
M.^a Isabel Rodríguez Fidalgo

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5167-0272>

mrfidalgo@usal.es

Universidad de Salamanca

Yanira Ruiz Paz

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1848-5662>

id00704254@usal.es

Universidad de Salamanca

Adriana Paíno Ambrosio

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3817-6071>

adriana.paino@usal.es

Universidad de Salamanca

Submitted

February 4th, 2019

Approved

April 10th, 2019

© 2019

Communication & Society

ISSN 0214-0039

E ISSN 2386-7876

doi: 10.15581/003.32.4.193-205

www.communication-society.com

2019 – Vol. 32(4)

pp. 193-205

How to cite this article:

Rodríguez Fidalgo, M.^a I., Ruiz Paz,

Y. & Paíno Ambrosio, A. (2019).

#EleccionesMéxico2018: Post election analysis of news media's tweets and citizens' feedback.

Communication & Society, 32(4),

193-205.

#EleccionesMéxico2018: Post election analysis of news media's tweets and citizens' feedback

Abstract

Political parties and their candidates use social networks as a new tool for political communication and so the media have also begun to use them in the same context. This article focuses on the analysis of the posts made by the news media on Twitter (tweets) during the week following Mexico's 2018 elections, based on the informative, secondary and protagonist roles proposed by Vallés (2007), and on the reactions these posts generated on citizens. Content analysis has been performed on a sample of 525 tweets posted by 18 Mexican and international news media organizations. The results show that the three roles that traditional media publications play, according to Vallés (2007), can be extrapolated to the posts they make on Twitter, and that there are differences in the performance of these functions across news media outlets. The main innovation in the use of Twitter by news media is associated to citizens' feedback (retweets and mentions), which has allowed us to determine that the "protagonist" role is the most commonly played within the political context under study.

Keywords

Digital journalism, social networks, political communication, Twitter, media.

1. Introduction

Social networks have consolidated their role as a tool for political communication. This has given rise to a wide variety of research works and academic studies that delve into their diverse aspects, from communicative as well as political points of view. These research works

have contributed to the greater understanding of the use that different political actors make of social networks, from the point of view of the dissemination and reception of political information. These works began to proliferate with Barack Obama's 2018 election campaign, which paved the way for a new conception of social networks within the political framework (Túñez & Sixto, 2011).

Specifically, the use of social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Snapchat, has become widespread and diversified thanks to a series of technical issues that enable their use in different contexts, in addition to the personal sphere. As far as the political field is concerned, the introduction of social networks has opened a new way of making political communication (Zugasti & Pérez, 2015; Rovira, 2017; Gibson & McAllister, 2011). In this regard, one of the main innovations introduced by social networks is the change in the role of citizens as producers and consumers of political information. In this sense, as

Aguilera and Casero-Ripollés point out, "citizens can be empowered in digital networks, understanding this process as the development of the ability to actively participate and control their communicative activity" (2018, p. 5). This is essential because it has significant repercussions on the rest of the actors involved in the political communication process, namely politicians, political parties, the media, governments, interest groups, institutions, etc.

It should be noted that each social network has its own peculiarities, and this makes it possible to use them in different ways within the political context. Many authors agree that Twitter is one of the most used social networks in the political arena due, among other things, to its unique functions (Miquel-Segarra, Alonso-Muñoz & Marcos-García, 2017; Kruikemeier, 2014). As Orihuela points out, "Twitter is asymmetric, brief, decentralized, global, hyper-textual, intuitive, multiplatform, synchronous, social and viral" (2011, p. 32-33), which has modified the structure of the political dialogue thanks to the possibilities it offers to its users to disseminate information and interact with the news media under equal conditions. "The key concept now is conversation. The voter not only listens, but also speaks" (Ureña, 2011, p. 31).

Moreover, the traditional role the media have fulfilled so far, as channels for political messages, is also being questioned. The political conversation that is generated in social networks like Twitter, to a large extent, does not proceed exclusively from the media agendas, but also comes from ordinary citizens, which is an aspect that opens the line of research related to the disintermediation role that social networks play (Schulz, 2004).

