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**Politicized celebrities against far-right on Twitter. Political preferences and activity of users retweeting Rosalía's anti Vox tweet after the 2019 general elections in Spain**

***Celebridades politizadas contra la extrema derecha en Twitter. Las preferencias políticas y la actividad de los usuarios al retuitear el tuit de Rosalía contra Vox después de las elecciones generales de 2019 en España***

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**Abstract**

Celebrities use social networks to interact with and to mobilize their audiences (Zilinsky, Vaccari, Nagler & Tucker, 2019). Politicized celebrities may assume the role of leaders to counter politicians' monopoly of political representation and to bring social awareness to specific causes (Street, 2004; Wheeler, 2013). This paper analyzes the impact of politicized celebrities in Twitter among politicized and non-politicized audiences. We focus on the case of the Catalan singer Rosalía, who published a short explicit tweet against the Spanish far-right populist party Vox with the text 'Fuck vox' the day after the Spanish general elections in November 2019. We measure the political preferences and activity of Rosalía's followers, Fuck vox post's retweeters, and users who retweeted the singer before and after the tweet. The results show that Rosalía had a great impact among left-wing and Catalan separatist parties, and among those users with no political preferences or political activity. In addition, we found that Rosalía's followers were less likely to be politically active (Loader, Vromen & Xenos, 2016). This study sheds light on the potential of politicized celebrities to mobilize their non-politicized audiences to counter far-right movements in social networks.

**Keywords**

Celebrity politics; Twitter; far-right; Vox; Spain; general elections

**Resumen**

Las celebridades utilizan las redes sociales para interaccionar y movilizar a sus audiencias (Zilinsky, Vaccari, Nagler & Tucker, 2019). Las celebridades politizadas pueden asumir rol de líderes con el objetivo de confrontar el monopolio de los políticos e incrementar la notoriedad de causas específicas (Street, 2004; Wheeler, 2013). El objetivo de este artículo es analizar el impacto de las celebridades políticas en Twitter entre audiencias politizadas y no politizadas. Nos enfocamos en el caso de la cantante Rosalía, quien publicó un breve tuit contra Vox con el texto "Fuck Vox", tras las elecciones generales de noviembre de 2019. Medimos preferencias políticas y actividad de los seguidores de Rosalía, los retuiteadores del post tuit y los usuarios que habían retuiteado a la cantante antes del tuit y después. Los resultados muestran que Rosalía tuvo un gran impacto entre partidos de izquierda y separatistas, y entre usuarios sin preferencias políticas o actividad política. También encontramos que los seguidores de Rosalía tenían menos probabilidad de ser activos políticamente (Loader, Vromen & Xenos, 2016). Esta investigación arroja luz sobre el potencial impacto de las celebridades políticas para movilizar sus audiencias no politizadas y contraponer a la extrema derecha en las redes sociales.

**Palabras clave**

Celebridades políticas; Twitter; extrema derecha; Vox; España; elecciones generales

## 1. Introducción

Nowadays, celebrities play a key role in the public and political agendas of democratic societies and have become fundamental actors in the process of generating interest in politics among audiences of young voters (Coudry & Markham, 2007; Loader, Vromen & Xenos, 2016). One of the ways of interaction between celebrities and their audiences is social networks (Wheeler, 2018). Through them, politicized celebrities show their ideological tendency and support or criticize politicians and parties. It is considered that this support or criticism can have a great impact on the political attitudes and behaviours of her followers (Zilinsky et al., 2019). The political role played by celebrities in social networks has coincided in many countries with the rise of populism (Engesser, Fawzi & Larsson, 2017; Alonso-Muñoz & Casero-Ripollés, 2018) and the far right, which have turned these platforms into the main means for spreading their messages. For some authors, the celebritization of politics and the populist boom are two sides of the same coin, both fostered by access to digital technologies and the disintermediation of the communication process (Kornhauser, 1959; Mazzoleni, 2007; Guerrero-Solé, Suárez-Gonzalo, Rovira & Codina).

In recent years, Spain has witnessed a sharp rise in the support to populist far-right parties. Vox, a party that was born as a split from the Popular Party (PP) and that welcomes a large part of the extreme right political movements and Francoist ideology, has gone from being a residual actor to becoming the third political force in the country, with 52 deputies in the Spanish Congress. This triumph of the Spanish radical right was received with concern and anger by a considerable part of Spanish society (Waisbord, 2018). One day after the elections on November 10, 2019 that confirmed the consolidation of Vox, Rosalía, one of the Spanish singers with the greatest international projection, published a tweet with a text as laconic, as explicit: Fuck vox. The message had a huge impact on the network, with more than 90 thousand retweets and more than 200 thousand likes.

