



From Twitter to Instagram: evolution in the use of social networks in political communication. The case of the elections of the autonomous community of Madrid 2021


De Twitter a Instagram: evolución en el uso de las redes sociales en la comunicación política. El caso de las elecciones de la comunidad autónoma de Madrid 2021

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Abstract

Political communication in social media is a vital element in any modern electoral campaign. In the early days, the use of any social network or even a website was the norm, however, nowadays, all candidates participating in an election must be present in Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. For this reason, the aim of this research is to analyze the impact of the main political leaders that ran for the presidency of the regional government of Madrid in these three major social media. To do so, a quantitative methodology, based in massive data collection is used, allowing for a precise approach to the impact of every candidate account in the studied social media platforms. As an initial conclusion, it can be highlighted that, even if Twitter is the preferred social media platform by politicians, Instagram is the one favorite by users.

Keywords: Political communication, social media, elections, Madrid, image.

Resumen

La comunicación política en las redes sociales es un elemento vital en cualquier campaña electoral moderna. En los primeros días, el uso de cualquier red social o incluso un sitio web era la norma, sin embargo, hoy en día, todos los candidatos que participan en una elección deben estar presentes en Facebook, Instagram y Twitter. Por ello, el objetivo de esta investigación es analizar el impacto de los principales líderes políticos que se postularon para la presidencia de la Comunidad de Madrid en estas tres grandes redes sociales. Para ello, se utiliza una metodología cuantitativa, basada en la recopilación masiva de datos, que permite una aproximación precisa al impacto de cada cuenta de candidato en las redes sociales estudiadas. Como primera conclusión, se puede destacar que, si bien Twitter es la red social preferida por los políticos, Instagram es la preferida por los usuarios.

Palabras clave: Comunicación política; redes sociales; elecciones; Madrid; imagen.

Introduction

The way in which society understood elections and, most relevantly at this point, voting day, has changed since the World Health Organisation granted pandemic status on 11 March 2020 to the spread of the Sars2-Covid virus19 (WHO, 2020). In Spain, as in the rest of the countries in the world, political activity continued its natural course, always determined by the scenario of restrictions linked to the increase in cases of the virus; in this sense, on 12 July 2020, barely four months after the declaration of the state of alarm by the Central Government (Royal Decree 463/2020, 14 March, 2020), the regional elections in Galicia and the Basque Country took place.

Subsequently, on 14 February 2021, the Catalan elections were held in the midst of great controversy, as the level of contagion, especially in the Catalan region, remained very high. This resulted in a record abstention rate, with voter turnout standing at 53.6 per cent, 25 points lower than in the last elections of the same type (El Periódico, 2021).

The Spanish political scene thus closed a cycle of elections in the period of state of alarm that was altered by the motion of censure presented by the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party and Ciudadanos against the Popular Party government in Murcia and led the president of the Autonomous Community of Madrid, Isabel Díaz Ayuso, on 10 March 2021, to bring forward the Madrid elections to 4 May of that year (El País, 2021). Given the mediatic nature of the Madrid president and the fact that the second vice-president of the government, Pablo Iglesias, left his post to lead the United Podemos party in these elections, the electoral period had an impact on society that had the opposite effect to what happened in Catalonia and boosted the turnout to 76%, the highest figure in a vote for the Autonomous Community of Madrid (El Mundo, 2021). As might be expected, given the evolution of the last elections (Bustos and Ruiz del Olmo, 2021), a parallel campaign was generated on social networks, sparking debate and positioning the candidates on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

Based on this, the purpose of this paper is to analyse the impact on social networks of the main candidates who ran in the elections for the autonomous community of Madrid that took place between 18 April and 2 May.

Political communication and new technologies

Political communication has been established as a tactical enclave where citizens and politics connect (Barandiarán Irastorza et al., 2020). Within this, two main aspects are contemplated: campaign communication and governmental or management communication, mainly differentiated by the duration, since the former can only be broadcast 30 days before the date of the elections and the latter is the one that corresponds to the one broadcast during the term of office (Anderson, 2015).

In this context, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are configured as one of the techniques used to communicate, understood within the different areas of political communication established by Ríscolo (2020).

