

Political influencers/leaders on Twitter. An analysis of the Spanish digital and media agendas in the context of the Catalan elections of 21 December 2017

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Abstract: A new politics, linked to the influencer/leader and to the empowerment of the public on social networking sites, is currently marking the media agenda. In light of this, the aim of this study is to gain further insights into the polarization and influence of political messages on Twitter and levels of user participation, in a context marked by social movements and the counter-power of citizenship. Based on a triangulated methodology of quantitative and qualitative-discursive content analysis, all the tweets were quantified (3,562), selecting only those pertaining to the elections (526) posted by the pro-independence and constitutionalist candidates of the parties obtaining the highest number of votes, plus 144,382 user engagement metrics and 68 front pages of the mainstream Spanish and Catalan press. The results point to a unidirectional use of Twitter by political leaders, a higher user response rate, and the influence of the digital political agenda on its media counterpart.

Keywords: Influencer, political agenda, Twitter, elections, independence process, media agenda, digital users

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