This article aims to analyse the political preferences and activity of users who endorsed politicized Rosalía's post with a retweet, and its impact on politicized and non-politicized audiences.

## 2. Politicized celebrities

Celebrities have been traditionally used for marketing strategies (Erdogan, 1999), but also their involvement in politics has a long tradition (Partzsch, 2015). Celebrities who are politically involved, and whose aim is to use their fame to endorse candidates or propagate ideology (Wheeler, 2013), are what Street (2004; 2012) calls politicized celebrities or CP2. For Street (2004), usually politicized celebrities legitimately represent the people and the popular views, because they are in touch with people's sentiments, they establish intimate relationships and create affective bonds with their followers (Partzsch, 2015). Consequently, celebrities usually assume the role of leaders, in particular when the states, politicians and political parties monopolize the forms of political representation. These celebrities, mainly cinema stars, musicians and artists, in general, have been involved in politics in the US since the 1960s, being associated with protest and pacifist movements, although it is possible to find traces of their involvement in earlier times (Wheeler, 2013). They have also played an important role on politics around the world (Pease & Brewer, 2008). They are said to have the ability to "spotlight" issues, to build the media agenda and to persuade audiences (Atkinson & DeWitt, 2018; Mark, 2018).

Celebrities are considered to have an effect on people's attitudes and voting behavior (Wheeler, 2018). In general, people's agreement with political statements increases if these statements are endorsed by celebrities (Jackson & Darrow, 2005); as a consequence, the endorsements by politicized celebrities have become a commonplace in many countries, being it a sign of the blurring of the lines between politics and entertainment (Jackson, 2009; Hung, 2014; Wheeler, 2018). In particular, politicized celebrities have been extensively used in Great Britain and the US. Endorsements received by Obama from popular film stars and singers (Wheeler, 2013) is a perfect example of this use. In this line, Garthwaite and Moore (2013), found that Oprah Winfrey's endorsement of Barack Obama during the 2008 Democratic presidential primary had significant effects on Obama's selection as the party nominee.

The capacity of politicized celebrities to engage non-followers, especially those with no prior political engagement, is uncertain. Erdogan (1999) identified the moderating factors of celebrities' influence on people; among them, attractiveness, credibility, target receiver characteristics, and personality and values attached to celebrities. In this vein, Jackson (2008) found that young people are significantly influenced by celebrities' endorsements, in particular when these endorsements are credible and match celebrities' identity. For Markham, an established fear or a predisposition towards supporting a certain cause are also necessary conditions for celebrities' endorsements to have an effect on audiences (Markham, 2015). Veer, Becirovic and Martin (2010) also concluded that British young adults are more likely to vote for a political party when a celebrity endorses the party, in particular if young adults are apathetic and poorly informed.

As a general norm, then, celebrity endorsements have a positive impact on young people's willingness to engage with politics (Austin, van de Vord, Pinkleton & Epstein, 2008). Celebrity political activity can

influence citizens' views of political parties, as well as celebrity political activity can have an impact on people's attitudes towards politically active celebrities (Nownes, 2012). A very recent piece of research by Zilinsky et al. (2019) found that celebrities can promote the engagement of the less politically involved, this is, celebrities can have a mediating role in a two-step flow of communication between politics and people with no political involvement.

These endorsements are, in general, done in electoral campaigns (Zilinsky et al., 2019), being nowadays social media the tribune from where celebrities usually transmit their politicized messages (Wheeler, 2013) and where citizens consume celebrities' political appeals (Nisbett & DeWalt, 2016). In particular, because the endorsement of politicized celebrities in social media is a means to convey political messages to millions of these young, uninvolved and non-politicized audiences (Markham, 2015; Loader, Vromen & Xenos, 2016; Wheeler, 2018).