Social Media in communication

An increasing number of studies in multiple areas of communication contemplate social networks (Sierra & Rodríguez-Virgili, 2020). These are established as an opportunity for brands to establish direct relationships with customers; since, due to advertising saturation, consumers increasingly seek to be served in a personalised way (Del Olmo & Fondevila Gascón, 2014). The latter may be the reason that may justify the success of social networks; without losing sight of another factor that may have favoured the use of social networks as a digital marketing tool in companies and that is that, nowadays, they are part of the daily activity of a large number of people (Kim & Ko, 2010).

Social networks have marked a stage and have been configured as communication tools thanks to advances in ICT, thus coexisting with traditional media (Campos Freire, 2008); in fact, thanks to the benefits they are bringing to companies in general, they are considered as another medium within the communication plan (Vazquez Brotto, 2015).

Currently, 85% of internet users between the ages of 16 and 70 use social networks. People between 25 and 40 years of age use them the most (35%), followed by those between 41 and 54 (33%). The social networks with the highest number of users are Facebook and Instagram (IAB Spain, 2021).

This growth in the use of social networks in society has not only influenced the use of these tools in business communication but has also had a significant impact on political communication and political marketing (Martínez Gutiérrez & Gómez Barriga, 2020).

The role of social media in political communication

Today's politics cannot be understood outside the social media landscape, because of what this entails (Luque Ortiz & Cano Alarcón, 2021), which is why the pairing of politics and social media is increasingly present in the scientific literature (Bustos Díaz et al., 2021; García Ortega & Zugasti Azagra, 2014), especially since Barack Obama's success in the 2008 presidential race for the White House (Castells, 2009). In fact, its role is fundamental in electoral campaigns, as it allows citizens to learn more about the candidates, their proposals and their post-campaign political activity (Camacho Villanueva, 2020).

In this sense, it is worth noting that social networks have established themselves as the main media for members of the millennial generation; however, this fact does not indicate that television and print media consumption have lost relevance (Lago-Vázquez et al., 2016). Along the same lines, the study by González-Oñate et al. (2020) shows that in the Spanish election campaigns in 2019, millennials used mobile phones and television as the main media; in fact, the use of both devices is usually simultaneous.

Among the factors that can influence the predisposition to use social networks in order to receive political information, not only is interest in the political context created by the campaign itself, but also political factors (sympathy and leadership) and socio-demographic factors, such as age and employment status (Pereira et al., 2020). On this issue, it is worth noting that voters of Unidas Podemos and Vox have a more digital profile compared to those of other parties such as Ciudadanos, Partido Popular or Partido Socialista Obrero Español, when it comes to gathering political information or even participating in it (Maneiro et al., 2020).

Social networks are not only configured as a tool for disseminating information that allows for a direct connection with citizens, but also for compiling it (Lozada, 2020).

Bidirectionality: the key to the digital communication model

The introduction of new technology tools has fostered the existence of a more direct relationship between companies and customers and between companies and employees (Gómez Nieto & Benito Vielba, 2014). In the same way that occurs from a corporate approach, where the success of social networks has been achieved thanks to the possibility of two-way communication (Selman, 2017) between companies, brands and customers, we can observe the importance of this type of communication in the field addressed; since social networks have been configured as a means of political communication where one of the fundamental points is the participatory system that is formed, where voters and political institutions can interact directly (Stieglitz, 2012). In fact, top-down, unidirectional and non-interactive political communication in social networks has begun to change (Fontenla-Pedreira et al., 2020). However, in this sense, there are several studies that indicate the presence of a prevalence towards vertical communication, i.e. top-down transmission of information and not so much horizontal, which would lead to a closer dialogue with citizens (Matassi & Boczkowski, 2020). For this reason, a real conversational model that starts from politicians to citizens and vice versa has not been established, since the latter, although it does take place, does not do so in an extraordinary way (Mancera Rueda & Pano Alamán, 2013).

