estrategia SEO y Factores Onpage da lugar a que su visibilidad sea mayor. Seguidamente, encontramos ICV, partido ya existente y con una estrategia comunicativa *offline* más potente que BeC. Iniciativa siguió la mejor estrategia en cuanto a backlinks, dominios de referencia, IPs de referencia y la herramienta otorga al dominio de su página web la mejor puntuación. Además de EQUO, del que no se han conseguido los suficientes datos para valorar su visibilidad, en último lugar se encuentra Esquerra Unida i Alternativa, lo que quizá se deba a que en numerosas ocasiones, EUiA se adscribe a Iniciativa, no solo en términos electorales sino también comunicativos dando lugar a ICV-EUiA.

Objetivo 4: Explorar las posibilidades de las herramientas de análisis de posicionamiento para su aplicación a los sitios web de partidos políticos.

Por todo lo anteriormente mencionado, y respondiendo a la exploración las posibilidades de las herramientas de análisis de posicionamiento para su aplicación a los sitios web de partidos

políticos, podemos afirmar que pese a algunas limitaciones encontradas como la limitación de acceso al ser una herramienta de pago o que algunos indicadores no tienen capacidad retrospectiva de captura de información, la herramienta resulta útil para este tipo de análisis de comunicación política. El uso de herramientas de marketing online, más común en la empresa privada que en la investigación académica como ya ocurría en el estudio de cibermedios (García-Carretero, Codina y Pedraza-Jiménez, 2016), se puede trasladar a otros objetos de estudio, más aún, en un contexto en el que la presencia en la Red se ha convertido en un requisito imprescindible en términos comunicativos.

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4.1.5. Paper four. *Barcelona en Comú* and mixed-method approach

The start point of this paper was presented at *ECREA 2018* conference in Lugano (Switzerland) as the paper conference “Social media, new political organisations and mixed-method approach: the case of *Barcelona en Comú* 2015 electoral communication”. Finally, a complete analysis was published at *Hypertext*.

García-Carretero, Lucía (2018). El método mixto: una aproximación metodológica a través de la campaña a las municipales de *Barcelona en Comú*. *Hypertext.net*, 17, pp. 103-117 DOI:10.31009/hipertext.net.2018.i17.10

El método mixto: una aproximación metodológica a través de la campaña a las municipales de Barcelona en Comú

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The mixed method: a methodological approach through Barcelona en Comú's council election campaign

RESUMEN ABSTRACT

El presente artículo analiza la comunicación electoral de la coalición *Barcelona en Comú* durante la campaña a las municipales de Barcelona de 2015. En concreto, se centra en el análisis de las estrategias comunicativas en Twitter del 8 al 22 de mayo de 2015 por parte de los partidos políticos *Barcelona en Comú*, *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds*, *Esquerra Unida i Alternativa*, *Podem*, *Procés Constituent* y *EQUO*. Para ello, se han analizado un total de 1.253 tweets en torno a tres niveles de análisis basados en la triangulación metodológica cualitativa cuantitativa. En primer lugar, el análisis a nivel macro mediante la técnica cuantitativa del análisis de redes sociales (SNA). En segundo lugar, el análisis micro a través de la técnica de análisis de contenido cualitativo. Por último, la aplicación de entrevistas en profundidad semi estructuradas a los encargados de la comunicación electoral de los partidos políticos. Los resultados muestran el papel central del partido *Barcelona en Comú* en relación al resto de partidos durante la campaña electoral. Metodológicamente, se reafirma la relevancia y necesidad del método mixto o triangulación para un análisis completo y en profundidad de la comunicación electoral en redes digitales como Twitter.

This paper analyses the political communication of Barcelona en Comú electoral coalition during Barcelona 2015 council election. That is, the analysis of communication strategies on Twitter from Barcelona en Comú, Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds, Esquerra Unida i Alternativa, Podem, Procés Constituent and EQUO during 8th-22nd May 2015. For this purpose, 1,253 tweets have been analysed through a mix-method approach organized on three levels of analysis. First, the quantitative method based on Social Network Analysis has been used. Secondly, a content analysis has been applied. Finally, we used semi-structured in-depth interviews to ask the community managers of the six political parties. The results allow us to concluded that Barcelona en Comú political party centralised the electoral communication. Also, this paper reaffirms the need to use mix-method approach for a complete analysis of the electoral communication in digital tools.

PALABRAS CLAVE KEY WORKS

Triangulación metodológica, Twitter, Análisis de redes sociales, Análisis de contenido, Entrevistas en profundidad, Comunicación electoral, Barcelona en Comú

Methodological triangulation, Twitter, Social network analysis, Content analysis, In-deep interview, Electoral communication, Barcelona en Comú

García-Carretero, L. (2018). El método mixto: una aproximación metodológica a través de la campaña a las municipales de Barcelona en Comú. *Hipertext.net*, (17), 103-117. DOI:10.31009/hipertext.net.2018.i17.10

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1. Introducción

Barcelona en Comú (previamente *Guanyem Barcelona*) surge en junio de 2014 como partido político y gana las elecciones municipales de Barcelona en mayo de 2015. Un año después de su aparición, este movimiento-partido (della Porta, Fernández, Kouki y Mosca, 2017), junto a otras 5 organizaciones políticas del eje izquierda, formó la coalición electoral *Barcelona en Comú*. La autodenominada *confluencia* fue constituida con la participación de *Barcelona en Comú* (*Guanyem*, BeC), *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds* (ICV) y *Esquerra Unida i Alternativa* (EUiA), *Podem* (P), *EQUO* (E) y *Procés Constituent* (PC).

Esta investigación analiza la comunicación en *Twitter* de *Barcelona en Comú* durante la campaña electoral a las municipales. Esto es, del 8 al 22 de mayo de 2015. El objetivo principal es profundizar en el uso de las redes digitales por parte de los nuevos partidos políticos, los cuales surgen directamente en el entorno digital, mediante un estudio de caso y la aplicación de la triangulación metodológica o el método mixto. El objetivo principal es analizar, mediante un estudio de caso (Yin, 2009), la estrategia de comunicación online de *Barcelona en Comú*, para comprender, en profundidad, la forma en que las nuevas fuerzas políticas, que aparecen en un entorno digital, utilizan las redes digitales. La coalición electoral *Barcelona en Comú* como caso de estudio (Yin, 2009) se encuentra vinculada a los movimientos sociales españoles que surgieron como consecuencia de la crisis económica (della Porta y Mattoni, 2014; della Porta y Pavan, 2017; Casero et al., 2017; Pavan, 2017), por ejemplo la *Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca* (*La PAH*) o el movimiento de los *Indignados* o *15-M*.

Estos movimientos sociales, a los que los autores se refieren como movimientos contra la austeridad (della Porta y Mattoni, 2014), introdujeron nuevo lenguaje y de acciones alternativas, tanto en el espacio físico como en el digital (Sampedro y Sánchez-Duarte, 2011; Flesher y Montañés, 2014; Casero et al., 2017). Asimismo impulsaron la oportunidad política para nuevos partidos (Mosca, 2014) como es el caso de *Barcelona en Comú* iniciando el ciclo político conocido como 'las ciudades del cambio'. El movimiento *15-M* y *La PAH*, entre otros ejemplos, cuestionaron el consenso político y social establecido hasta ese momento a través de la cultura de la transición (della Porta et al., 2017).

Como consecuencia, el proceso de institucionalización de movimientos sociales en los últimos años ha tenido lugar acompañado de procesos, a priori, de democratización a lo largo del mundo (Doowon, 2006, in Piccio, 2016). Es el caso de diferentes partidos políticos de izquierdas surgidos en el marco de la Europa mediterránea como el *Movimento 5 Stelle* en Italia, *Syriza* en Grecia o *Podemos* en España (Auriemma et al., 2015; Poulakidakos y Veneti, 2016). Volviendo al caso español, *Podemos* en el ámbito nacional y otros partidos en el ámbito local y regional conocidos como "Los Comunes",

surgidos en el contexto Post-15M (Sanz y Mateos, 2014), han capitalizado en términos electorales el descontento social de los últimos años. Es el caso de *Ahora Madrid* (Madrid), *En Marea* (Galicia) o *Barcelona en Comú* (Barcelona).

La comunicación política en general, y la comunicación electoral en particular, se encuentra ligada al concepto de mediatización de los políticos y de la política (Strömbäck, 2008; Couldry y Hepp, 2013; Landerer, 2013; Mazzoleni, 2017). La mediatización es entendida como un proceso de construcción sociocultural de la realidad mediante la comunicación (Couldry y Hepp, 2013) a través de los medios de masas como fuente de información política y electoral y a partir de la adopción de sus dinámicas por parte de partidos y candidatos (Mazzoleni y Schulz, 1999). Los medios tradicionales han pasado a ocupar un lugar central en las rutinas políticas, cuyo máximo exponente son las campañas electorales (Mazzoleni, 2008). La concepción teórica en torno a la mediatización se centra en la adaptación a las dinámicas y temporalidad de los medios de comunicación por parte de los partidos políticos con el fin de obtener mayor visibilidad (Strömbäck, 2008; Deacon y Stayer, 2014; Cammaerts, 2015). Por consiguiente, esta adaptación no puede ser entendida sin tener en cuenta la integración al proceso comunicativo de la tecnología, los cambios en el contexto económico y los cambios culturales (Landerer, 2013). De acuerdo con Daniel Hallin (2018), podemos referirnos al concepto de mediatización cuando, en el proceso comunicativo, la lógica de los medios impera sobre la lógica de los partidos e instituciones y la relega a un segundo plano.

Los medios sociales son espacios digitales sociales en los cuales el espacio cotidiano se encuentra mediado y en el cual las posibilidades de acción se encuentran estructuradas en un sistema jerárquico y diferenciado (Couldry y Hepp, 2017). Teóricamente, los partidos políticos en las redes digitales tienen la capacidad de difundir y gestionar su propio mensaje sin la intermediación de los medios y periodistas, no obstante la influencia de los medios de masas continúa manteniendo presencia en los medios sociales (Fenton y Barassi, 2011) superando el "mito de la horizontalidad" (Pavan, 2015) atribuido a los medios sociales. El proceso mediado de construcción de esta realidad política (Couldry, 2015) mediante el proceso comunicativo, tiene lugar simultáneamente en los medios de masas y en los medios sociales –el sistema híbrido de medios de Chadwick, 2013)– donde las líneas divisorias entre ambos se han desdibujado. Tanto los medios tradicionales como los nuevos medios tratan de influir en la representación social de la política y de los políticos y ambos pueden interactuar y competir al mismo tiempo (Chadwick, 2013).

Los (nuevos) partidos políticos han interiorizado estrategias y dinámicas comunicativas que contemplan esta dicotomía mediática (Feenstra et al, 2017). Como consecuencia del sistema híbrido (Chadwick, 2013), se puede afirmar la aparición de la cuarta fase o post-moderna en las campañas electo-

rales, o dicho de otra forma, la fase o campaña hipermedia (Lilleker, Tenscher y Štětka, 2015). Este tipo de campaña electoral se basa en una comunicación mediatizada (Römmele y Scheneidmesser, 2016), tanto en relación al uso de los medios digitales como en los medios de masas (Lilleker, Tenscher y Štětka, 2015). Así, encontramos dos tendencias comunicativas tanto en la organización de los partidos políticos como en su comunicación híbrida. Por un lado, los partidos políticos que se han adaptado a los cambios comunicativos propios del entorno digital y la hibridación, es decir, partidos más tradicionales; y por el otro, los partidos genuinamente híbridos en cuanto a comunicación se refiere (Chadwick, 2007). Es el caso de *Barcelona en Comú*, que surge directamente en el escenario digital cuando las redes ya se encuentran consolidadas como canal de comunicación política y electoral.