### **3. Twitter and politics**

Social media have become influential digital platforms for political communication (Gibson, Cantijoch & Ward, 2010; Guerrero-Solé, 2018; Blasco-Duatis & Coenders, 2020). Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, among others, are nowadays means for politicians to publish and share their messages (López-López & Vázquez-González, 2018), as well as to interact with citizens without the mediation of media outlets. In particular, politicians have adopted Twitter as one of the main tools for effectively interact in real-time with their audiences (Vergeer & Hermans, 2013; Graham, Jackson & Broersma, 2014), and citizens have also adopted the microblogging platform as a way for them to express their political attitudes and preferences (Amaral, Zamora, Grandío & Noguera, 2016; Hosch-Dayican, Amrit, Aarts & Dassen, 2016; Said-Hung, Prati & Cancino-Borbón, 2017; Cifuentes & Pino, 2018). Since social networks interactions are considered to follow a filter bubble logic (Pariser, 2012) and can thus be easily used to reveal users' preferences, a considerable part of the research in Twitter has been focused on the uncovering of latent attributes of the users, in particular their political preferences (Guerrero-Solé, Corominas-Murtra & López-González, 2014; Fang, Habel, Ounis & MacDonald, 2019), or their political activity online (Bruns & Highfield, 2013; Gelado-Marcos, Rubira-García, & Navío-Navarro, 2019).

Retweeting, which means spreading a certain message across the timelines of one's community of followers, has been one of the most analysed interactions in Twitter. Despite there has been a controversy around the interpretation of the retweet (boyd, Golder & Lotan, 2010; Hemphill, Otterbacher & Shapiro, 2013; González-Bailón, Borge-Holthoefer & Moreno, 2014), most of the studies show that when it comes to political discussions, retweeting can be understood as a form of political endorsement (Conover, Ratkiewicz, Francisco, Gonçalves, Flammini & Menczer, 2011; Williams, McMurray, Kurz & Hugo Lambert, 2015; Amaral et al., 2016; Guerrero-Solé, 2017; Guerrero-Solé & López-González, 2019).

Considering the aforementioned research on the impact of politicized celebrities on audiences, and the role played by social media in spreading their political messages, this paper aims to analyse the impact of Rosalia's tweet-condemnation of the Spanish far-right populist party Vox a day after the general elections in November 2019. We also aim to analyse the political preferences and online participation of Rosalia's retweeters, and compare them with those retweeting Rosalia before and after the episode, and with the whole community of Rosalia's followers. We also compare these two variables with those of the users endorsing Vox's response to the singer.

Thus, our research questions are as follows:

RQ1. What was the previous political involvement of the users endorsing Rosalia's Fuck vox tweet?

RQ1.1. Were Rosalia's Fuck vox's retweeters politically different from those (1) following Rosalia, (2) previously retweeting Rosalia, (3) later retweeting Rosalia?

### **4. Spanish political context: the rise of far-right populism**

On November 10, 2019, after the second snap general elections in a row that year in Spain, the far-right populist party Vox obtained 52 seats in the Spanish Congress of Deputies, becoming the third political force in the country. Vox had more than doubled the number of deputies compared to the elections six months ago, when it first entered to the congress. Vox followed the path of other right and populist parties, that had been flourishing all over the Western world in the last decades, in particular in Austria, France, Italy and later in Hungary, UK, Poland and others. Like other European populist extreme right-wing parties, Vox is an anti-immigrant and anti-elite party, that opposes to abortion, gender equality, same-sex marriage or gender violence protection (Turnbull-Dugarte, 2019).

Traditionally, Spain had been a two-party system, with two major political parties, right-winged Popular Party (PP) and left-winged Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) having won the elections from the early 1980s to the late 2010s. However, the financial crisis that started in 2008 dramatically changed

the political map of Spain, with two new parties, Citizens (Cs) and We Can (now United We Can, UP) winning a sensitive part of the voting share (see Table 1). At the same time, nationalist and separatist parties have reinforced their position in the Congress and challenged the Spanish political status quo. In particular the Catalan parties Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC), Together for Catalonia (JxCAT) and the Popular Unity Candidacy (CUP), and the Basque parties Basque National Party (PNV) and the Basque Country Unite (EH Bildu). However, in spite of the financial crisis, until 2019 any far-right populist party had any presence in the Spanish Congress. However, the elections in 2019 changed the situation in Spain, that follow a trend that had been spread all over Europe. Vox had become the third political force in Spain.

**Tabla 1: Results of the last two general elections in 2019 in Spain**

Party	November 2019	April 2019
PSOE	120	123
PP	89	66
Vox	52	24
UP	35	42
ERC	13	15
Cs	10	57
JxCAT	8	7
PNV	6	6
EH-B	5	4
CUP	2	-
Other	10	6

Source: Gobierno de España (Ministerio del Interior)