Although the shift to a real two-way communication model is not entirely clear, it is worth noting "the virtual space provided by social networks allows for an open dialogue on controversial and interesting issues. Similarly, it provides users with a large amount of information that facilitates knowledge of the different proposals, as well as the likelihood of an informed vote" (Ferrándiz et al., 2011, p. 79). Likewise, another aspect that has favoured the inclusion of new technologies in political communication is the opportunity they provide in terms of instantaneousness (Ruiz del Olmo & Bustos Díaz, 2020).

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Content and digital media in political strategies: from Twitter to Facebook and Instagram

The use that can be made of social media content is very broad. While there are studies that deal with the impact of content that is more related to the personal life of candidates in a campaign, i.e. communication focused on the charisma of the candidate (Sánchez Murillo, 2015), there are other studies (Zugasti & Sabés, 2015) that show that, for example, Twitter, in the 2011 general elections, acted as a platform similar to a noticeboard, where both Mariano Rajoy, candidate of the Partido Popular, and Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba, candidate of the Partidos Socialistas Obrero Español, showed the different events that made up their respective campaigns. Within this context, it was detected that the more traditional parties tended to use Instagram to communicate their political functions, while parties closer to the present day used it for a more private, personal and human purpose (Selva-Ruiz & Caro-Castaño, 2017).

In the beginning, social networks generated rejection in the field of political communication, and this has been the case until now, since the benefits that they can have have been observed, especially if we focus on the use of Twitter as a new tool (Carral & Tuñón-Navarro, 2020). On this issue, in the work *Twitter and elections around the world: Campaigning in 140 Characters or Less*, the editors state that, at present, no serious candidate would go to elections without a profile on the microblogging social network (Davis et al., 2016).

Although this social network has been one of the most used in the political and journalistic sphere (Rodríguez Andrés & Ureña Uceda, 2011), as well as one of the most analysed (Lee & Shin, 2012), Facebook and Instagram can also be considered as relevant media in political communication, since "the political impact of social networks depends on the ability to generate response: successful communication, in this sense, is capable of encouraging the activation of voters" (Barredo Ibáñez et al., 2015, p. 151). While it is true that, for example, in the case of the Spanish government's communication during the Covid-19 administration, Twitter was the one that collected the greatest number of publications, this does not indicate that Facebook was not also one of the most used on its part. In short, each social network maintained its differences according to its nature, level of intensity, content and other formal aspects (Castillo-Esparcia et al., 2020). Facebook can be configured as a powerful tool to promote voting; in fact, in a study applied in Greece (Lappas et al., 2014) the results showed that those candidates who used Facebook in their communication plan were more likely to win the elections than those who did not use it. The campaign that is considered to be the first to contemplate Facebook in a truly strategic way was Obama's in 2008; he used this social media to remind supporters to send reminders for an event (Williams & Gulati, 2008).

Furthermore, along the lines of the connection between the use of social networks and success at the polls, studies such as that of Percastre-Mendizábal (2021), applied to the Mexico City elections in 2015, propose the possibility of a relationship between both factors, where the use of these tools is directly proportional to the number of favourable votes.

In the same way, Instagram is becoming a social network to be considered by political parties. In fact, an increasing number of studies point to the importance of this social network in electoral campaigns (Tirado-García & Doménech-Fabregat, 2021; Názar et al, 2019; Quevedo-Redondo & Portalés-Oliva, 2017). In this context, parties with a closer relationship with the "new politics" have a greater approach to this social network, compared to parties belonging to the "old politics" (Selva-Ruiz & Caro-Castaño, 2017).

Methodology

To carry out this analysis, a quantitative methodology is used in order to explore the facts as objectively as possible. In this way, it is possible to point out those characteristics that they have in common with other similar events, their origins and their consequences (Ruiz Olabuénaga, 2012). The extraction of the necessary data from each of the candidates' social network accounts was carried out using the FanPage Karma software. Previous research, such as that of Caballero-Escusol et al. (2021) and Bustos Díaz and Ruiz del Olmo (2021), has already proven the effectiveness of this tool in the collection of data from public profiles on social networks of brands and companies, public figures, influencers and politicians, among others.