These issues are precisely the starting point of our analysis, which in this case focuses on how the news media use Twitter in the specific context of political communication, and more specifically in relation to an election process. In this sense, this article proposes a novel approach to the field of political communication, as it focuses on the post-election process while the majority of previous analyses have focused on the campaign (debates) and election periods. For this purpose, we have analyzed the posts made by Mexican and international news media on Twitter, the week following Mexico's 2018 elections.

2. Changes in political communication following the emergence of social media

The digitalization of information has changed the traditional communication paradigms. The changes are mainly associated with the interaction enabled by the Web 2.0. This new reality has not gone unnoticed within the world of politics, which instead of turning their backs on these new communication technologies has assimilated them as another element to carry out the political communication. As a result, the sphere of political communication is experiencing changes that affect the political and citizen discussion of public affairs because, as Moya and Herrera (2015, p. 2) argue:

A representative democracy of educated citizens requires a form of communication in which these citizens can deliver their opinions to the public authorities as reaction to the policies that have been or are about to be implemented. ICT create spaces for a different political communication, in which all actors –citizens, political leaders, journalists and other influential agents– can intervene under equal conditions. Interaction is key in the new communication model proposed by social media.

This new communication model emerges at the time that this interaction has been transferred to social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram, and has been amplified with its current true implementation. As De Aguilera and Casero-Ripollés point out, "citizens can be empowered in digital networks, understanding this process as the development of the ability to actively participate and control their communicative activity, both in the production as well as distribution and consumption stages" (2018, p. 5).

As a result, social media now coexist with traditional media. All this has led to an important process of change that has forced the media to redefine their role in the

dissemination and reception of political information, becoming what authors like Chadwick (2013) have defined as a hybrid media system. It is important to note that in this new scenario, the traditional media that served as news outlets are now losing legitimacy to new social media, such as Twitter.

This new situation leads us to reflect on the roles the media can play and allows us to revisit previous ideas that were offered in this regard, like those put forward by Vallés (2007), which emerged in another communicative context. This author claims that the media perform three functions or roles: “informative” (*eco*), “secondary” (*comparsa*) and “protagonist” (*protagonista*).

In some cases, the media echoes –more or less faithfully– the messages transmitted by other political actors: leaders, organizations, citizens, etc. In other cases, the media accompany other actors as secondary actors: support or criticize the positions of parties, movements and social organizations, the government or the opposition, etc. Finally, the media become protagonists when they decide to develop their own strategy on the political scene: for example, by undertaking a campaign of systematic opposition to the government or of permanent support to a party or candidate they are aligned to (Vallés, 2007, p. 380).

It should be noted that these three roles or functions identified by Vallés (2007) referred to the publications made by the media in traditional platforms, but they can be extrapolated to the new social platforms such as Twitter, which is also used by the news media to carry out communication within the political context. This idea is precisely the backbone of the object of study of this research.

Along Vallés's ideas (2007), other authors have also tried to identify new functions and roles related to media publications. This is the case of Waisbord (2009), who argues that the press performs three functions within the public sphere: “the monitoring of political power (‘watchdog’), the coverage of issues of public relevance that require citizen attention (‘agenda-setter’) and the dissemination of an infinity of perspectives (‘gate-keeper’)” (in Califano, 2015, p. 69). Waisbord complements Vallés's contribution from the perspective of the agenda setting function of the media, which is also being reformulated given the political and social changes prompted by social media and the emergence of new forms of political participation that no longer only follow traditional institutional mechanisms (Torcal, Montero & Teorell, 2006). These aspects put the focus on research lines centered on what authors like Sung-Tae and Young-hwan (2007, in De Aguilera & Casero-Ripollés, 2018) call reversed agenda-setting.