In its Founding Manifesto<sup>1</sup>, Vox defines itself as the voice of the alive Spain, the party of the common sense, and the guarantor of the indissoluble unity of the Spanish Nation. In consonance with its populist nature, Vox denounces the degradation of the constitutional State, the discredit of politics and politicians, and the corruption of the Spanish political system that puts the Government at the mercy of forces whose explicit purpose is to liquidate national unity. Vox considers that the Spanish State is going through a deep crisis of a systemic nature that not only affects its unity, but also its economy, its institutions and its collective morality. Vox states that this situation requires taking measures in order to remedy such a situation, a reaction from civil society to strengthen Spanish political structure, and to renew and strengthen the Spanish democracy. Vox considers politicians as a small elite of party leaders handling the State at their discretion, and media as a means to impose the political elite's beliefs on society. Finally, Vox defines itself as the party that does not need to look at surveys or read a newspaper to know what the fashion discourse is; its discourse stems from convictions, and is the discourse of the free and brave Spain.

Vox first electoral success in Spain was in the regional elections in the autonomous region of Andalusia (Turnbull-Dugarte, 2019) in which the extreme right-wing party obtained 11% of the votes and 12 seats in the Andalusian parliament. Turnbull-Dugarte (2019) examined the factors that explained Andalusian voters support for Vox, finding that the Catalan conflict was the main reason why they voted for the extreme right. The more willing were voters to reduce Catalan political autonomy, the more they supported Vox. As reported by Turnbull-Dugarte (2019), Vox has carried out a grassroots-based strategy in social media and has expanded its support without the intermediation of traditional media.

The consolidation of Vox as a mainstream, not marginal, party in Spain was interpreted by a great part of the Spanish society as a threat and a shame for democratic values (Waisbord, 2018). After forty years of democracy, those who represented the ideology of Francoism were finally back. This fact provoked the angry reaction of people who also considered that the repetition of the elections had been unnecessary and that it mainly served for a huge boost of the far-right (El País, 2019).

### 5. Rosalia and celebrities' response to far-right success

The Catalan singer Rosalia was among those who fiercely reacted to Vox success, and the day after the elections she published a post in Twitter that become viral. Rosalia and Vox represent two opposing faces of Spain. On the one side, Rosalia is Catalan and shows her catalanity there where she goes, sings in English, Spanish or Catalan, shows herself as an open-minded singer, and sings a fusion of flamenco (Mejia, 2019), "a gutsy, rule-defying renegade whose latest album, *El Mal Querer* (The Bad Love), smashes flamenco apart without losing sight of its spirit" (Lopez, 2018). Her post, without any image or video, was laconic and straightforward: Fuck vox (see Figure 1). The tweet was liked by almost 280 thousand users and retweeted by more than 90 thousand during the two following days (Rosalia's Twitter account has around 750 hundred followers).

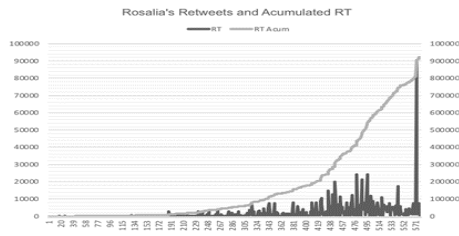
Figure 1. Rosalia's tweet one day after the Spanish General Elections in November 10, 2019



Source: Own

To better understand the impact of Rosalia's tweet, we collected the number of retweets received by Rosalia in the last 3,200 tweets she published from February 2017 to November, 2019 (dataset [ROS-T]). As seen in Figure 2, the total number of retweets was about 900 thousand, being the Fuck vox tweet the most endorsed message posted by Rosalia ever since, with more than 90 thousand retweets. Consequently, more than a tenth of the retweets to Rosalia in the last three years were retweets to the Fuck vox post.

Figure 2. Number of retweets received by Rosalia's tweets in the last 3 years



Source: Own

The day after, Vox (350 thousand followers) replied to Rosalia's tweet with a post that contained an image of Rosalia on a private jet flying to Las Vegas (the one the singer published before the Fuck vox one), accompanied by the following text: Only millionaires, with private jets like you, can afford not to have a homeland (Figure 3). The message paraphrased a well-known sentence of Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, a politician, writer and journalist, who in the 1930s was a pioneer in the introduction of Fascism in the country, and executed in 1936.

Figure 3. Vox's reply to Rosalia's tweet



Source: Own

## 6. Method

To answer to the research questions posed above, we collected several datasets by means of the Twitter API 1.1. The collection process was done by means of a code developed by the authors in Java. Below we detail the datasets collected:

[ROS-F] contains the user id of all the users that followed Rosalia (N=746,931) when the Fuck vox tweet was posted.

[ROS-B] contains a random sample of 4487 retweets to Rosalia's tweets posted six months before sample [ROS]. The small size of the sample is due to Twitter limitations when the collection was done.