Units of analysis

As mentioned above, this study analyses the presence of the candidates running in the 2021 Madrid elections on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The study period is determined by the official campaign period, which runs from 18 April to 2 May, leaving out of the sample the days of 3 May, corresponding to the day of reflection, and 4 May, the day of the vote. The profiles selected for analysis are shown below:

Table 1: Description units of analysis.

Candidate	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram
Ángel Gabilondo	@angelgabilondo2021	@equipoGabilondo	@a.gabilondo
Edmundo Bal	@Baledmundo	@BalEdmundo	@BalEdmundo
Isabel Díaz Ayuso	@idiazayuso	@IdiazAyuso	@isabeldiazayuso
Mónica García	@monicagarciag.medica	@MonicaGarciaG	@monicagarciag
Pablo Iglesias	@iglesiasturriompablo	@PabloIglesias	@iglesiasturriompablo
Rocío Monasterios	@rociomonasteriosvox	@monasterioR	@rociomonasteriosvox

Source: Own elaboration

The only limitation during the data collection period was Edmundo Bal's Instagram profile. The tool used for data collection, FanPage Karma, has certain limitations and if the profiles studied have some kind of restriction in their configuration, the tool cannot obtain their data, which is what happened in this case.

However, despite the lack of this specific profile, the study sample contains the rest of the candidates who ran in the elections for the Autonomous Community of Madrid, so we understand that this limitation does not hinder the rest of the study.

Variables

Table 1 below shows all the variables used in the study of the social network strategy of the different profiles analysed and their description. As can be seen, those variables that are common to both social networks taken as a reference are grouped together; but, subsequently, other variables specific to each of them are taken into account.

Table 2: Description of the study variables; Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Common variables in Facebook, Twitter e Instagram	Description of the variable	Variable not common Facebook and Instagram	Description of the variable
		Facebook	
Interaction with publications	Average number of interactions per post on a day's publications in relation to the number of fans on the same day in the selected period.	Images	Publications that are image-based in nature. They may have an associated text
Frequency of publication	The average number of posts published per day in the selected period.	Videos	Publications that are video in nature. May have associated text
Compromise	The average number of interactions on a profile's posts per follower per day.	State	Publications of a short text-based nature. May have associated multimedia elements
		Instagram	
Growth	Difference between the number of fans on the first and last day of the selected period	Images	Publications that are image-based in nature. They may have an associated text
Total number of comments, reactions and shares	Number of comments and reactions (depends on each network) from users posted in the selected period to which the page reacted	Videos	Publications that are video in nature. May have associated text
Fans	Number of users who on the last day of the selected period like the page	Carrousel	Set of images published in the same post
		Twitter	
		Only Text	The tweet only contains text

		Link + Image	An image accompanied by a hyperlink
		Enlace	The publication is generated through the use of a hyperlink.
		Image	Publications that are image-based in nature. They may have an associated text

Source: Own elaboration

Procedure

Once the variables and subjects of study have been defined, in this case the profiles of the main candidates for the presidency of the autonomous community of Madrid on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, we proceed to the temporal delimitation. As already described, in this case it responds to the electoral period that took place between 18 April and 2 May 2021, leaving out of the study the day of reflection and voting day.

With this information, the Fanpage Karma tool processes the data and generates data reports for each of the study subjects, limited by time and social network. Based on the data obtained, we perform an information dump and proceed to its processing and analysis to shape the results.

Results/ Results discussion

As described in previous sections, one of the most interesting aspects of this work is that the elections are addressed in the three most active social networks in Spain: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. For this reason, the results will be presented in three blocks corresponding to the analysis of each of these social networks.

Impact of the Madrid regional elections on Facebook

Mark Zuckerberg's social network continues to be one of the pillars of current political communication. In fact, the data shown in Table 3 reflects this, and despite the increase in the use of Instagram, the average number of posts made during the Madrid election campaign was 45, compared to 28 on Instagram. But beyond the general data, the specific data for each of the candidates offer different ways of managing social networks and, in particular, Facebook.