Social networks, therefore, as mentioned above, are used by each and every one of the actors involved in the political communication process, and particularly by political parties and politicians, the media and, of course, citizens.

3. The use of Twitter in the political context

The analysis of social networks, from the perspective of their use within the specific context of the political sphere, is therefore intrinsically linked to the features of each social network. In this respect, with regards to Twitter, authors such as Moya and Herrera (2015) highlight the following aspects:

It went from being a channel designed for personal updates to a medium for communication, conversation and political dialogue. Twitter has demonstrated its ability to facilitate citizens' informative emancipation. This has aroused the interest of political leaders and has also attracted the attention of the research community, which is highlighting the features that make Twitter ideal for advanced communication (Moya & Herrera, 2015, p. 1).

On the other hand, the advantages of Twitter in the current communication environment allude to the following unique features:

1. Information is condensed in short texts no longer than 280 characters.
2. Posts are agile and direct thanks to its interaction possibilities (retweets, mentions, replies and hashtags).
3. It serves as support for the civil society and the public sphere, as it is a channel where opinions flow.
4. It is a diversified source of information and opinion.
5. It promotes dialogue with citizens, i.e., a two-way communication with the political parties, politicians and the media that use it.
6. It can be a social thermometer. It provides the conditions necessary for real-time global market studies (Orihuela, 2011) and it can be a sensor for social behaviors and moods and public contexts (Gutierrez-Rubí, 2011).

Twitter's features, in short, make the information flow faster than in other social networks and are accessible to unregistered users (Stier, Bleier, Lietz & Strohmaier, 2018). For these reasons, Casero-Ripollés considers Twitter as "the most appropriate network for the dissemination of news content" (2018, p. 967). Along this same line, authors such as McGregor, Mourão and Molyneux (2017, p. 2) argue that Twitter can be used as a tool and object for political communication:

1. As a tool: Twitter can be used by the political elites in election campaigns, by the media in the distributing of political messages, and by citizens to share their opinions about candidates and their policies.
2. As an object: since Twitter allows politicians, the media and citizens to direct their attention when it comes to disseminating messages, voting, developing campaign strategies, etc. In short, it allows all users to establish a political dialogue that now flows more directly.

Twitter's features and unstoppable use by the different actors involved in the political processes have inspired several studies in recent years. So much so, that it is possible to identify a series of analytical perspectives related to Twitter, which revolve around the production and consumption of tweets, its use in election campaigns by political parties and candidates, as part of the construction of the political debate. However, the studies focused on the media's use of Twitter are especially significant for the object of analysis of this research. It is worth noting, for example, the contributions made by Coddington, Molyneux and Lawrence (2014), who have examined journalists' professional objectivity in their use of Twitter and have concluded that journalists do not check facts regularly when using Twitter. Twitter's interaction tools have also aroused great interest and have been the focus of works such as those carried out by Molyneux and Mourão (2017), who highlight the media's interest in using Twitter to attract audiences, and Corona (2019), who analyzes the interaction of journalists with these Twitter accounts in the context of Mexican television. Both studies highlight the importance of the change in the role of users, from passive to active, and the lack of real feedback from users to the media on Twitter. Percastre-Mendizábal (2018) developed another line of research related to the discussions generated during Mexico's 2015 elections, and the media, journalists and communicators who participated in them. The results of this study showed that the media try to achieve a prominent role in the deliberative sphere through a large number of followers, retweets and tweets. For its part, the work of Justel-Vázquez, Fernandez-Planells, Victoria-Mas and Lacasa-Mas (2018) focuses on journalists' use of tweets as a source of information and concludes that tweets have become a source legitimized by prestigious news media such as *The New York Times*. This line is also followed by authors such as Heravi and Harrower (2016), English (2016), Engesser and Humprecht (2015), and Pérez-Soler and Micó (2015).

It is important to highlight that most of these studies focus on the election periods (pre-campaign and campaign), while only a few works address the post-election period. This situation makes our study novel and relevant to the development of this line of research focused on the social network Twitter.