[ROS] contains all the retweets of the Rosalia's original tweet during seven days after its publication. We used the string 'RT AND @rosaliavt AND fuck AND vox' for the collection, and gathered 85154 retweets of the more than 90,900 retweets that appeared in the platform (see Figure 1). The use of the string allowed the collection of almost all the retweets (RT) to the user (@rosaliavt) that contained the fuck vox text. After a cleansing process, we confirmed that only retweets of the 'fuck vox' tweet were collected. It is assumed that the missing retweets were from protected users. The collection was done seven days after the publication of the tweet.

[ROS-A] contains a sample of 33,310 retweets of Rosalia's tweets posted three months after sample [ROS].

[VOX] contains all the retweets of the Vox's response to Rosalia's tweet during seven days after its publication. We used the string 'RT AND @vox\_es AND millonarios' for the collection, and gathered 10583 retweets of the more than 11,800 retweets that appeared in the platform (see Figure 2). It is assumed that the missing retweets were from protected users.

[ROS-T] contains a sample of the last 3,200 tweets and retweets published by Rosalia between February 2017 and November 2019.

[GE28A] contains a sample of 1,259,324 tweets and retweets that were published during the electoral campaign in April 2019, with the hashtag #28A. The collection started the 14<sup>th</sup> of April and finished the 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

[GE10N] contains a sample of 5,081,222 tweets and retweets that were published during the electoral campaign in November 2019, with the hashtag #10N and #EleccionesGenerales. The collection started the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November and finished the 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

[GE2015] contains a sample of 540,231 tweets and retweets that were published during the electoral campaign in December 2015, with the hashtag #20D. The collection started the 5<sup>th</sup> of December and finished the 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

And, finally,

[GE2016] contains a sample of 576,842 tweets and retweets that were published during the electoral campaign in June, 2016, with the hashtag #26J. The collection started the 12<sup>th</sup> of June and finished the 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

To measure users' political involvement, we operationalized the variables political preference and online political activity as described below.

### 6.1. Political preference

Several researches in Twitter have developed methods for computing users' political preferences (Ceron, Curini, Iacus & Porro, 2014; Barberá, 2015). In this case, we operationalized users' political preference by checking the following connection of the users (Golbeck & Hansen, 2011; Golbeck & Hansen, 2014) with the main Spanish politicians and parties in Twitter (see table 2).

**Tabla 2: Twitter accounts of the Spanish main political parties and leaders**

Party	Party name	Party Handle	Leader Account
MP	Más País	MasPais_Es	ierrejon
UP	Podemos	PODEMOS	Pablolglesias
PSOE	PSOE	PSOE	sanchezcastejon

Party	Party name	Party Handle	Leader Account
Cs	Ciudadanos	CiudadanosCs	Albert_Rivera
PP	Partido Popular	populares	pablocasado_
Vox	Vox	vox_es	Santi_ABASCAL
ERC	Esquerra	Esquerra_ERC	gabrielrufian
JxCAT	JxCAT	JuntsXCat	KRLS
CUP	CUP	cupnacional	HiginiaRoig

Source: Own

We created six dummy variables (for UP, PSOE, Cs, PP, Vox and Catalan Separatist Parties), and a continuous variable ranging from 2,4 (radical left) to 9,4 (far right) that measured the mean political preference, considering the people's perceived ideology of each of the parties included in the CIS (2019) questionnaire (table 3). Catalan Separatist Parties are not included in the CIS questionnaire.

**Tabla 3: Spanish citizens' perceived parties' ideology ranging from 1 (left) to 10 (right)**

Party	M
UP	2.4
PSOE	4.2
Cs	7.1
PP	7.8
Vox	9.4

Source: CIS (2019)

## 6.2. Online political participation

Afterwards, we created a dummy variable for measuring users' participation in political debates in Twitter (Bruns & Highfield, 2013). We used the samples of users participating in the electoral debates in Spain in 2015 ([GE2015]), 2016 ([GE2016]), April 2019 ([GE28A]) and, finally, November 2019 ([GE10N]), that included more than 7,5 million tweets and retweets of the last four General Elections. The value of the variable is equal to 1 if the user participated in any of the debates, and 0 in the contrary case.

Besides these two variables, we also created the dummy variable Follows Rosalia that measured whether a user was a follower of the Rosalia account (+R) or not (-R). Table 4 shows the distribution of the variable in samples [ROS], [ROS-A], [ROS-B], and [VOX]. All the aforementioned variables were introduced in a SPSS file that we used to perform the statistical test.