Table 3: Common variable results on Facebook

Candidate	Frequency of post	Compromise	Total number of comments and reactions	Number of posts	Growth	Interaction with posts
Ángel Gabilondo	12	11%	15k	41	11%	11%
Edmundo Bal	6,5	8%	16k	36	0%	8%

Isabel Díaz Ayuso	4,7	11%	260k	34	5,4%	11%
Mónica García	9,1	7,5%	56k	31	0%	7,5%
Pablo Iglesias	11	7%	832k	77	0,25%	1,4%
Rocío Monasterios	13	4,7%	155k	48	4%	7,2%

Source: Own elaboration

Firstly, with regard to the frequency of publication, it can be seen that Rocío Monasterios, with 13 publications, was the most active candidate on this social network, followed by Ángel Gabilondo with 12 publications per day. This fact is striking and, by way of an initial conclusion, it can be highlighted that the profiles with the highest frequency of publication, the case of Rocío Monasterios and Ángel Gabilondo, are the only ones that include other impersonal elements in addition to the name (the name of the party or the year of the elections) in the name of their page, as can be seen in Table 1.

The rest of the candidates belonging to left-wing parties have maintained a higher average daily publication rate than those on the right, as is the case of Pablo Iglesias and Mónica García with 11 and 9.1 daily publications respectively. In the case of candidates from right-wing parties, the rate of publication was lower, with 6.5 daily publications in the case of Edmundo Bal and 4.7 in the case of Isabel Díaz Ayuso's profile, the latter being the candidate with the lowest frequency of publication on this social network.

Engagement emerges as a striking variable. As can be seen, with the exception of Ángel Gabilondo, in the rest of the cases, those candidates who have a lower frequency of publication are those who have a higher engagement; that is, the average number of interactions in the publications of a profile per follower per day, as occurs in the case of Edmundo Bal and Isabel Díaz Ayuso, who for a frequency of publication of 6.5 and 4.7 have an engagement of 8% and 11% respectively.

On this basis, the interaction with the publications, i.e. the average number of interactions per post in the publications of a day in relation to the number of fans of the same day in the selected period, follows the same pattern of behaviour as engagement, with the case of Pablo Iglesias being of particular interest, going from an engagement of 7% to an interaction of 1.4%.

Typology of post in Facebook

In methodology, two large groups of variables were defined, those common to all social networks and those specific to each network. In addition to this distinction, this second group of variables refers to the type of post used by each of the candidates. In the case of Facebook, the first data that stands out is that the status type is in disuse; in fact, during the entire electoral period analysed, only one post of this type was published by Pablo Iglesias; the rest of the political profiles did not publish any post of this type.

Table 4: Typology of posts on Facebook

Candidate	Images	Links	Videos	Estado
Ángel Gabilondo	28	2	11	0
Edmundo Bal	7	4	25	0
Isabel Díaz Ayuso	22	5	7	0
Mónica García	3	2	26	0
Pablo Iglesias	3	1	72	1
Rocío Monasterios	18	8	22	0

Source: Own elaboration

On the other hand, we can observe in Table 4 that images, both static and video, are gaining more and more space over other formats. In this regard, although the status format has fallen into disuse, there are hardly any links, being an almost residual type of publication in proportion to the image and video as shown in Table 4. In this regard, it should be added that Facebook's algorithm penalises in terms of dissemination those publications that contain links that go outside the social network itself, so this could be one of the reasons why they are being used less and less.

Finally, it has been observed that, despite a tendency towards the excessive use of images, video, for its part, is gaining more and more space within the type of publications chosen for the publication of posts on Facebook. In fact, Pablo Iglesias, Mónica García, Edmundo Bal and Rocío Monasterios have published 72, 26, 25 and 22 videos respectively, compared to 3, 3, 7 and 18 still images. Therefore, 80% of the candidates running in the elections for the Autonomous Community of Madrid prefer the use of video over images.

Impact of the Madrid regional elections on Instagram

Among the main social networks, Instagram has become one of the fastest growing, both in general terms and among young people (Iab.Spain, 2020). It would be expected, therefore, that the management of the accounts of the official profiles of the candidates for the autonomous community of Madrid would make a special effort to publish on this social network. However, it can be seen in Table 5 that the frequency of publication is much lower than in the case of Facebook.

