

# **THE CLOSED FACEBOOK GROUPS OF SUPPORT AS THE INNOVATIVE INSTRUMENTS OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION ON SOCIAL NETWORKS. THE CASE STUDIES OF VOX AND PODEMOS ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS TO SPANISH PARLIAMENT IN APRIL 2019.**

## **AUTHORS**

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The future of political communication according to several experts is increasingly focused on the use not so much of social networks per se, but on the personalization of the message and through direct contact. The emergence of new social network tools have opened and facilitated this process of proximity in the electoral campaigns. The extreme parties with less or no funding have found in them the perfect ally to connect with their sympathizers, as well as influence those who still seek where to deposit the vote. The proximity, conversation, direct exchange and free opinions, finding the support, impression of anonymity, interactivity and possibility to participate in the process are some of the advantages that attract users to the political groups of the parties on Facebook, Telegram or WhatsApp, in the current electoral campaign to the Spanish parliament.

## **Objectives of research**

The paper focuses on an analysis of the main political groups from two extremes of the Spanish political formations in social networks (Facebook): left wing (Podemos) and right wing (Vox). Its objective is to examine the public debate and the discourse in social networks, especially in extra-official channels of political communication within a proliferated political Spanish politics.

## **Methodology**

The subject of the analysis are the closed Facebook groups belonging to two extreme parties on the left and right: Podemos and Vox. The time frame is the electoral campaign period of the 2019 General Spanish Elections- April 2019. It applies a triangulated approach for methodology of participant observation on the case study and content analysis of these groups. The following variables are examined throughout the analysis: political actors, keywords, use of symbols, appeal to feelings, as well as the type of formats of content, such as photos, video, memes or gif.

## **Results**

By means of the analysis we can observe the processes of influence in the political communication through the digital public sphere using participatory model. They manage to generate a digital public opinion by means of sentimental, extreme and infantilised discourse full of audiovisual elements, leadership worship that is centred on discrediting the opponents.

## **Conclusions**

As such, political parties are looking for the legitimization in the elections as the representatives of the citizens. Due to the growing crisis in private and state media, decrease in citizen's trust towards mass media, the politician and their parties employ Social Media to communicate their ideas and persuade the voters by means of proximity and conversation.

**Keywords:** Political communication-Social networks – Social Media – electoral campaign– Spanish parliamentary elections