**Tabla 4: Distribution of the users in samples [ROS], [ROS-A], [ROS-B], and [VOX] in terms of the variable Follows Rosalia**

Sample	-R	+R
[ROS-F]		746,931 (1.00)
[ROS-B]	3.298 (.74)	1,189 (.26)
[ROS]	58.170 (.68)	26,984 (.32)
[ROS-A]	16.294 (.49)	17,016 (.51)
[VOX]	10.128 (.96)	455 (.04)

Source: Gobierno de España (Ministerio del Interior)

## 7. Results

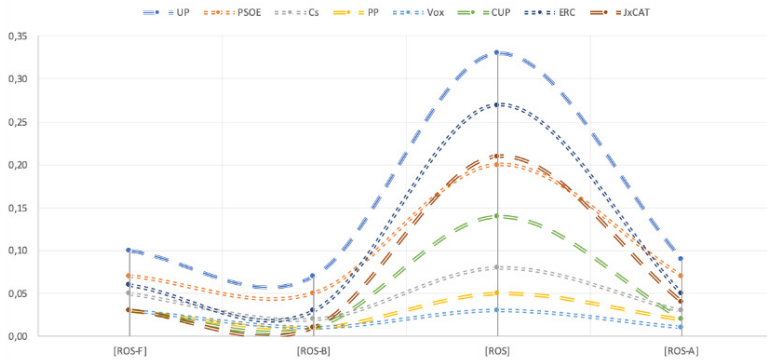
To answer to the research question posed, we first calculated the percentage of those users in [ROS], [ROS-A], [ROS-B], and [VOX] that followed any of the Spanish main political accounts in table A1. Results are show in table 5 and plotted in Figure 4 for Rosalia's followers.

**Tabla 5: Ratio of users retweeting Rosalia that follow the main political parties in Spain for samples [ROS], [ROS-A], [ROS-B], and [VOX], grouped by Follows Rosalia**

Sample	[ROS-F]		[ROS-B]		[ROS]		[ROS-A]		[VOX]	
	-R	+R	-R	+R	-R	+R	-R	+R	-R	+R
Spanish Parties										
UP	.10		.04	.07	.28	.33	.04	.09	.09	.23
PSOE	.07		.03	.05	.13	.20	.03	.07	.10	.25
Cs	.05		.02	.02	.05	.08	.02	.03	.28	.43
PP	.03		.01	.01	.04	.05	.01	.02	.25	.32
Vox	.03		.01	.01	.02	.03	.01	.01	.72	.65
Catalan Separatist Parties										
CUP	.03		.00	.01	.14	.14	.02	.02	.01	.05
ERC	.06		.02	.03	.28	.27	.04	.05	.04	.13
JxCAT	.03		.01	.01	.22	.21	.03	.04	.02	.09

Source: Own

**Figure 4. Ratio of users by political preferences in samples [ROS], [ROS-A], [ROS-B], and [VOX] for +R**  
**RATIO OF USERS BY POLITICAL PREFERENCES IN SAMPLES [ROS-F], [ROS-B], [ROS] AND [ROS-A]**



Source: Own

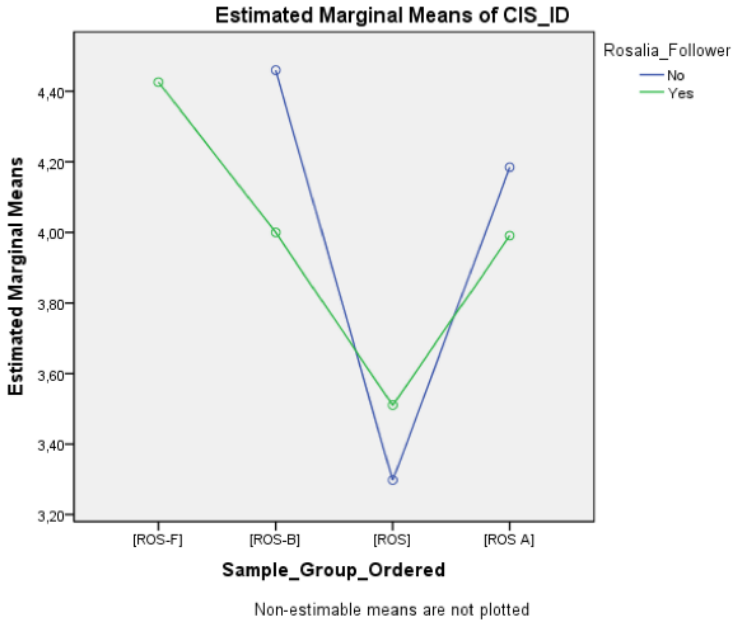
**Tabla 6: Mean values of the variable political preference for samples [ROS], [ROS-A], [ROS-B], [ROS-F] and [VOX]**