Table 5: Common variable results on Instagram

Candidate	Frequency of post	Compromise	Total number of comments and reactions	Number of posts	Growth	Interaction with the posts
Ángel Gabilondo	3,3	21%	15k	49	3,4%	6,3%
Edmundo Bal	-	-	-	-	-	-
Isabel Díaz Ayuso	0,7	11%	260k	11	4,1%	15%
Mónica García	1,4	15%	56k	21	0%	10%
Pablo Iglesias	1,9	7,4%	832k	29	0,65%	3,8%
Rocío Monasterios	2,1	18%	155k	31	0%	8,7%

Source: Own elaboration

In figures, the average number of daily posts on Facebook was 8.2 compared to 1.4 average posts on Instagram during the campaign. As an early conclusion, it can be assumed that Instagram posts seek a more elaborate aesthetic value than Facebook, which in many cases make use of newspaper posts, etc. The fact that they have to produce a higher quality product may be linked to this lower use by politicians of Instagram, compared to Facebook.

However, another striking statistic is found in the total number of comments and reactions, as we can see that, with a lower number of posts compared to Facebook, a very similar impact is achieved in terms of likes and comments.

Finally, and this is a fact that remains constant on Facebook and Instagram, engagement and interaction with publications remains at very low percentages, with Ángel Gabilondo being the most engaged on this social network, with 21%, and Isabel Díaz Ayuso the one with the highest interaction, with 15% in this field. This final fact is interesting, as the Partido Popular candidate is the one who has the most interaction with her audience on Instagram, but also on Facebook.

Typology of post on Instagram

As is well known, Instagram is a social network based on images. The first thing that can be highlighted, unlike Facebook, is that the Carousel publication typology, which is typical of Instagram, like the Facebook status, maintains a regular use. That is, all the candidates make use of this function of the social network, even in the case of Mónica García and Pablo Iglesias, there are more publications of this type, 8 and 14 respectively, than still images, with 4 each.

Table 6: Typology of posts on Instagram

Candidate	Images	Carrousel	Videos
Ángel Gabilondo	27	11	11
Edmundo Bal	-	-	-
Isabel Díaz Ayuso	6	5	0
Mónica García	4	8	9
Pablo Iglesias	4	14	11
Rocío Monasterios	12	10	9

Source: Own elaboration

Similarly, Table 6 shows a trend that has also been observed in the case of Facebook, namely the increase in the number of video posts to the detriment of images. In this case, Mónica García and Pablo Iglesias have shared more videos, 9 and 11 respectively, than images on their official Instagram profiles. The case of Isabel Díaz Ayuso stands out in a very particular way, as the level of publication of both images and carousels is very low and, during the campaign, she has not posted any videos on this social network.

Finally, Ángel Gabilondo was the most active profile on this social network with 49 publications, of which 27 were images, 11 carousels and 11 videos. Rocío Monasterio was the candidate with the most balance in managing her profile, posting 12 images, 10 carousels and 9 videos.

The Impact of the elections on the autonomous community of Madrid on Twitter

As can be seen in Table 7, the so-called left-wing candidates (with the exception of Rocío Monasterios) are the ones who have published the most posts during the campaign, but this does not imply that communication is bidirectional; in fact, the candidates with the most posts are the ones who show the least interaction with Twitter users (with the exception of Mónica García).

In terms of engagement, two profiles stand out. On the one hand, Pablo Iglesias has the lowest engagement index, i.e. the lowest average number of interactions in the publications of a profile per follower per day, compared to Mónica García, who has generated the most engagement. On the other hand, it is interesting to see that the candidates defined as economic liberals or centre-right, i.e. Edmundo Bal and Isabel Díaz Ayuso, are the ones with the lowest publication frequency. Finally, it is worth highlighting the profile of Rocío Monasterios, as she is the most active candidate on the social network Twitter.