De acuerdo con lo mencionado, según los autores no hay una única lógica mediática en la campaña política hipermediada, ya que los actores políticos instrumentalizan y se adaptan a los diferentes medios (*online* y *offline*) y sus lógicas, en función las necesidades comunicativas concretas (Römmele y Scheneidmesser, 2016). La lógica de los medios se define como un proceso, conjunto de normas, códigos y formatos que influyen en la construcción de un mensaje para ser difundido a través de un medio de comunicación determinado (Altheide, 2004). Por lo tanto, los partidos políticos necesitan adaptar su mensaje a los criterios de los medios para recibir una cobertura favorable (Feenstra et al., 2017) que les permita ser percibidos de una forma concreta ante el electorado. De acuerdo con la lógica de los medios en la red, más allá del tipo de medio digital, los partidos se ven obligados a adaptar el mensaje (Klinger y Svensson, 2015), cuestionando la no hipermediación de las redes digitales, en línea con la afirmación de McLuhan (1987) de que el medio es el mensaje. De acuerdo con Guillermo López-García y José María Pavía (2018), la presente investigación forma parte del enfoque teórico en el que se considera el papel desempeñado por los medios en la comunicación política como central e inevitable. Así,

Such is the case with the Medium Theory (McLuhan, 1964) or the perspective of media logic (Altheide & Snow, 1979). Later, enhanced by the emergence of the agenda-setting theory and its subsequently huge influence. All these approaches can be grouped around the concept of mediatization (Schulz, 2004; Strömback, 2008), understood as the capacity of the media to set the scene and influence the manner in which other social institutions operate in the public sphere (2018, p.4).

Con el fin de profundizar en el análisis de la comunicación electoral en *Twitter* de *Barcelona en Comú*, este artículo contempla tres niveles de análisis de acuerdo con tres tipos de aproximaciones metodológicas, centrándonos en la triangulación o método mixto. La primera fase, relativa al análisis del comportamiento en la red de la coalición electoral *Barce-*

lona en Comú, mediante el análisis de redes sociales (SNA). En segundo lugar, el análisis del mensaje difundido por *Barcelona en Comú* en *Twitter*, para lo cual el método seleccionado es el análisis de contenido (AC). Y por último, la consecución de entrevistas semi estructuradas en profundidad a los encargados de las estrategias comunicativas electorales en el seno de los partidos políticos de la confluencia, con el fin de contrastar los resultados de sus esfuerzos (SNA y AC) con su diseño y ejecución.

2. Objetivos y metodología: triangulación cuantitativa-cualitativa

Barcelona en Comú es un estudio de caso, por lo tanto, en esta investigación se asume que es ejemplo representativo (Yin, 2009) de los partidos-movimiento contra la austeridad en Europa y el mundo occidental (della Porta, et al., 2017) y de partidos genuinamente híbridos (Chadwick, 2007). Mediante el estudio de caso, podemos aproximarnos a la investigación de un evento, programa, actividad o, en nuestro caso, una coalición electoral concreta en un periodo de tiempo determinado (Creswell, 2009). Mediante el estudio de caso, podemos centrarnos en el proceso y efectos de un fenómeno (Kohn, 1997). Así, esta aproximación "is an in-depth explanation from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system in "real life" context" (Simons, 2009, p.21).

Asimismo, se basa en el método mixto (Edwards, 2010) o triangulación metodológica (Bellotti, 2015) ya que se considera imprescindible un enfoque cuantitativo-cualitativo para profundizar e investigar de forma completa y precisa la comunicación electoral en *Twitter* de *Barcelona en Comú* (Denzin, 1978; Webb, Campbell, Schwartz y Sechrest, 1966; Golafshani, 2003). Esto es, diferentes formas de aproximación o análisis para los mismos datos y el mismo fenómeno (Mitchell, 1986). De acuerdo con Wendy Olsen (2004), el método mixto proporciona diversos puntos de vista en un mismo análisis contribuyendo a una investigación completa y en profundidad.

En el nivel macro de investigación, el análisis de redes sociales, no solo redes sociales digitales, es una oportunidad para la triangulación metodológica ya que, debido a su interés por la forma o estructura de una red (Edwards, 2010), requiere del análisis de contenido cualitativo para completar el estudio a un nivel micro, es decir, profundizar en información más sensible (Edwards y Crossley, 2009). En base a Nick Crossley y Emma Edwards,

Our argument for mixing methods rests upon an ontological premise; namely, Bhasker's (1979) argument that social reality, though dependent upon actions, perceptions and conceptions of actors, exists independently of the perceptions, conceptions and research sociolo-

gists. Social worlds exist to analyse them, and whilst the sociological gaze may impose particular perspectives upon and inform interventions within them, the aim of sociology is to explore and understand those worlds as independently existing domains (2016, p.3).

Por lo tanto, utilizamos el análisis de redes sociales (SNA) para los tweets difundidos por los seis partidos políticos que forman la coalición electoral *Barcelona en Comú*. En línea con la afirmación de Elisa Bellotti (2015), el SNA permite observar la red formada por diferentes actores, como es el caso de los partidos políticos, y las relaciones significativas entre ellos en un entorno red contextualizado en el seno de la campaña electoral. Analizamos 1.253 tweets difundidos a través de las cuentas oficiales de los seis partidos políticos: *Barcelona en Comú* (@bcnencomu), *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds* (@iniciativaBCN), *Esquerra Unida i Alternativa* (@EUiABCN), *Podem* (@Podem_BCN), *Procés Constituyente* (@pconstituentBCN) y *EQUO* (@Equobcn). Los objetivos del primer nivel macro de análisis son:

- **01.** Analizar el flujo de comunicación y la relación entre los seis partidos políticos de la confluencia en *Twitter* durante la campaña electoral.
- **02.** Estudiar la comunicación multidireccional entre los seis partidos políticos y los usuarios/ciudadanos a través de las respuestas en los tweets.
- **03.** Identificar los temas electorales dominantes propuestos por los partidos políticos a través de los *hashtags* usados en *Twitter*.

En segundo lugar, se ha procedido a la aplicación del análisis de contenido cualitativo a los tweets de la coalición (Bardin,

2002; Colle, 2011; Krippendorff, 2013). A través de este método cualitativo, estudiamos el mensaje difundido no solo por las cuentas oficiales de *Twitter* de los seis partidos políticos de la coalición electoral, sino también por varias cuentas de candidatos políticos como @Adacolau, @Laiortiz, @G_Pisarello, @Janetsanz y @Jaumeasens, y uno de los miembros de la comisión de comunicación y del *Movimiento de Liberación Gráfica de Barcelona* (@3eses) ya que, según los resultados del SNA realizado previamente, se trata de un actor político relevante a la hora de fijar el mensaje electoral. Los objetivos del segundo nivel de investigación son:

- **04.** Discernir la estrategia de comunicación electoral de acuerdo con el mensaje difundido. Es decir, averiguar el tipo de mensaje y el tema electoral difundido por parte de los partidos políticos durante la campaña y su concordancia con los *hashtags* seleccionados.
- **05.** Analizar el uso de *Twitter* realizado por los partidos que constituyen *Barcelona en Comú* con el fin de averiguar en qué medida se aprovechan las posibilidades de *Twitter* como herramienta de comunicación electoral.
- **06.** Profundizar en el tipo de conversación entre los seis partidos políticos y los usuarios de *Twitter*.

Finalmente, en el tercer nivel, utilizamos entrevistas en profundidad semi estructuradas con el fin de:

- **07.** Profundizar en el diseño y ejecución de las estrategias comunicativas electorales de la coalición.
- **08.** Comparar las conclusiones obtenidas por SNA y el AC con la información aportada por los propios partidos de *Barcelona en Comú*.

Características estructurales	Definición	Resultados asociados
Toda la red		
Densidad	El número de vínculos existentes dividido por el número de vínculos posibles en una red.	Una densidad alta es un caldo de cultivo para la confianza y el intercambio generalizado, a costa de información redundante (Coleman, 1988).
Reciprocidad	La medida en que un vínculo de A a B coincide con el vínculo de B a A.	Valores altos de reciprocidad altos indican una relación simétrica entre nodos. Valores de reciprocidad bajos indican desequilibrio y que se trata de una red jerárquica.
Transitividad	La medida en que los extremos/relaciones de una red están cerrados	La alta transitividad sugiere una tendencia de los individuos a que sus lazos se conozcan con el tiempo, entre sí, y se homogeneicen.
Posición del nodo en la red		
Grado de centralidad	El número de conexiones directas a otros nodos que posee un nodo concreto	Un grado alto significa mayor acceso a los flujos de la red (Freeman, 1979).
Centralidad de intermediación	El número de rutas más cortas que conectan otros nodos en una red que pasan a través de ese nodo.	Se refiere a la alta entrelazabilidad significa un rápido acceso y control sobre los flujos de red (Freeman, 1979).
Centralidad de vector propio	Determinado tanto por el número de conexiones directas como por la calidad de sus contactos.	Cómo se refleja el nodo en la red y quién está vinculado al mismo (Bonacich, 1987)
Centralidad de cercanía	El promedio de pasos para acceder a todos los demás nodos de una red	Acceso rápido a los flujos de la red (Freeman, 1979)

Tabla 1. Características del SNA (Kane et al, 2014; en Pérez-Altable, 2016: 118).

2.1. Análisis de redes sociales (SNA)

Las redes sociales (digitales y tradicionales) permiten entender el sistema social porque se centran en las diferentes relaciones entre los actores que construyeron este sistema (Borgatti, Everet y Johnson, 2013). Son fenómenos empíricos de patrones de relaciones (Bellotti, 2015) en el mundo digital y en la vida real (Bellotti, 2015; Borgatti et al., 2013). Las relaciones sociales tienen lugar en un entorno cultural concreto y delimitado, con características contextuales concretas y redes sociales específicas (Bellotti, 2015). En el caso de internet y las redes digitales, las conversaciones entre usuarios o el intercambio de información (comunicación multidireccional) se representa mediante hilos en el SNA (Aragón, Gómez, García y Kaltenbrunner, 2017), a su vez basado en la ciencia de redes y la teoría de grafos (Bellotti, 2015). Así, esta investigación concibe la red social como un todo en base al SNA (*whole network*) y la posición de cada nodo o actor en esta red (Kane et al, 2014). La **tabla 1** ilustra las características en las que se centra el SNA de este trabajo.

La representación de SNA se lleva a cabo mediante gráficos donde los actores o nodos –cuentas en *Twitter* de los seis partidos de la coalición y candidatos– son puntos o vértices y las relaciones o vínculos entre ellos se representan mediante flechas –en los casos en los que hay una dirección lógica– o mediante arcos –si la comunicación es multidireccional– (Borgatti et al., 2013). El espacio social de la red (**tabla 2**) está formado por diferentes actores (nodos) y el intercambio de comunicación entre ellos (enlaces o aristas). Los actores o nodos tienen sus propias características, los denominados atributos por los cuales es posible categorizar, definir y diferenciar cada nodo (Borgatti et al., 2013).

A su vez, la relación entre estos nodos o actores tienen, también, sus propias características (Borgatti et al., 2013). Por lo tanto, nos centramos en eventos relacionales (*relational events*), (Atkin, 1977) puesto que se trata de una relación

entre nodos basada en los 15 días de la campaña electoral. Como muestra la **tabla 3**, nos referimos a una relación no permanente entre actores, con un inicio y un final. Los eventos relacionales están formados por interacciones y flujos y los flujos son resultados de las interacciones (Borgatti et al., 2013). El número de conexiones entre vértices, la representación de los actores políticos, se denomina grado. Según Stephen Borgatti (2005, basándose en Freeman, 1979), el grado de centralidad determina el número de conexiones en relación a un nodo concreto y en función de si recibe las conexiones (*in-degree centrality*) o parten de este nodo (*out-degree centrality*).