	Party name	User	Mean (SD)	+R	-R
1	[ROS-F]	103.980	4.43 (2,05)	4.43	
2	[ROS-B]	336	4.30 (2,23)	4.00 (2,01)	4.46 (2,34)
3	[ROS]	28.376	3.37 (1,43)	3.51 (1,43)	3.30 (1,42)
4	[ROS-A]	3.339	4.05 (1,88)	4.00 (1,84)	4.18 (1,97)
5	[VOX]	8.096	8.38 (1,33)	7.48 (1,74)	8.42 (1,29)

Source: Own



Figure 5. Mean values of the variable political preference for samples [ROS-F], [ROS-B], [ROS] and [ROS-A]



Source: Own

We then performed ANOVAs to test whether the differences in the score of the variable political preference were statistically significant or not. We found that these differences were statistically significant between [ROS] and [ROS-A] ( $F(1, 28710) = 136,849, p = .000$ ), and [ROS] and [ROS-B] ( $F(1, 31713) = 628,206, p = .000$ ). However, the differences were only moderately significant between [ROS-A] and [ROS-B] ( $F(1, 3673) = 4,951, p = .026$ ). In particular, the mean scores of the variable political preference for Rosalia's followers in [ROS-A] and [ROS-B] were identical (see table 6). We also compared the political preferences of the users in sample [ROS] and those in sample [ROS-F]. The difference between both groups was 1,06, and the ANOVA test was  $F(1, 132354) = 6622,440, p < .000$ . Finally, we performed an ANOVA to test the differences between the users that followed Rosalia (+R) and those who didn't follow her (-R) for the sample [ROS]. The differences (.21) were again significant (.21), with  $F(1, 28375) = 145,196, p < .000$ . This result shows that users retweeting Rosalia's tweet that didn't follow her were more leaned to the left than those following the singer.

Finally, we calculated the mean value of the variable online political activity in Twitter during the last four General elections in Spain (table 7), and the ratio of users in the five samples [ROS], [ROS-A], [ROS-B], [ROS-F] and [VOX] that had no political preference and that scored zero in the online political participation variable (table 8).

Table 7: Mean value of online political activity for samples [ROS], [ROS-A], [ROS-B], [ROS-F] and [VOX]

	Sample	Activity	-R	+R
1	[ROS-F]	.06		
2	[ROS-B]	.13	.13	.14
3	[ROS]	.52	.55	.45
4	[ROS-A]	.17	.13	.21
5	[VOX]	.72	.73	.64

Source: Own

**Tabla 8: Number of users with no political preferences and no previous online political participation for samples [ROS], [ROS-A], [ROS-B], [ROS-F] and [VOX]**

	Sample	Activity	-R	+R
1	[ROS-F]	.82 (610353)		
2	[ROS-B]	.83 (3714)	.83	.81
3	[ROS]	.33 (27439)	.31	.37
4	[ROS-A]	.79 (26330)	.84	.74
5	[VOX]	.13 (1389)	.13	.14

Source: Own

Results in table 8 show that a great majority of users in samples [ROS-F], [ROS-B] and [ROS-A], showed no political preferences and had no previous online activity. However, the proportion of those in sample [ROS] was significantly lower, with only a third of the users that retweeted Rosalia's Fuck vox tweet showing no political preferences and no previous online activity. However, we must consider that this was the first and only political tweet published by the celebrity, and it managed to trigger the endorsement of a significant part of the Rosalia's followers that didn't show previous political preferences or activity.

## 8. Discussion

Several conclusions can be drawn from the result of the present research. Firstly, it is in tune with previous research that confirms the considerable impact that celebrities have in political debates (Wheeler, 2018) and on people's willingness to engage with politics (Austin et al., 2008). In the particular case of Rosalia, her tweet received more than 90 thousand endorsements or retweets, approximately a tenth of all the retweets received by Rosalia's posts in almost three years. If we consider that Rosalia is not a conventional politicized celebrity, since her posts are almost always about her music or her personal life, and that Twitter is not her natural platform, the impact of her anti far-right tweet is beyond any expectation. Rosalia's impact can be probably explained by the fact that she represented a popular view and sentiment (Street, 2004) about the Spanish far-right, considering that an important part of the Spanish society receives Vox's electoral successes with anger and concern (Waisbord, 2018). According to Markham (2015), this concern or fear is precisely a condition for politicized celebrities to have impact on their audiences.