4. Hypotheses and objectives

Taking into account the previous literature review, and particularly the contribution made by Vallés (2007), the following objectives have been established:

1. Identify the “informative,” “secondary” and “protagonist” roles played by the political posts made on Twitter by the selected news media, following Mexico’s 2018 elections.
2. Identify the ways in which citizens react (retweets and favorites) to the political publications made on Twitter by the selected news media in the aforementioned political context.

Two research hypotheses have emerged from the previous objectives:

1. The “informative,” “secondary” and “protagonist” roles, Vallés (2007) attributes to traditional media when transmitting political messages, can be extrapolated to the political messages transmitted by the media through posts on Twitter.
2. The “informative,” “secondary” and “protagonist” roles provoke different types of reactions (in terms of retweets and favorites) in citizens on Twitter in relation to the political publications made by the news media.

5. Methods

5.1. Sample selection

Given the relevance of Mexico’s 2018 elections, different international and Mexican news media reported opportunely on the various events that occurred during and after this electoral contest. In view of this, the analysis starts with the study of the tweets posted between 2nd and 7th July 2018 (the week after the elections). The selection of the sample of tweets was based on the following three criteria.

1. The tweet had to mention the winning candidate (López Obrador, #AMLO, @lopezobrador, new President).
2. The tweet had to mention the other candidates (@RicardoAnayaC, @JoseAMeadeK, @JaimeRdzNL).
3. The tweet had to mention the electoral process (#Elecciones2018, #EleccionesMéxico, Elecciones México 2018, #Eleccion2018, Mexico election).

The selected tweets, in this case, had to meet one of the previous three criteria to be considered in the analysis.

Therefore, taking into account the two selection criteria (the selected post-election period, corresponding to the week following the voting day, and the mentioning of the three elements) a sample of 18 media was selected, 11 international and 7 Mexican: *Al Jazeera English*, *BBC News Mundo*, *Clarín*, *CNN* en español, *DW español*, *El País*, *El Universal*, *El Economista*, *El Financiero*, *El País América*, *Periódico Excelsior*, *Expansión CNN*, *Folha de S-Paulo*, *La Tercera*, *Milenio.com*, *NYTimes en español*, *Washington Post* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

During the period of analysis, these media outlets posted a total of 6,327 tweets, but only 525 met at least one of the criteria and were related to the Mexican elections.

5.2. Methods

The study is based on the content analysis of the sample of 525 tweets. The content analysis focused on the identification of the traditional media roles proposed by Vallés (2007), which are now extrapolated to the posts made by the selected media on Twitter: “informative,” “secondary” and “protagonist.” In addition, the latter role was divided into pro-government protagonist role and the critical protagonist role, to distinguish between those media that were for or against the policies of the new government.

The analysis took into account the following elements: name of media outlet, author of the post (tweet), account's creation date, display name on Twitter, location and number of followers, as well as each tweet's content, publication date, number of retweets and number of favorites. Moreover, tweets were classified according to the “role” they played, taking into account the following variables:

1. “Informative” role: Assigned to publications with a news format, i.e., publications that privilege statements made by political sources prevail. These publications use verbs conjugated in the third person singular or plural (depending on the case). These publications also include discursive fragments and use quotation marks to highlight parts of the discourse. The source of the discourse is linked to politics in this type of role.
2. “Secondary” role: assigned to publications that are characterized by their opinion value and include statements made by non-political sources. As in the previous case, these publications use verbs conjugated in the third person singular or plural (depending on the case) and, in some cases, use quotation marks to highlight a fragment of the discourse. However, in this case, the source of the discourse is not related to politics.
3. “Protagonist” role: In this case, this category applies to the following two types of tweets:
 - Pro-government protagonist tweets: Promote government policies through in-depth coverage. They mention events of interest linked to the elected candidate's electoral platform (government, security, education and health, public works projects, economy, youth, rights and social programs, culture and sport, women, corruption) or the political agenda of the country (transition of the new government). The opinions of politicians or other sources are ignored.
 - Critical protagonist tweets: Refer to those posts that openly express their opinions, assessments and judgments to the audience. All publications that contain the word “opinion” are considered for this category. In some cases, these publications quote fragments of the discourse. In addition, the tweet presents an in-depth assessment or judgement performed by the news media outlet.