Vinculado al grado de centralidad de los nodos, se pueden diferenciar dos tipos de actores: los nodos programadores y los nodos movilizados (Padovani y Pavan, 2016). Los programadores son los que, con motivo de su alto *in-degree* en una red concreta, establecen o fijan el mensaje, por ejemplo los temas de campaña. Los nodos movilizados son aquellos que difunden este mensaje a través de enlaces y conexiones dado su alto valor de *out-degree* (Padovani y Pavan, 2016). Por consiguiente, para el análisis de *Twitter*, nos centramos en los *retweets* y las menciones que envía o recibe cada uno de los usuarios entendidos como interacción. Los nodos con un alto *in-degree* son los que reciben mayor cantidad de menciones y son *retweeteados* en mayor medida, mientras que, por el contrario, los que reflejan un alto *out-degree* realizan un alto número de *retweets* y menciones. A pesar de que una de las características principales que se le atribuyen a las redes digitales en el marco comunicativo es su capacidad para facilitar la comunicación multidireccional –el mito de la horizontalidad– las conversaciones generalmente no muestran reciprocidad (Pavan, 2015).

2.2 Análisis de contenido

La aplicación metodológica del análisis de contenido en el segundo nivel parte de la necesidad de hacer inferencias a partir del texto (Krippendorff, 2013). A través de esta técnica

G (V, E)			
Vértices (V) Conjunto de vértices	Actores/Nodos	Puntos	
Bordes (Edges, E) Conjunto de bordes	Líneas de flujo (flujo de comunicación)	Directa (lógica)	Flechas
		Indirecta (multidireccional)	Arcos

Tabla 2. Teoría de grafos y SNA. Elaboración propia, basado en Borgatti et al. (2013).

Estados relacionales Relaciones permanentes	Semejanza: fenómenos relacionales no sociales que pueden ser tratados como si lo fueran desde el punto de vista metodológico (p. e. localización).
	Roles relacionales: son las relaciones humanas más permanentes en el tiempo (p. e. relación madre-hija).
	Relaciones cognitivas: pensamientos y sentimientos que unas personas hacia otras.
Eventos relacionales Relaciones no permanentes	Interacciones: comportamientos entre nodos que pueden ser observados por terceros nodos.
	Flujos: resultados y forma de las interacciones que forman un medio determinado para que estas se produzcan (actitudes, normas, creencias).

Tabla 3. Estados relacionales y eventos relacionales. Elaboración propia, basado en Borgatti et al. (2013).

basada en la descripción objetiva y sistemática del contenido de una comunicación (Berelson, 1971), los investigadores pueden inferir sobre el hablante, el receptor y el mensaje (Colle, 2011). Su carácter flexible lo convierte en un método de investigación aplicable a diferentes tipos de comunicaciones (Berelson, 1971). Ello siempre y cuando sea objetivo, estandarizado y mecánico (López-Noguero, 2002). El análisis temático (Bardin, 2002) es relevante para conocer los temas de campaña en *Twitter* y el marco o *frame* de esos temas (Goffman, 1986). El enfoque constructivista entiende que los conceptos adquieren sentido cuando alguien –los partidos políticos– los sitúan en un contexto o *frame* determinado (Van Gorp, 2010). Los estudios de comunicación política y electoral utilizan el análisis de los *frames* de diversas formas (Gitlin, 1980; Entman, 2004; Lakoff, 2004). Son particularmente relevantes las obras que se refieren a marcos de acción colectiva que organizan la experiencia y guían la acción electoral y política (Benford y Snow, 2000). En este sentido, el presente artículo busca definir cómo *Barcelona en Comú* relaciona y sitúa sus principales temas de campaña y mensajes electorales, la causa de los problemas que se plantean, las consecuencias de estas situaciones y las soluciones en términos de programa electoral (Entman, 2004).

Las categorías de análisis, están relacionadas con los actos ilocucionarios del habla (*tabla 4*) (Searle, 1976; Austin, 2003), la participación digital (Lobera, 2010) (*tabla 5*), los actores políticos (Figura 1), las posibilidades de *Twitter* y la clasificación de los temas diseminados por los partidos políticos.

En primer lugar, para averiguar la intencionalidad en la comunicación de los partidos políticos, se emplean los actos de habla de Austin (2003) y Searle (1976). Los actos ilocucionarios engloban las categorías de actos directivos, actos de comisivos, actos expresivos, actos de declarativos y actos asertivos. Sin embargo, de acuerdo con Searle (1976), cada expresión tiene una fuerza ilocucionaria, pero no necesariamente tiene contenido proposicional. Además, los verbos no son el único signo de fuerza ilocucionaria (Alarcón, 2008) y cabe la posibilidad de que algunos de los tweets de la campaña no contengan un verbo, debido a la limitación de espacio en 140 caracteres.¹

La clasificación de Josep Lobera (2010) es relevante para pro-

Actos del habla	
Directivos	Intentar que el receptor lleve a cabo una acción concreta
Comisivos	Comprometer al hablante en un acción futura
Expresivos	Expresar el estado psicológico del hablante
Declarativos	Modificar una situación presente generando/imaginando una nueva
Asertivos	Comprometer al hablante con la verdad expresada

Tabla 4. Actos del habla (Searle, 1976; Austin, 2003).

Categorías de participación digital	
Información	Acceso a la información.
Comunicación	Intercambio de información.
Deliberación	Procesos de examen, evaluación, reflexión, debate, etc.
Consulta o toma de decisiones	Formas para conocer las opiniones de los ciudadanos
Acción creativa	Acciones colaborativas desde el entorno digital

Tabla 5. Participación digital (Lobera, 2010).

fundizar en la participación digital. El autor contempla cinco tipos de participación digital, en función de su finalidad y el tipo de red social o herramienta *online* utilizada por los partidos políticos. No obstante, para nuestra investigación, el canal de comunicación es *Twitter*, por lo que clasificamos los tweets en relación con la información, la comunicación, la deliberación, la consulta o toma de decisiones y la acción creativa (Lobera, 2010) y no en función de la herramienta utilizada.

También analizamos las posibilidades de comunicación relacionadas con el uso de *Twitter* por parte de los seis partidos políticos en relación con las imágenes, videos o enlaces. Se han explorado algunas posibilidades de *Twitter* como, por ejemplo, el número de "me gusta" o "favoritos" (*Fav*), *retweets* (*RT*) y *#hashtags* utilizados por los partidos políticos.

En relación a las respuestas, se analiza el tipo de diálogo, las conversaciones entre los partidos políticos de la confluencia y los usuarios/ciudadanos. El objetivo es averiguar si es una comunicación multidireccional entre los partidos y los ciudadanos durante la campaña electoral. En este sentido, varios autores han notado las limitaciones en el uso de las redes digitales como canal de comunicación multidireccional (Graham, Broersma, Hazelhoff y Van't Haar, 2013; Jungherr, 2015) ya que las estructuras de poder, estructuras económicas y estructuras políticas prevalecen en del espacio online (Lilleker, Koc-Michalska y Schweitzer, 2011). Para analizar las respuestas de los usuarios se incluyen las categorías partidos políticos/políticos, periodistas/medios de comunicación y usuarios/ciudadanos en función de quién responde. Esta clasificación está relacionada con la tesis de Wolton (1989) que sitúa como principales actores políticos legítimos a actores públicos como las instituciones o partidos, los medios de comunicación y periodistas y actores ciudadanos, individuos o grupos como asociaciones (Wolton, 1989).

Se incluye, asimismo, un grupo de categorías destinadas al análisis de las respuestas o conversaciones que surgen en *Twitter* a partir de la información difundida por los partidos políticos, basada en el trabajo realizado por, entre otros autores, Deen Freelon (2010) y ampliada por Guillermo López-García y Lidia Valera-Ordaz (2015). En estas conversaciones se explora, asimismo, si los usuarios introducen un tema diferente al del *tweet* (micro tema). De acuerdo con esta

Agentes políticos			
<input type="checkbox"/> Partidos políticos	<input type="checkbox"/> Medios de comunicación	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Usuarios/ciudadanos	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Partidos políticos	<input type="checkbox"/> Medios de comunicación	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Usuarios/ciudadanos	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Partidos políticos	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medios de comunicación	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Usuarios/ciudadanos	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partidos políticos	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medios de comunicación	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Usuarios/ciudadanos	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Partidos políticos	<input type="checkbox"/> Medios de comunicación	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Usuarios/ciudadanos	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Figura 1. Actores políticos. Elaboración propia en base a Wolton (1989).

taxonomía (Freelon, 2010, López-García y Valera-Ordaz, 2015, Valera-Ordaz, 2018), existen tres modelos de conversaciones, por lo tanto, tres modelos de democracia. Así, encontramos:

1. Modelo liberal-individualista: enfatiza en la capacidad del individuo para hacer oír su voz través de espacios digitales.

- Monólogo: el hablante emite comentario sin la intención de discutir su punto de vista con otros usuarios
- Revelación personal: revelación de información personal.
- Exhibición personal: el hablante disemina y publicita su propio contenido.

2. Modelo comunitario: mantiene el foco en la capacidad de las nuevas tecnologías para fortalecer los vínculos entre las comunidades ideológicas preexistentes.

- Homofilia ideológica: el usuario expresa el grado de acuerdo o rechazo con el tweet publicado. Cuanto mayor es el grado de acuerdo entre los hablantes, mayor es la homofilia.
- Movilización: el usuario reafirma su intención de movilización política mediante la participación en actos físicos electorales, intención de voto, aportaciones económicas o mediante movilización a otros usuarios.
- Identificación comunitaria: el usuario se auto percibe como parte de la comunidad y el mensaje denota el sentimiento de pertenencia.

3. Modelo deliberativo: establece el foco en el potencial tecnológico para llevar a cabo un diálogo racional.

- Argumentación: opinión razonada, con la voluntad de argumentación detectable en presencia de adverbios causales.
- Reciprocidad: se centra en la observación de una respuesta a otro usuario.
- Libertad discursiva: el tipo de lenguaje empleado por los usuarios en sus respuestas.

2.3 Entrevistas semiestructuradas

El tercer nivel de análisis se centra en entrevistas en profundidad semi estructuradas (Ruiz-Olabuénaga, 2012). La entrevista es una metodología sistematizada y estandarizada

con un propósito específico, sujeta a la apariencia de una conversación normal (Kvale, 1996). Este método cualitativo resulta útil para obtener más información sobre situaciones o eventos que no se pueden observar de manera directa (Taylor y Bogdan, 1992). La entrevista semi estructurada mantiene un final abierto como consecuencia de un diálogo en profundidad (Morrow, 2005; O'Sullivan, 2005; Kvale, 2007). No obstante, es importante combinar las entrevistas con otro tipo de métodos de investigación, ya que depende directamente del discurso y voluntad del entrevistado (Taylor y Bogdan, 1992). La aplicación de esta metodología requiere un cierto nivel de información y conocimiento del tema y objeto de estudio (Wengraf, 2001; Kelly, 2010) que se ha obtenido con los dos pasos anteriores, el SNA y el AC. Las entrevistas semi estructuradas (Flick, 2004) se basan en un modelo donde las preguntas dependen de las características del entrevistado, según un punto de vista etnográfico y biográfico (Vallés, 2009). De esta forma, se obtiene información relevante, útil e importante relacionada con la dinámica comunicativa del caso de estudio *Barcelona en Comú* (Brennen, 2013), de manera colaborativa y activa (Fontana y Frey, 2005). Las entrevistas cualitativas se centran en el significado, el contexto, las relaciones y las experiencias del entrevistado (Pietkiewicz y Smith, 2014). Así, la aplicación metodológica se lleva a cabo en miembros/participantes en la comisión de comunicación de *Barcelona en Comú* durante el diseño y ejecución de la campaña a las municipales.