In terms of political preference, calculated by considering users' following behaviour, we found that the mean score of the variable for Rosalia's followers was 4,43. However, the mean score for those retweeting Rosalia's tweet was noticeably deviated to the left, with a value of 3,51 for those following Rosalia, and even more deviated to the left (3,30) for those not following her. Consequently, we can conclude that Rosalia's tweet triggered the endorsement of users following Spanish left-winged parties more than of those following Spanish right-winged parties. As it has been shown before, in all cases the differences between followers' mean score and retweeters' mean scores were statistically significant.

Those differences were also observed for the samples of retweeters of Rosalia's posts three months before ([ROS-B]) and three months after ([ROS-A]) the Fuck vox tweet. The mean scores for political preferences before the tweet were 4,30, and 4,05 respectively. From these results we can argue that one of the consequences of the Fuck vox tweet was a slight displacement to the left of Rosalia's endorsers. However, the ANOVA test showed that these differences were only moderately significant. Consequently, although the political profile of the users retweeting the Fuck vox tweet was displaced to the left, their political preferences remained the same after the tweet.

But one of the most relevant findings of the research is the fact that Rosalia's tweet not only had an impact on users that did not follow her, but it also had an influence on users with no political preferences (Zilinsky et al., 2019) who did not follow any of the Spanish main political parties and politicians. This is of great relevance, since celebrities are considered to be a political asset for engaging people in politics. Consequently, it can be drawn from these results that Rosalia fostered the engagement of those who didn't previously show any preferences for politics.

Finally, we also observed strong differences in previous online political participation between samples, being the community of retweeters of Rosalia and the communities of retweeters of Vox the most active. On the other hand, the users in samples [ROS-A] and [ROS-B], and the community of Rosalia's followers

had little online political activity, in particular the followers, with only a 6% of them being active in the four previous electoral campaigns in Spain. Our results confirm Couldry and Markham's (2007) conclusion that people following celebrity culture are, in general, least likely to engage in politics. Consequently, although politicized celebrities may intervene in the flow of social media to combat young citizens' disappointment (Loader, Vromen & Xenos, 2016), it is also confirmed that their communities are formed by highly politically inactive citizens.

## 9. Conclusion

Findings in this study show that celebrities facilitate political discussions (Loader, Vromen & Xenos, 2016), but also responses to political leaderships that can lead uninformed people to reflect about relevant social and political issues (Wheeler, 2018). This research shows the huge impact of Rosalia's involvement in politics after she condemned the success of the Spanish populist far-right party Vox. It also shows that Rosalia's post was mainly endorsed by left-winged users, but also attracted the attention of a large number of users with no political preferences and no online political activity, a trend on the way that the opinion of celebrity followers could differ from that of the celebrity (Wang & Luo, 2017). Celebrities have long been known to play an important role in politics (Pease & Brewer, 2008), and this paper confirms that political messages posted by celebrities in social media can have a larger influence among non-politicized audiences than those of politicians and political parties.

This work was not without limitations. First, we have to mention the already classical limitation related to the restrictions in the access of the Twitter firehose (Moats & Borra, 2018), and that of the impossibility of collecting the tweets published by protected accounts. Besides this, the operationalization of the two main variables is also to be considered as a limitation, since they are only partial measures of people's political preferences (in particular, the fact that it is based on the following-follower connection) and online political activity and introduce a bias that can have an influence in the generalization of the results. However, the study is restricted to Rosalia's endorsers and followers, and so are its conclusions. A deeper analysis of users' political preferences, by means of a combination of methods for uncovering their ideological attributes, and the tracking of all their activity online could be a solution for these limitations, and a challenge for a future research.

## 10. Contribución específicas de cada persona autora

Contribuciones	Nombre y apellidos de personas firmantes en cada caso
Concepción y diseño del trabajo	Frederic Guerrero-Solé
Búsqueda documental	Frederic Guerrero-Solé, Toni Aira, Lluís Mas-Manchón
Recogida de datos	Frederic Guerrero-Solé, Eva Pujadas
Análisis e interpretación crítica de datos	Frederic Guerrero-Solé, Toni Aira, Lluís Mas-Manchón, Eva Pujadas
Redacción, formato, revisión y aprobación de versiones	Frederic Guerrero-Solé, Eva Pujadas, Toni Aira, Lluís Mas-Manchón

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