Table 7: Common variable results on Twitter

Candidate	Frequency of post	Compromise	Total number of comments and reactions	Number of Posts	Growth	Interaction with the posts
Ángel Gabilondo	12	11%	101K	179	3,2%	0,94%
Edmundo Bal	6,5	11%	77K	97	2,7%	1,7%
Isabel Díaz Ayuso	4,7	9%	669K	71	1,5%	1,9%
Mónica García	9,1	17%	266K	136	8,7%	1,9%
Pablo Iglesias	11	2,2%	873K	162	0,12%	0,20%
Rocío Monasterios	13	8%	304K	197	2,3%	0,64%

Source: Own elaboration

Once again, as in the case of Facebook and Instagram, Isabel Díaz Ayuso is, together with Mónica García in this case, among the candidates who have the most interaction with their followers. On the other hand, the data extracted from Table 7 show that Twitter continues to be the social network preferred by politicians for the management of electoral communication, with an average of 123.5 publications made during the campaign, compared to 40.6 on Facebook and 22.1 on Instagram.

Finally, the candidates who generate the most reactions are, once again, Pablo Iglesias and Isabel Díaz Ayuso. As in the previous case, the impact is very similar to that of Instagram and Facebook, where a much lower number of posts are published compared to Twitter.

Typology of post on Twitter

Unlike Facebook and Instagram, Twitter has a wider range of publications. In this regard, we highlight the tweets that are entirely text-based, which are typical of this social network, together with those that contain an image plus a link. As can be seen, the theory described by Ruiz del Olmo and Bustos Díaz (2016) that images would become the vehicle for political communication on Twitter is confirmed.

Table 8: Typology of post on Twitter

Candidate	Images	Links	Links + Image	Text
Ángel Gabilondo	82	10	24	63
Edmundo Bal	34	29	5	29
Isabel Díaz Ayuso	44	12	1	14

Mónica García	58	29	11	38
Pablo Iglesias	70	18	28	46
Rocío Monasterios	48	39	0	110

Source: Own elaboration

As can be seen in Table 8, with the exception of the candidate Rocío Monasterios, the rest of the official Twitter profiles have published more images than text, as in the case of Ángel Gabilondo, with 82 images compared to 63 text-only tweets; Edmundo Bal, with 34 images and 29 text tweets; Isabel Díaz Ayuso, with 44 images and 14 text tweets; Mónica García with 58 images and 38 text tweets; and Pablo Iglesias, with 46 text tweets compared to 70 images.

In the case of Twitter, given the way this social network works, it is natural that there are a large number of posts where only text is used, as debate and discussions on this network are very frequent.

Discussion

As has been established, the purpose of this paper is to analyse the impact on social networks of the main candidates who ran in the elections for the autonomous community of Madrid that took place between 18 April and 2 May. On this basis, the following aspects should be highlighted. Firstly, although Twitter is the social network preferred by politicians, Instagram is the users' favourite. This idea is based on the results presented, as indicated in the previous section, and it is easy to see how there is greater use of politicians' profiles on Twitter than on the other social networks. However, the average impact, in terms of reactions among users, is greater on Instagram than on the rest, even though it is the social network with the lowest number of publications during the campaign.

The pre-established idea that the image was the driving vehicle for political communication on Twitter (Ruiz del Olmo and Bustos Díaz, 2016) is confirmed in this social network. It is clear that on Instagram, a social network based on images, their use is a basic requirement when creating any publication; however, it is worth noting that both in this case and on Facebook, the use of videos has increased significantly to the detriment of images.

Conclusion

Political communication on social media, especially at campaign time, is becoming more and more accentuated, as this study shows. However, there are some facts that could be considered for future campaigns. Firstly, in some social networks, such as Twitter, there is an excess of publications that in no case translates into greater success or impact on the networks. It should be noted at this point that the candidate's political communication on social networks could be approached from a more personal point of view and with added value, leaving the publications of events and announcements to the party's profile.

Some candidates, such as Ángel Gabilondo, directly state that it is a profile managed by his team and not by him. This kind of question should be avoided, as it depersonalises the profile. On the other hand, in the case of Rocío Monasterio, it should be noted that she is the only candidate who includes her party in her name @rociomonasteriosvox. As in the case of Gabilondo, this is perceived as a mistake, since it looks like a party account and not a personal one, which is what it is all about.

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