Esta conversación se registra mediante una estructura estandarizada (de Vaus, 2001). En nuestro estudio de caso, utilizamos un guión flexible que incluye preguntas básicas relacionadas con la campaña electoral y condicionadas por el contexto –social, político, económico y cultural– de *Barcelona en Comú* y de los entrevistados (Flick, 2004). El guión en torno al cual se estructura la conversación, resulta útil cuando el investigador sabe algo sobre el entrevistado y sobre el objeto de estudio a través de la investigación de campo (Taylor y Bogdan, 1992). Aunque el modelo semi estructurado permite al investigador redefinir las preguntas y ofrece libertad (Wimmer y Dominick, 1996), se basa en un cuestionario definido previamente (Agirreazkuenaga, 2012). La revisión metodológica de entrevistas semi estructuradas llevada a cabo por Hanna Kallio, Anna-Maija Pietilä, Martin Johnson y Mari Kangasniemi (2016) señala cinco fases esenciales dentro del proceso de la entrevista. La primera fase, con el fin de identificar la necesidad de la misma; en segundo lugar, la fase en la cual el investigador debe preparar el contexto con información previa sobre el tema o estudio de caso; la tercera fase se basa en la redacción de una guía o protocolo y el libro de codificación; en la cuarta, se preparan las preguntas preliminares; y finalmente, se establece cómo dar forma y presentar las respuestas y los resultados (Kallio et al, 2016). Para agrupar las unidades de análisis, las variables y las categorías creadas para estas entrevistas (Wimmer y Dominick, 2011), utilizamos el software *Dataminer Pro* con diferentes categorías y campos, que depende del tipo de pregunta (abierta o cerrada). El

Grupo 1 Información general y preguntas descriptivas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implicación y motivación personal en el partido/confluencia Periodo de participación
Grupo 2 Estructura del grupo de comunicación y roles profesionales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estructura de la comisión de comunicación Perfiles dentro del grupo Responsabilidad de cada rol y relación entre los diferentes perfiles Dinámicas comunicativas durante la campaña electoral Coordinación entre los grupos de comunicación de los seis partidos
Grupo 3 Herramientas y canales de comunicación digital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal canal de comunicación durante la campaña Relación con los medios de masas Posición de cada medio en relación a su relevancia dentro de la campaña Tipos de herramientas (comunicación interna y externa) Estrategia/protocolo específico para las redes digitales Gestión de las redes digitales de los partidos y candidatos Por qué seis cuentas en las redes digitales en lugar de una de la coalición
Grupo 4 Estrategias comunicativas El mensaje	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definición del mensaje Selección del mensaje Mensaje diferente para cada medio Coordinación del mensaje (homogeneidad) entre los seis partidos Mensaje de campaña institucional vs la otra campaña
Grupo 5 Respuestas Comunicación multidireccional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gestión de las respuestas Identificación de las respuestas (usuarios/ciudadanos + negativas/positivas) Cuentas personales/cuentas oficiales/cuentas de los candidatos Relevancia de las respuestas (temas/argumentos) Feedback

Tabla 6. Guión de las entrevistas semi estructuradas en profundidad. Elaboración propia.

cuestionario semi estructurado incluye cinco grupos de preguntas (tabla 6).

3. Resultados

3.1 Primer nivel: SNA

La aplicación del SNA, incluido en trabajos previos (García-Carretero y Pérez-Altable, 2017) en un marco de investigación más amplio muestra que el principal partido de la coalición en generar la información electoral en *Twitter* durante la campaña fue *BeC*. Desde la cuenta de *Twitter* de *BeC* se fija el mensaje electoral –nodo programador– mientras que los

cinco partidos restantes –*ICV*, *Podem*, *EUiA*, *Procés Constituent* y *EQUO*– actúan como movilizadores, es decir, difundiendo la agenda propuesta por *BeC*. En este sentido, destacan particularmente los casos de *EUiA* y *EQUO* ya que, durante la campaña electoral, apenas participaron en *Twitter* desempeñando alguno de los dos roles presentados en el SNA. Por el contrario, *ICV* y *BeC* fueron los partidos que más explotaron el potencial bidireccional de *Twitter*. La reciprocidad (comunicativa) entre los nodos muestra valores bajos, por lo que podemos hablar de una red jerárquica organizada en torno a un nodo o actor central (Figura 2) y, por tanto, una distribución asimétrica del poder, donde *BeC* centraliza la comunicación electoral.

De acuerdo con la multidireccionalidad del total de tweets diseminados, *BeC* es el partido con mayor *in-degree*. Seguido por *ICV*, *Podem*, *Procés Constituent* y *EUiA*. Por su parte, *EQUO* no recibió ninguna mención durante la campaña en *Twitter*. En cuanto al *out-degree*, destaca el papel de *ICV*. Con mayor profundidad, las tablas 7 y 8 muestran el papel llevado a cabo por los partidos a la hora de fijar la agenda electoral. De acuerdo con la categorización de Elena Pavan (2015), entre los partidos que fijan los temas de campaña (programadores) destaca, una vez más, la comunicación en *Twitter* de *Barcelona en Comú*. No obstante, los resultados del SNA muestran la necesidad de incluir otros nodos en esta investigación así como profundizar en su mensaje. Es el caso de Ada Colau y otros candidatos de la confluencia. Asimismo, mediante el SNA se ha identificado

Programadores	<i>In-degree</i>
@bcnencomu	1263
@adacolau	880
@g_pisarello	132
@laiaortiz	115
@misanchezgar	65
@janetsanz	64
@3eses	61

Tabla 7. Nodos programadores (García-Carretero y Pérez-Altable, 2017).

Movilizadores	<i>Out-degree</i>
@iniciativabcn	468
@bcnencomu	439
@constituentbcn	199
@misanchezgar	186
@3eses	108
@podem_bcn	93

Tabla 8. Nodos movilizadores (García-Carretero y Pérez-Altable, 2017).

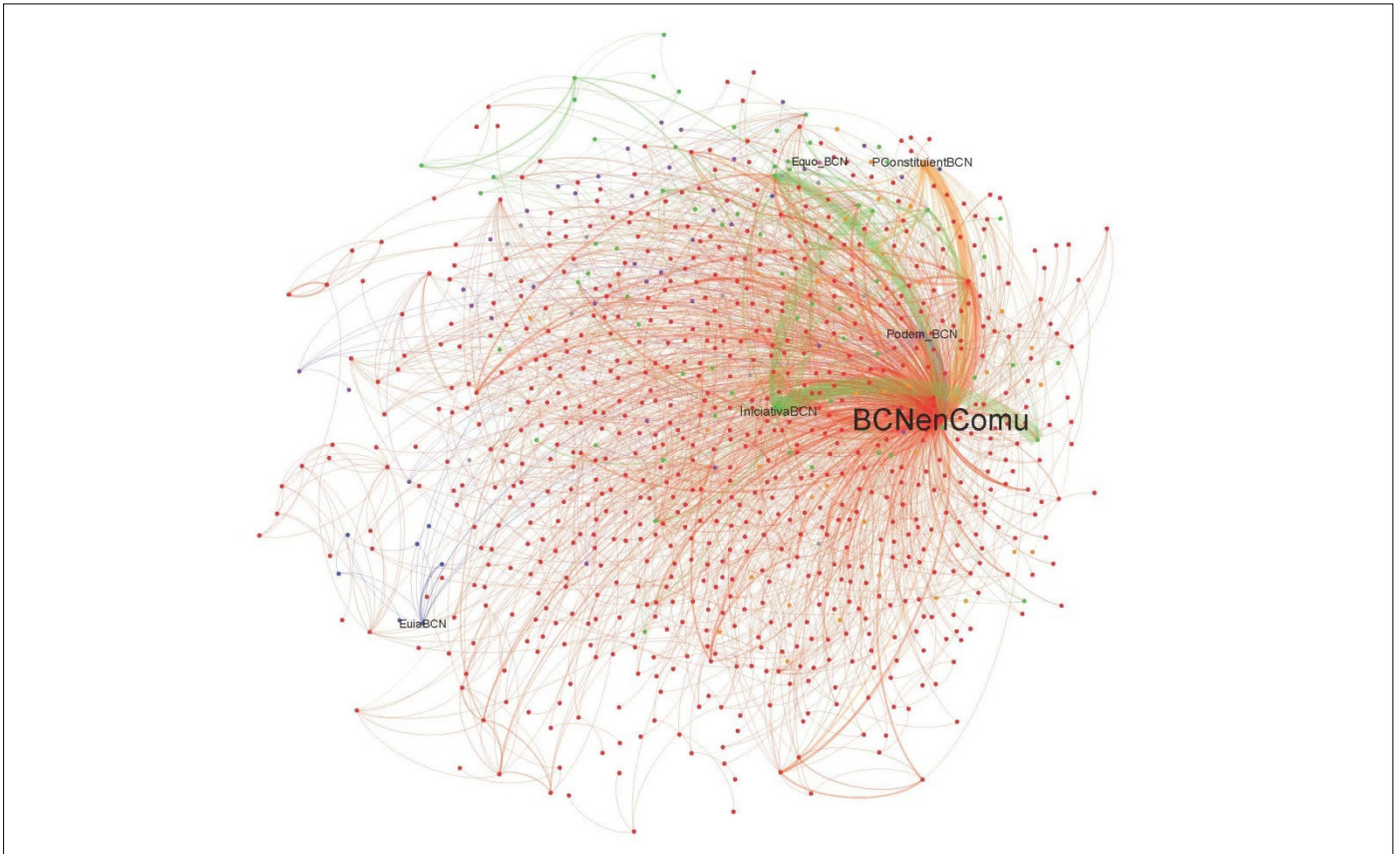


Figura 2. Actores comunicativos durante la campaña electoral (García-Carretero y Pérez-Altable, 2017).

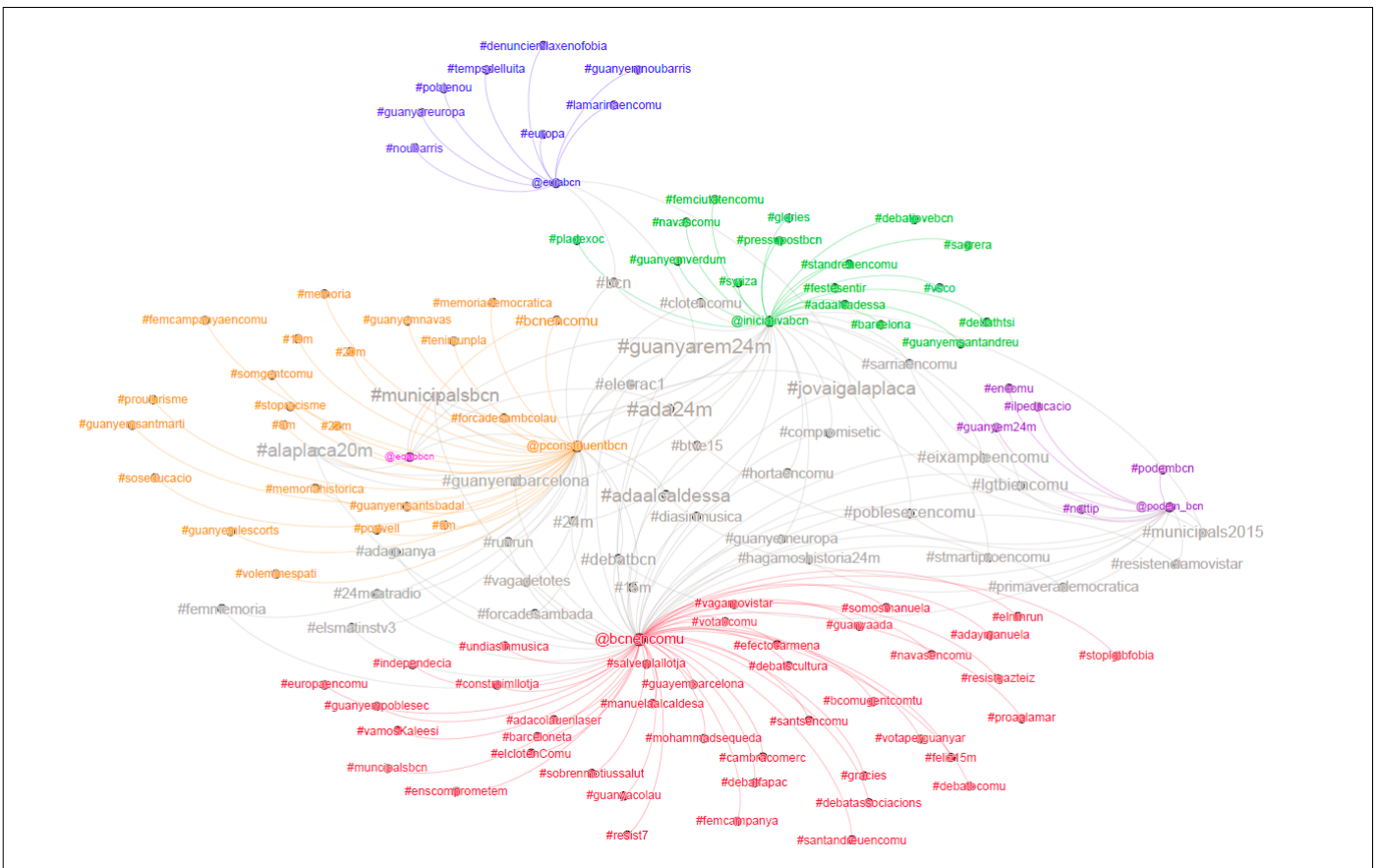


Figura 3. Distribución de los tweets de la confluencia (García-Carretero y Pérez-Altable, 2017).

a uno de los miembros de la comisión de comunicación y del *Movimiento de Liberación Gráfica de Barcelona* relevante en el establecimiento de los temas de campaña (@3eses).

El total de 128 hashtags analizados (Figura 3) muestra la necesidad de llevar a cabo un análisis temático mediante otra metodología (AC) ya que los hashtags más comunes son transversales para todos los partidos y durante toda la campaña, es decir, no se refieren a un tema de campaña concreto. Entre los más relevantes, encontramos #Adaalcaldessa, #alaplaca20m, #jovaigalaplaca y #municipalsbcn.

3.2 Segundo nivel: CA

La aplicación metodológica del análisis de contenido nos ha permitido profundizar en las estrategias comunicativas de la coalición electoral *Barcelona en Comú* en diferentes aspectos, tanto en relación al mensaje difundido por las cuentas en *Twitter* de los seis partidos, como en relación a el mensaje de candidatos y usuarios (García-Carretero y Díaz-Noci, 2018).

Así, se ha observado que entre los temas de campaña predomina la difusión de la agenda electoral –principalmente actos en el espacio físico y debates o entrevistas de los candidatos en televisión– dirigida a su público objetivo o posible electorado mediante los actos asertivos (Searle, 1976; Austin, 2003). Es decir, con la intención de implicar o comprometer a los usuarios o receptores a la participación de los mismos, ya sea acudiendo a estos actos o generando debate en torno a

apariciones de los candidatos en televisión a través del uso de *hashtags*. Seguidamente, encontramos mensajes basados en activismo y participación ciudadana, desigualdades sociales – propios de los movimiento-partidos (della porta et al., 2017)– y apelación al voto (Figura 4). Entendiendo el populismo como un estilo de comunicación política basado en la articulación de la hegemonía (Abts y Rummers, 2007; Moffit y Tormey, 2014; De Smet, 2016), el mensaje de la confluencia se encuadra en un *frame* basado en “la gente común” y el “bien común”. Esto es, la lucha o articulación del nosotros contra ellos con el fin de recuperar el espacio público que pertenece a los vecinos y los barrios de Barcelona, ser la fuerza más votada como única posibilidad para el cambio real y esperanza de cambio mediante un programa electoral “desde abajo” (activismo) que permita combatir las desigualdades y dignificar la política y a los políticos. Este cambio en la política mediante la participación ciudadana y el activismo supone una ruptura con la distribución anterior de lo político, donde el poder pertenece a un grupo de privilegiados (los otros), entendido esta lucha de poder en términos de revolución democrática.

En cuanto al análisis temático de las cuentas de *Twitter* de los candidatos o políticos de *Barcelona en Comú*, se ha observado que la distribución de la selección temática en estas cuentas es similar a las cuentas de los partidos, por lo tanto, se sigue una estrategia comunicativa electoral coordinada en *Twitter*. No obstante, se ha observado variaciones en cuanto al tono o registro del mensaje, otra de las características del popu-

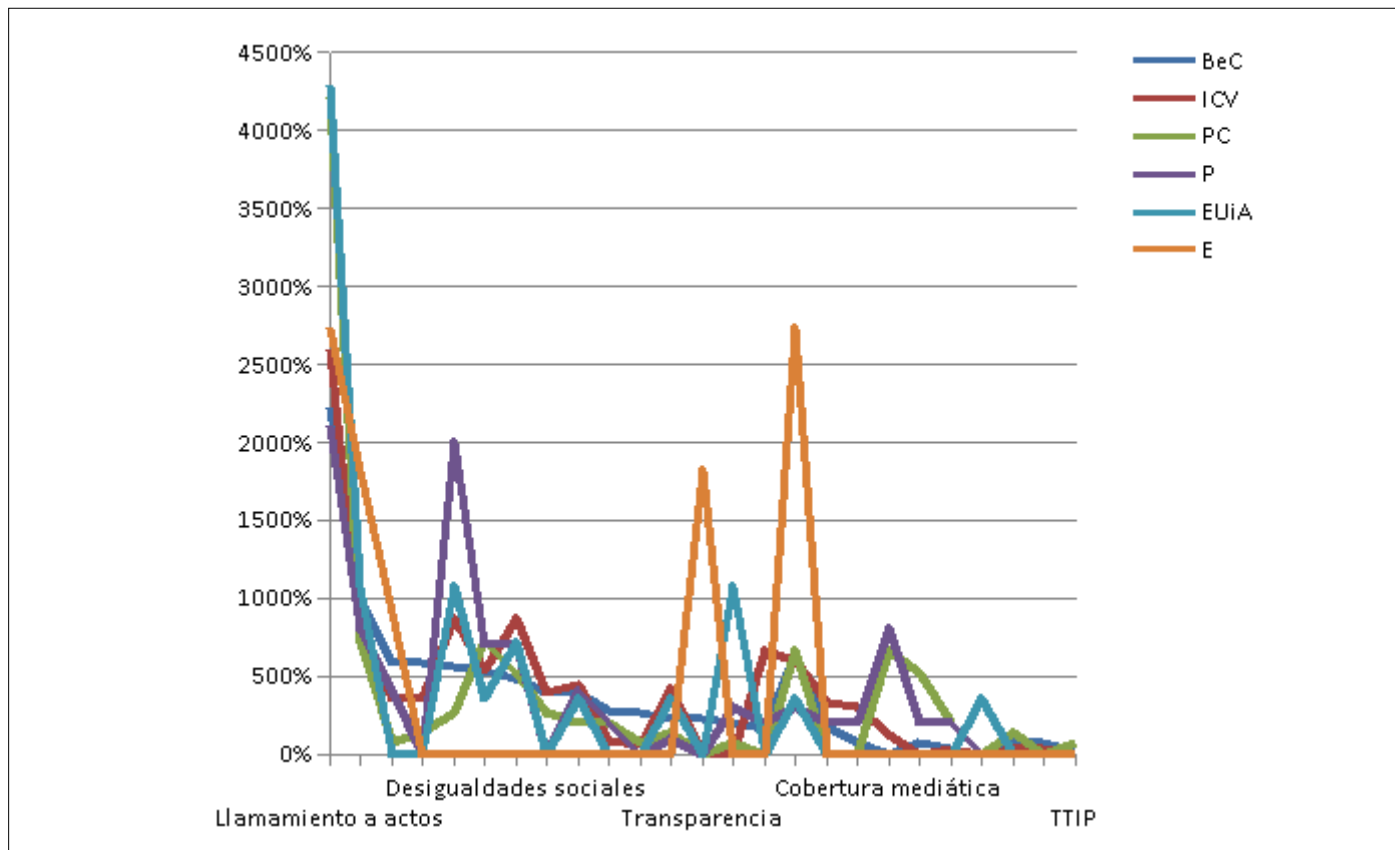


Figura 4. Distribución temas de campaña (García-Carretero y Díaz-Noci, 2018).

lismo como estilo de comunicación política (Tudoroiu, 2014; Bracciale y Martella, 2017; Feenstra et al., 2017). Así, desde la cuenta *@adacolau*, la candidata a la alcaldía de Barcelona, mediante un registro más informal y personal, introduce los temas de campaña apelando a las emociones, mediante el *storytelling* y ejemplos basados en su propia experiencia como "gente común".

Los seis partidos políticos, en relación a las principales posibilidades de *Twitter* como herramienta digital, incluyen contenido audiovisual y enlaces a las páginas web o *hub* (Giansante, 2015) de los partidos políticos donde se amplía la información electoral y política (ver García-Carretero y Codina, 2018). Como se ha observado en el primer nivel de análisis (SNA), los hashtags son, en términos generales, transversales y no se relacionan con un único tema de campaña. No obstante, predomina la imagen sobre el video en un formato en el que, dadas las limitaciones textuales de *Twitter*, en actos o debates concretos se incluyen imágenes donde se amplía la información textual del mensaje.

Se ha observado que la principal finalidad de *Twitter* como herramienta digital es la comunicación o el intercambio de información (Lobera, 2010). Por el contrario, es significativamente negativo el uso de *Twitter* como herramienta de participación, consulta o toma de decisiones.

En este sentido, el análisis de las conversaciones con los usuarios en la red digital nos permite afirmar que el uso de la red digital como herramienta multidireccional es limitado. Según la categorización basada en tres modelos de democracia (López-García y Valera-Ordaz), el único partido político caracterizado con cierto grado deliberativo en sus conversaciones es *Barcelona en Comú*. No obstante, sin garantizar cierto grado argumentativo en las respuestas y con una limitada aportación de nuevos temas a la discusión. Además, se ha observado que los partidos políticos no intervienen significativamente en las conversaciones que surgen a partir de sus mensajes independientemente del tipo de comentario. Sin embargo, se ha observado la participación de miembros de la comisión de comunicación en las conversaciones desde sus cuentas personales sin identificarse, claramente, como miembros de *Barcelona en Comú*.

3.3 Tercer nivel: entrevistas en profundidad

La ejecución metodológica de las entrevistas en profundidad ha permitido establecer la causalidad de algunas de las dinámicas de *Barcelona en Comú* en *Twitter* así como conocer el funcionamiento interno de los grupos de comunicación de una coalición electoral formada por seis partidos políticos. Retomando el mito de la horizontalidad (Pavan, 2015), los resultados basados en una red jerárquica del SNA y la falta de participación en las conversaciones en *Twitter* como indica el AC (López-García y Valera-Ordaz), las entrevistas en profundi-

zar permiten situar la falta de respuesta como una estrategia premeditada durante la campaña. A través de las entrevistas, se ha asegurado la estrategia de no intervención en las conversaciones de las cuentas de los partidos pero sí a través de los perfiles en *Twitter* de los miembros de la comisión de comunicación. El argumento se articula en torno a dos ejes. Dar respuesta a las dudas por parte de los miembros del grupo que contaban con más información respecto al tema objeto de debate y, así, dotar la conversación de un tono menos institucional al no intervenir los partidos (de ciudadano/usuario a ciudadano-usuario).

Cabe destacar, además, la finalidad atribuida a los perfiles oficiales por parte de los partidos políticos, lo cual condiciona tanto el mensaje como el tono del mismo. Así, encontramos dos tipos de campaña electoral y, por tanto, al menos dos usos diferentes de las redes digitales por parte de *Barcelona en Comú*. En primer lugar, la campaña oficial o institucional, analizada en esta investigación. En segundo lugar, una campaña más flexible, con un tono más dinámico, basada en el contenido audiovisual y el diseño gráfico, más propia del activismo *fandom* (Earl y Kimport, 2009) o del *fandom* político (Coleman, 2003; Erikson, 2008; Madore, 2009; Sandvoss, 2013).

Otro aspecto relevante es el diseño de la comunicación de la coalición durante la campaña articulada a través de los seis partidos políticos. La comisión de comunicación se organizaba como espacio abierto con dos perfiles diferenciados. En primer lugar, el grupo más permanente organizado por "meritocracia" es decir, en función de la especialidad comunicativa de cada miembro (redes, diseño, audiovisual, etc). En segundo lugar, un segundo grupo de apoyo que ejecutaba la comunicación. Las estrategias comunicativas electorales se llevaron a cabo por parte de cada partido, con traspaso o flujo de información continuo pero sin que hubiese un grupo unificado de los seis partidos. En relación a las cuentas de los candidatos, la gestión la llevaban a cabo los titulares de las cuentas aunque con apoyo del grupo de comunicación cuando, debido al momento concreto de la campaña, era necesario.

4. Conclusiones

La consolidación de las redes digitales como herramientas de comunicación política y electoral (Campos-Domínguez, 2017), así como la aparición de nuevos objetos de estudios en los que convergen dinámicas comunicativas tanto de movimientos sociales, como de partidos institucionalizados, muestra la necesidad de aproximarse a ellos desde diferentes perspectivas para su completo entendimiento y análisis. El empleo de las redes digitales por parte de los partidos políticos plantea numerosas preguntas de investigación en cuanto a su uso y/o el mensaje difundido en ellas pero, sobre todo, muestra un interés incipiente por el uso de las redes digitales como canal de comunicación bidireccional.

La investigación realizada mediante la triangulación metodológica o método mixto (Bellotti, 2015) –y su organización en tres niveles de análisis– reafirma la complejidad comunicativa de la red y la necesidad de abordar su análisis mediante diferentes métodos que permiten la observación completa de la misma (Denzin, 1978; Webb, Campbell, Schwartz y Sechrest, 1966; Golafshani, 2003).

Por su parte, la metodología cuantitativa, en un nivel macro de análisis, resulta útil para explorar los patrones de conexiones sociales y conocer los sesgos de manera estadística (Bellotti, 2010; Crossley y Edwards, 2016). De esta forma, el análisis de redes sociales (SNA) ha contribuido a conocer el comportamiento de los partidos políticos durante la campaña electoral en la red, conocer el contexto de la campaña electoral, los actores políticos dominantes, quién establece la agenda y quién la difunde. Al mismo tiempo, muestra limitaciones sobre cómo gestionan la comunicación electoral los actores políticos, cuál es el mensaje o las causas de este comportamiento en la red.

La aproximación cualitativa permite identificar y profundizar en estos patrones de comportamiento y ofrece detalles más concretos en un nivel micro de análisis (Bellotti, 2010; Crossley y Edwards, 2016). Por ello, el análisis de contenido nos ha permitido profundizar tanto en el qué como en el cómo de las estrategias comunicativas además de en el contexto de este mensaje. Sin embargo, sin las entrevistas no habríamos obtenido información de acuerdo con si los datos observados y los resultados forman parte de la estrategia coordinada de la coalición electoral *Barcelona en Comú* o son consecuencia de otros factores no diseñados para la campaña. Todo ello, reafirma la tesis de partida de esta investigación en cuanto a la relevancia del método mixto para una investigación completa y en profundidad.

Se considera, que lo anteriormente expuesto, da lugar a que esta investigación reitere la necesidad de aproximarnos a la investigación de redes digitales mediante la triangulación metodológica o el *mixed-method approach* (Edwards, 2010), combinando técnicas cuantitativas y cualitativas y así obtener la mayor información de análisis posible sobre el mismo objeto de estudio.

Nota

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Notas a pie de página

1. En la actualidad, desde septiembre de 2017, la limitación de caracteres en Twitter es de 280. Durante el periodo de análisis, la limitación era de 140 caracteres.

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El **Observatorio de Cibermedios** es una producción del *Grupo de Investigación en Documentación Digital y Comunicación Interactiva* (DigiDoc) del **Departamento de Comunicación** de la **Universitat Pompeu Fabra**.

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CHAPTER V

Discussion and Conclusion

Chapter V. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and case study conclusion

The primary purpose of this thesis is to deepen the electoral communication strategy on Twitter of new political actors and ultimately, the electoral coalition *Barcelona en Comú*, for better understand the way new political organisation use digital networks. For that end goal, the research study assumes that *BComú* is a representative example of movement parties against austerity in Europe and the Western World (della Porta *et al.*, 2017). The case study is as an indirect consequence of the global economic and political crisis, the emergence of various social movements all over the world particularly the *Indignados* movement, the *PAH* -and the Post-15M Spanish context-; and a result of the outcome of social movements institutionalisation and the political opportunity set by these social movements (Amenta *et al.*, 2010; Carballo-Cruz, 2011; Sampedro and Sánchez-Duarte, 2011; Giugni, 2014; Sanz and Mateos, 2014; Orriols and Cordero, 2016; Piccio, 2016; Feenstra *et al.*, 2017).

After the period of institutionalisation, the electoral coalition *Barcelona en Comú* runs into 2015 city council election, and it won the electoral process on the 24th May 2015. Ada Colau became the Mayoress of Barcelona. During the electoral campaign that took place from 8th to the 23rd of May, the six parties carried out an electoral communication strategy in the hybrid media system as is defined by Andrew Chadwick (2013). According to the hybrid and hypermedia electoral campaign, the parties evolved both social media and mass media electoral communication adjusting their message to social media and mass media logic. The necessity to achieve visibility to the parties' coalition and their political programme, causes the hipermediatisated electoral campaign as a process of reality

construction through the mass media and the social media (Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999; Couldry and Hepp, 2013).

This research work focuses on the relevance of social media and digital networks on the process. That is due to the assumption that the new or minor political parties –the counter-hegemonic- can be less visible than traditional parties – hegemonic- on mass media coverage (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001; Almirón, Stantcovsky and Capurro, 2010; Aragón *et al.*, 2013). Additionally, it is due to the relationship between the new political parties and social movements and, hence, the use of social movements communication dynamics on digital networks by these parties.

Digital networks, specifically Twitter, allow the position struggle between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic political parties, being the central core of this position struggle the political and electoral communication (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001; Laclau, 2005; Gramsci, 2009). Also, it allows multidirectional communication between parties and citizens although the authors have noticed the limitations on the use of digital networks as a bidirectional communication channel (Graham *et al.*, 2013; Jungherr, 2016). That is named the "myth of horizontality" (Pavan, 2015).

This PhD dissertation explores *Barcelona en Comú's* communication network on Twitter (*Table 19*) during the electoral campaign with particular attention on the flow of communication and the relationship between the six political parties and the parties with the users.

Table 19. The first level of analysis: *Barcelona en Comú*'s network

Level 1. Exploring <i>Barcelona en Comú</i> 's communication network on Twitter (Macro level).	
RQ1. What are the relationship and the flow of communication between the six political parties of the confluence?	O1. Analyse the flow of communication and the relationship between the six political parties of the confluence on <i>Twitter</i> during the electoral campaign.
RQ2. Do the political parties use the possibilities that Twitter enables to interact with the users? Do they conduct a two-way process of communication?	O2. Study the multidirectional communication or the relationship among the parties and users or citizens through the replies and comments in the tweets spread by the six political parties.
RQ3. What are the main electoral issues disseminated by the political parties according to the hashtag used?	O3. Identify the dominant issues proposed by political parties through the <i>hashtags</i> used on <i>Twitter</i> .

Source: Own elaboration.

As the work “Barcelona en Comú on Twitter. Analyzing the electoral communication of the confluence during 2015 council election” (García-Carretero and Pérez-Altale, 2017) reveals, the most efficient party of the coalition during the electoral campaign is BComú (*Guanyem Barcelona*) while the other five are less efficiency. From our findings, (C1) *Barcelona en Comú*'s and Ada Colau's *Twitter* account play a central role and therefore, the electoral agenda of parties' network. For the other parties, Twitter is a breeding channel of what is happening on public spaces or for mass media agenda so, the parties with less visibility do not articulate the hegemony on the Twitter digital network. The mass media logic (Martínez-Rodríguez, 2005; Aragón *et al.*, 2013; Chadwick, 2013; Carpentier, 2015; Feenstra *et al.*, 2017) prevails in digital networks, although as we observed with the case of *@bcnencomu*, is possible to redefine. In this regard, (C2), we agree with the myth of horizontality affirmation (Pavan, 2015) since we find a hierarchical network. Approximately half of the tweets give rise to user comments but, these interactions are unreciprocated, and on *Barcelona en Comú* (coalition) network fewer actors or nodes manage much information. By studying the hashtags through SNA (C3), our findings are not representative to ascertain the electoral

issues and the agenda because the hashtag theme is often not the same as the text's theme. Hence, we need a content analysis application.

Concerning the second level of analysis, which is explained in the article "From social movements to political parties. *Barcelona en Comú's* electoral message, uses and limitations on Twitter during 2015 city council election" (García-Carretero and Díaz-Noci, 2018) and it is based on the electoral message (*Table 20*), (C4) *Barcelona en Comú* uses Twitter as a "notice board" (Lobera, 2010) and it is linked to directive speech act (Searle, 1976; Austin 2003). Although the substantial amount of tweets disseminated, the number for each electoral issue is not a very high number, and it was chiefly used for a "call" to public meetings or television debates. One of the most significant contributions of this analysis is related to message construction around the articulation of the hegemony (Laclau, 2005; Gramsci, 2009) throughout populism as a communication style (Taggart, 2000; Jagers and Walgrave, 2007; Moffit and Tormey, 2016). *Barcelona en Comú* is 'the alternative' against 'the elites', the 'common people' against 'the others'. Besides, the crisis or breakdown and social inequalities are a consequence of this elite - political opposition- because of the political corruption, cowardice and privatisation of public service. The electoral message is complemented (C5) mainly with images, links and the use of hashtags in a crosscutting way for the six parties of the confluence and it allows generating conversations around a particular issue or event.

In response to multidirectional communication, we are in the condition to advance that *Barcelona en Comú* shows two different strategies to interact with the users/citizens. On the one hand, (C6) *Barcelona en Comú's* political parties use Twitter as a one-way channel of communication (Carpentier, 2015). The soft exchange of information through parties-users' conversations are negative or positive comments, and they are characterised by a low argumentation rate (López-García and Valera-Ordaz, 2015). On the other hand, (C7) the second group

of users (politicians and citizens), who also set the message, use Twitter in a bidirectional way. That is the case of the replays controlled by activists (Aragón *et al.*, 2015) who are not identified on *Twitter* as part of *BComú*.

Table 20. The second level of analysis: *Barcelona en Comú*'s electoral message

Level 2. Identifying the electoral message (Micro level).	
2.1. <i>Barcelona en Comú</i>'s electoral message on Twitter.	
RQ4. What is the electoral message of the six political parties? Do they use the same electoral issue for the six Twitter accounts? How are the frames of the electoral themes and ideas during the electoral campaign?	O4. Inquire about the electoral communication strategy according to the message. In other words, find out the thematic selection, the kind of message and, the concordance between the text of the tweets and the hashtags.
RQ5. How do they use Twitter possibilities? Do they use the text but also images, videos and link? In that case, which one they use?	O5. Analyse the use of <i>Twitter</i> by the parties of the confluence. That is, know if the parties took advantage of communication possibilities of <i>Twitter</i> such as images, videos or links.
RQ6. Do they have a fluent and an argued conversation? Do they debate election campaign issues?	O6. According to the replies on parties' tweets, deepen on the kind of conversation among the six political parties of the electoral coalition and <i>Twitter</i> users.
RQ7. According to the SNA results, do the users who are not the political parties introduce new electoral issues on <i>Barcelona en Comú</i> network on Twitter? Which kind of message do they spread?	O7. Study the kind of message disseminated by the users, both politicians and citizens, which set the political message of the confluence during the electoral campaign.

Source: Own elaboration.

As aforementioned, the second level of analysis also responds to the activists' electoral message or 'the other campaign (*Table 21*), which is defined in the research study. "The other campaign of *Barcelona en Comú* and political fandom: *Som Comuns, Movimiento de Liberación Gráfica* and *la guerrilla comunicativa*"¹⁴ (García-Carretero and Establés, 2019). (C8) The activist groups @*somcomuns* and the *Movimiento de Liberación Gráfica de Barcelona*, and the activist who

¹⁴ Translation from Spanish "La otra campaña de *Barcelona en Comú* a través del fandom político: *Som Comuns, Movimiento de Liberación Gráfica* y *la guerrilla comunicativa*".

participated in BComú communication commission are primarily responsible for the ‘other campaign’. Its participation involved the transformation and adaptation of the content of the media and political parties through fan activism (Establés and Guerrero-Pico, 2017; Guerrero-Pico, Establés and Ventura, 2018). During the council campaign, Twitter accounts of *Barcelona in Comú* coalition coexisted with other profiles based on fan culture (Sandvoss, 2005), affections (Erikson, 2008) and pop content for political purposes (Brough and Shresthova, 2012). Likewise, the study of the communication group to understand what is the place of the communicative activists on its structure (C9), allow us to delve into the relations between fandom, politics and populism (Sandvoss, 2012, 2013; Dean, 2017). The efforts carried out during the campaign of @somcomusn, MLGB and the 'desborde' through 'the other campaign' are a critical part of the campaign, and they are part of the electoral communication due to the decentralised structure of the communication group of *Barcelona in Comú*.

Table 21. The second level of analysis: “the other campaign”

Level 2. Identifying the electoral message (Micro level).	
Level 2.2. The “other campaign”: activism and decentralisation during the election campaign (Micro-level).	
RQ8. What or who are @somcomuns and MLGB? Are they part of <i>Barcelona en Comú</i> electoral coalition? What kind of message do they disseminate during the election campaign?	O8. Analyse the ‘informal’ communicative elements of the electoral campaign such as @somcomuns and the <i>Movimiento de Liberación Gráfica de Barcelona</i> created from ‘outside’, but incorporated into the institutional campaign of <i>Barcelona en Comú</i> .
RQ9. What is the place of communicative activists within the communication commission of <i>Barcelona in Comú</i> ?	O9. Deepen the internal structure of the communication group of <i>Barcelona en Comú</i> and the #guerrillacomunicativa to understand its internal and external communicative structure.

Source: Own elaboration.

Finally, based on the concept of the permanent campaign (Plasser and Plasser, 2002), we analyse the coordinated online strategy. To that extent, we previously investigate digital network as a source of information (conclusion from 1 to 9). Taking into account the place that digital networks have as online traffic provider, in this work, we also analysed digital networks as the intermediary channel between the users and political parties' websites (*Table 22*). That is the conference paper "Web Visibility and Political Communication: Analysis of Barcelona en Comú coalition's websites" (García-Carretero and Codina, 2018)¹⁵.

Table 22. Coordinated online strategy

Level 3. Communication on Twitter in a coordinated online strategy (Macro level).	
RQ10. How relevant are the digital networks as a visibility provider for the websites of the six political parties in a coordinated online strategy?	O10. Ascertain the role of social networks as an online traffic provider of political parties' websites.
RQ11. Which are the most used words to search the information on parties' websites? Are they related to the central electoral issues? Have they something in common with the electoral issues on Twitter?	O11. Study the keywords used for searching political parties' websites.
RQ12. What are the differences between the political parties' website visibility? Does it relate to the use of digital networks?	O12. Analyse the visibility differences among the six political parties' websites according to online traffic.
RQ13. Are the <i>SEO/SEM</i> tools useful for the analysis of political information?	O13. Explore the possibilities of <i>SEO/SEM</i> tool for the analysis of political parties' websites.

Source: Own elaboration.

In this sense, we ascertain (**C10**) that there is a direct relationship between the relevance given by BComú to Twitter and the website parties' traffic. The significance of Twitter, beyond its relationship with the logic of mass media, lies in being a channel of fluid communication (Lawrence *et al.*, 2014). On the contrary, Facebook creates a commitment and facilitates reflection (Williams and Gulati,

¹⁵ Translated from Spanish "Visibilidad web y Comunicación Política: análisis de los sitios web de la coalición electoral *Barcelona en Comú*".

2012). The access of political information through the keywords (C11) follows a natural language, so it indicates an intuitive logic for the users' approach. As with the six political parties on Twitter, the websites show several differences being the most visible the website of the political party *BComú*. For all those above, (C13) we consider that SEO/SEM tools are also useful for political communication analysis.

5.2. Discussion and methodological conclusion

Many questions and research objectives emerged on the analysis of the use of digital networks by political parties about their use, the message disseminated and early interest in the use of it as a multidirectional communication channel (*Figure 15*). During this thesis dissertation process, we realised that different methodological approaches are needed for a complete analysis of Twitter (*Table 23*).

Table 23. Mixed-methods approach

Level 4. Mixed-methods approach (Macro-micro level).	
<p>RQ14. How useful is the methodological triangulation or the mixed method approach to this case study? Moreover, what level of information can we obtain through the application through the quantitative-qualitative approach of the <i>Barcelona en Comu</i>'s electoral campaign?</p>	<p>O14: Deepen the design and application of the electoral communication strategies of the coalition of parties.</p>
<p>RQ15. Is there an agreement between the results obtained from the analysis and the response to the interviews?</p>	<p>O15: Compare the results obtained by the application of SNA and the content analysis with the information obtained from the political parties by in-depth interviews.</p>

Source: Own elaboration.

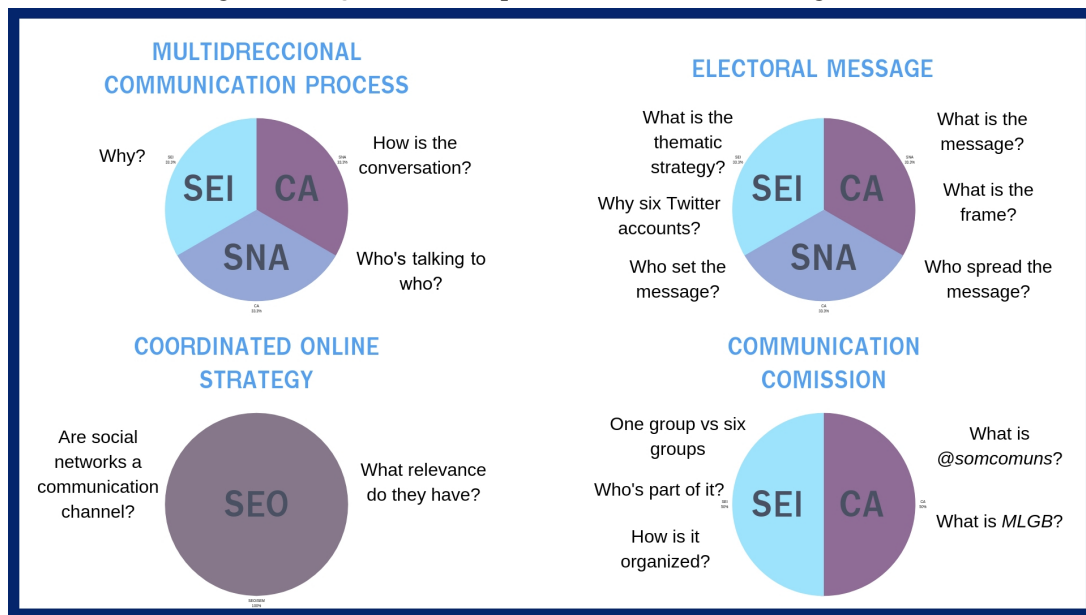
As the research work “The mixed method: a methodological approach through *Barcelona en Comú*’s council election campaign”¹⁶ (García-Carretero, 2018) introduces, the analysis based on a quantitative methodology is suitable for exploring social connections and knowing, statistically, their biases (Bellotti, 2010; Crossley and Edwards, 2016). This method of analysis application carries out that it is possible to observe how social network analysis contributed to delve into the context of the electoral campaign, the behaviour of the political parties during the electoral campaign and identify the dominant political actors who set the agenda and who spreads it. By contrast, this kind of analysis present limitations related to how political actors manage electoral communication, the electoral message, the causes, and the strategy behind this behaviour.

The second step to obtain Twitter’s electoral information was the qualitative approach. The qualitative approach enables us to identify and deepen the SNA patterns of behaviour. Besides, it offers more precise information on a micro level of analysis (Bellotti, 2010; Crossley and Edwards, 2016). Throughout the content analysis, we deepen on both the *what* and the *how* of communicative strategies around the context of this message.

Nonetheless, the second qualitative method used –the interviews- we obtained information about the design of the communication strategy –the reasons of our results- and details about the organisation of *Barcelona en Comú* electoral coalition communication group. All of the above reasserts the starting point of this research, highlighting the relevance of the mixed method for an in-depth and complete case study.

¹⁶ Translated from Spanish “El método mixto: una aproximación metodológica a través de la campaña a las municipales de *Barcelona en Comú*”.

Figure 15. Quantitative-qualitative methods' triangulation



Source: Own elaboration.

Given the above, we assert the requirement for a mixed method or methodological triangulation. The methodological triangulation or mixed method (Bellotti, 2015) that this research carried out organised in three levels of analysis, reaffirms the necessity of different techniques and approaches to understanding Twitter's network and its communicative complexity (Denzin, 1978; Webb, Campbell, Schwartz and Sechrest, 1966; Golafshani, 2003).

5.3. Limitations and further research

During the evolution and writing process of this dissertation, we observed interesting directions for further research. First, the growth of Twitter as a political communication tool. The consolidation of digital networks as tools for political and electoral communication could be affirmed in 2015. However, over the past few years, some political parties have devoted part of their efforts to influence the communication process on Twitter through *bots* and algorithmic communication (Bessi and Ferrara, 2016; Puyosa 2017; Campos-Domínguez and García-Orosa, 2018). This influence has modified the flow of communication, the communication

between parties and users without intermediaries, or the interferences beyond the mass media and social media logic (Römmele and Scheneidmesser, 2016). Furthermore, political parties are exploring other digital networks for electoral and political communication which has already been relevant in an election process, for example, the use of *WhatsApp* in Brazil (Moura and Michelson, 2017). Another example is the use of Instagram (Quevedo-Redondo and Portalés-Oliva, 2017; Selva-Ruiz and Caro-Castaño, 2017) which offers streaming possibilities.

Secondly, we observed the evolution of *Barcelona in Comú* and its communication since the organisation arrived at institutional politics. In 2015, the electoral coalition showed strategies and dynamics close to social movements and as counter-hegemonic parties (Laclau, 2005; Gramsci, 2009). Their inclusion into the institutional context can be generated new dynamics, with another purpose and different style. Therefore, further analysis of the communication of the political parties' and Ada Colau's Twitter accounts would be an interesting subject of study. Within the analysis, we could observe the changes in their communication as a consequence of the institutionalisation of movement parties against austerity (Pavan, 2015; della Porta *et al.*, 2017).

Also, we wonder why if the communication of *Barcelona en Comú* not so much coordinated (base on not long established protocol or communication guide), and it has a decentralised/open communication group, they show similarities with other political parties in other cities. For further research, it will be interesting to find out what is the link between the communicative strategy of *Barcelona in Comú* despite not having had a strictly marked communicative plan.

As final considerations, the intending to continue the research on online political communication and the main directions are focused on (1) delve into left-wing Spanish populism and its consolidation, (2) the use of other digital networks as an electoral communication tool and (3) explore the communication strategies of these

'new' political parties after their consolidation in government institutions and Spanish political parties system.

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CHAPTER VI

Appendix

Chapter VI. Appendix

6. 1. Content Analysis Pre-test

For the elaboration of the different categories related to content analysis, a pre-test has been carried out. The methodological pre-test is before the 2015 election campaign and was conducted during the *Master in Social Communication* (Universitat Pompeu Fabra) in Content Analysis course.

This appendix shows several categories for the analysis of the tweets disseminated by *Barcelona en Comú* on Twitter on 24th of June 2014, during the official presentation of the political party (N=69). We also do the pre-test for Facebook posts during the same period, although this part is not included because this research study focuses on Twitter. The categories of analysis, as it has been included in this dissertation, are related to:

- (1) The illocutionary acts of the speech (Searle, 1976; Austin, 2003).
- (2) Digital participation (Lobera, 2010).
- (3) The political actors.
- (4) Twitter possibilities.
- (5) Moreover, the classification of the issues disseminated by the political parties.

Part of the analysis included in this appendix has been deleted for the thesis dissertation, as it was not useful for the analysis of our object of study. Thus, the three phases of neo rhetoric analysis (Gómez and Capdevilla, 2012) were dismissed. Also, on the thesis, we include an analysis of the taxonomy for the replies on Twitter (López-García and Valera-Ordaz, 2015) that did not appear in the pre-test work.

The following tables (*Tables 24, 25 and 26*) show some examples of tweets and the corresponding categories of analysis according to the methodological pre-test. Nonetheless, we only include some of the tweets as an example.

Table 24. Example one of the pre-test

ID Tweet 1	Name of the party	Barcelona en Comú @bcnencomu
	Digital Network	Twitter
	Date of publication	@bcnencomu
	Time of publication	25 de junio de 2014
	Language	Catalán



Macro issue	Autèntica democràcia metropolitana		
The message	Text	Yes	X
		No	
	Hashtag	Yes	X
		No	
	Video	Yes	
		No	X
	Image	Yes	
		No	X
	Link	Yes	
		No	X
Speech acts	Assertive act		
	Directive act		
	Commissive act		
	Expressive act		
	Declaration act		X
	Observations	Se considera un acto declarativo ya que el emisor pretende cambiar el estado de algo, en este caso de la política y la democracia.	
Participation/ Interaction	@	4	
	RT	27	
	Like	17	
	Digital	Information	

Feedback	Participation	Communication	X
		Deliberation	
		Enquiry/Decision making	
		Creative action	
	No		
	User-user	X	
	Political party		
	Political parties		
	Associations		
	Mass media		
Political actors	User/citizens	X	
	N replies	2	
	Kind of reply	Positive	
		Negative	X
		Neutral	
	Image	Yes	
		No	X
	Issue	Macro	
	Observations		
		Introduce un tema pero de poca relevancia. En primer lugar, el primer comentario mantiene relación con el tema propuesto por @bcnencomu en tono irónico, hace una crítica a lo que este quiere. En segundo lugar, introduce un micro tema en relación a una persona en concreto (@Arnaumb) y su relación con Bcn en Común y la Cup.	
USER/ CITIZEN 1 @Xescocesc	N replies	1	
	Kind of reply	Positive	
		Negative	
		Neutral	X
	Image	Yes	
		No	X
Issue	Macro		
Observations			
USER/ CITIZEN 2 @AntoniLlambrich	N replies	1	
	Kind of reply	Positive	
		Negative	
		Neutral	X
	Image	Yes	
		No	X
Issue	Macro		
Observations			
USER/ CITIZEN 3 @sadeu57	N replies	1	
	Kind of reply	Positive	
		Negative	
		Neutral	X
	Image	Yes	
		No	X
Issue	Macro		
Observations			
	Hace referencia al tema principal, a lo que “quiere” Bcn en Comú, pero introduciendo a un nuevo partido (Partido X) y comparándolo con él.		

Table 25. Example two of the pre-test

ID Tweet 35	Name of the party	Barcelona en Comú @bcnencomu
	Digital Network	Twitter
	Date of publication	26 de junio de 2014
	Time of publication	19:05
	Language	Catalán



Macro issue	Recogida de firmas para Guanyem		
The message	Text	Yes	X
		No	
	Hashtag	Yes	#GuanyemBarcelona
		No	
	Video	Yes	X
		No	
	Image	Yes	X
		No	
	Link	Yes	
		No	X
	Speech acts	Assertive act	
		Directive act	X
		Commissive act	
		Expressive act	
		Declaration act	
		Observations	
		No obliga pero invita a firmar.	
Participation/ Interaction	@		
	RT	12	
	Like	6	
	Digital participation	Information	
		Communication	X
	Deliberation		
	Enquiry/Decision making		

Feedback	No	Creative action	X
		X	
Political actors	User-user		
	Political party		
	Political parties		
	Associations		
	Mass media		
	User/citizens		

Table 26. Example three of the pre-test

ID Tweet 69	Name of the party	Barcelona en Comú @bcnencomu
	Digital Network	Twitter
	Date of publication	27 de junio de 2014
	Time of publication	21:52
	Language	Catalán



Barcelona en Comú @bcnencomu · 27 de jun.
Complex, sí, i també apassionant ;). Crònica de l'acte d'ahir per @qbadiamasoni
"tota una ciutat per guanyar" directa.cat/noticia/tota-u...

← ↻ 15 ★ 8 ...

Macro issue	Presentación de Guanyem en los medios		
The message	Text	Yes	X
		No	
	Hashtag	Yes	
		No	X
	Video	Yes	
		No	X
	Image	Yes	
		No	X
	Link	Yes	X /Externo
		No	
	Speech acts	Assertive act	
		Directive act	
		Commissive act	
Expressive act		X	
Declaration act			
Observations		"complejo y apasionante"	
Participation/ Interaction	@	1	
	RT	15	
	Like	8	
	Digital participation	Information	X
Communication			
Deliberation			

		Enquiry/Decision making	
		Creative action	
Feedback	No	X	
	User-user		
	Political party		
Political actors	Political parties		
	Associations		
	Mass media		
	User/citizens	X	
USER/ CITIZEN 1 @trineitor	N replies	1	
	Kind of reply	Positive	X
		Negative	
		Neutral	
	Image	Yes	
		No	X
	Issue	Macro	
	Observations		

6. 2. Pre-test Codification Guide

The coding datasheets for content analysis are structured in four parts: identification data, central or macro issue, analysis of the message and resources used and the study of participation and interaction.

1. Identification data: contains information on the name of the political party and the type of social network being analysed, the official profile or account of the party on the social network, the date and time of publication and, finally, the language used (Catalan or Spanish), as this aspect may be relevant when analysing an election campaign in municipal elections.

2. Macro issue: defines the theme proposed by the political party in the social network that constitutes the tweet or entry of departure. From it, a conversation can be generated through the participation of users/citizens that continues, or not, with the central theme. In cases where tweets contain, for example, textual quotations, the content of these citations will not be taken into account but the context in which it is developed. In other words, if a tweet contemplates in quotation marks a declaration that a politician made in the act of presentation of the political party, the subject will be the present, the real words that it introduces.

3. Analysis of the message and resources used: this section considers several characteristics that compose the message. We analyse the possibilities that social networks offer, such as, for example, accompanying the text with a video, an image, a link to a website -which can be internal, from its website, or external- as well as a hashtag (Twitter) or slogan (Facebook).

Besides, it contains the taxonomy of the illocutionary speech acts of John R. Searle (1991) explained in the methodology section of this paper. If the markers of

illocutionary force (verbs) belong to two or more forms of this classification, the choice made will be justified in the observations section.

4. Participation/interaction: this block contains what relates to our approach to the dimension of illocutionary acts that we have set out to analyse. As we have explained on several occasions, it is not intended to carry out an analysis of reception. Through the study of the possibilities that the selected social networks offer we analyse from a quantitative point of view the number of comments, times that information has been shared and like that they have been generated on Facebook from the entry proposed by *Guanyem*. In the same way, the mentions, *retweets* and favourites on Twitter are analysed.

-Information: within this category, we place the digital participation destined to the access to informative elements such as online documents, hyperlinks, communiqués, calls, audio-visual material, streaming, etc. through general or alternative portals, mailing lists or bulletins.

-Communication: lies in the exchange of questions, suggestions, demands, complaints and comments, among others, through email, social networks and communication spaces enabled on the websites.

-Deliberation: constituted by processes of examination, evaluation, reflection, debate and discussion of decisions on any socio-political issue through tools such as social networks, chats and forums.

-Enquiry/decision-making: this category includes all the groups, and public administrations can find out the opinions of citizens and their members and/or participate in decision-making through tools or consultative platforms such as polls, surveys, electronic voting.

-Creative action: collaborative actions from the digital environment that can later be translated into face-to-face expressions, for example, through free software.

It is necessary to qualify that although our analysis according to this classification would be limited by the use of social networks, we have set the purpose of the message according to each of the forms of participation rather than in the tool used, which is evident that for the case at hand will only be Twitter or Facebook. For example, if an entry in the social network Facebook -which according to this classification would be within the digital communication process- calls for participation in a survey through an attached link, it will be categorized as “enquiry or decision making”.

Thirdly, the feedback from the conversations generated is analysed. Thus, we find three modalities: the “no” category when there is no comment on the information disseminated or when there is only one comment that does not receive a response; “user-user” feedback in which it is the citizens/users themselves who respond to the comments; and “political party-user” feedback, when the political party intervenes in the conversation generated. In the cases in which members of the political party participate, they are categorised as a political party since they are part of its brand and respond in the name of the party and not in a personal capacity.

Finally, the type of political agent or agents that participate in the conversation is categorised according to whether they are political parties, associations -any other agent that is not a political party or a means of communication that may be a company-, media -also includes journalists-, opinion leaders and users/citizens.

During the execution of the pre-test of this work, we considered including the figure of opinion leader as a political agent. To do this, we look at definitions such as Elías Said-Hung and Carlos Arcila-Calderón (2011). According to these authors,

an opinion leader is characterized by generating contents that others consume, by creating trust and communicative links towards real and potential followers, has an active and permanent presence in the net and use diverse means of communication to emit certain opinions, theoretically, with criteria (Said-Hung and Arcila-Calderón, 2011). His research focuses on a sample of the "top 20" opinion leaders most seen in Colombia, Venezuela and Iran so their classification was not useful to us in some respects, since our potential opinion leaders could not be selected from tools such as *TwitterCounter* but determines their participation in the tuits and entries of *Barcelona in Comú*.

On the other hand, in the words of Luis Deltell, María Luz Congosto, Florencia Claes and José Miguel Osteso (2013) the opinion leaders on Twitter correspond to the three main components of the traditional agenda setting. That is political parties, media and citizens according to the classical conception of Maxwell Maxwell McCombs (1972) and James W. Dearing and Rogers (1996).

Taking into account this definition, we consider, definitively, the suppression of this subcategory since we find that this space is covered from the rest of aspects of the classification such as the subcategories of political parties, associations, media (and journalists) and citizens, all of them being opinion leaders.

As a subcategory within the participation/interaction block, a breakdown is included for each of the comments generated by users (citizens) to study some of the characteristics of the replies they produce. It considers the number of comments published by the same user within the conversation, the type of feedback depending on whether it is positive, negative or neutral, whether it includes or the comment is made through images and whether it proposes a new topic (micro issue) or continues with the one submitted by the political party (macro issue).