The “informative” and “secondary” roles could be both considered to perform the informative function of the media, unlike the “protagonist” role which, in this case, would be characterized by the adoption of a political stand.

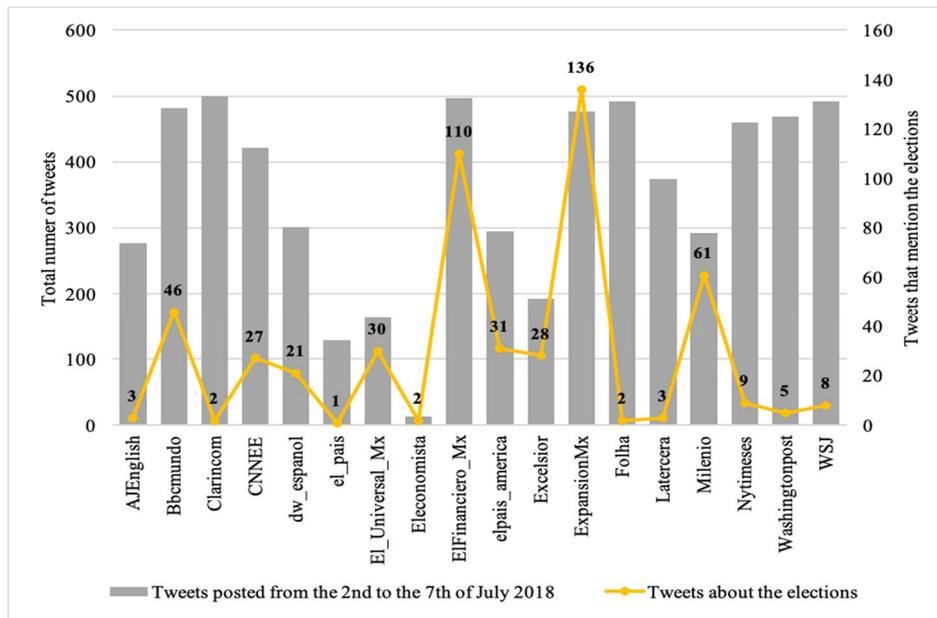
The coding of the 525 tweets was carried out by two researchers, who analyzed separately the entire sample, which resulted in two data matrices. Cohen's kappa coefficient was used to calculate inter-rater reliability in SPSS. The resulting inter-rater agreement was 0.923 for the variable related to the “role” performed by the media's publications on Twitter.

6. Analysis of results

Once Mexico' 2018 elections ended, international and Mexican news media used Twitter in different ways to publish news and opinions about it. As shown in figure 1, Mexican news media (*El Universal*, *El Financiero*, *Periódico Excélsior*, *Milenio* and *Expansión*) posted a large number of tweets about the election process, unlike international media, which published a very small number of tweets about the elections. However, there is an exception in the case

of *BBC News Mundo* which, unlike other international news media, closely followed the process and intensified the number of tweets about the elections, accumulating a total of 46 tweets in the period under analysis.

Figure 1: Use of Twitter during Mexico's 2018 elections.



Source: Own elaboration.

However, each media outlet plays a different role when tweeting, be it “informative,” “secondary” or “protagonist.” The results obtained from the analysis are presented in the following sections.

6.1. Analysis of the “informative” role in the tweets posted by the selected media

During the election process, highlighting the political actor was a resource widely used by the selected media. The statements made by different politicians were exploited by the media in their tweets. The Mexican news media, *El Universal* (with 14 tweets), *El Financiero* (with 49 tweets), *Periódico Excelsior* (15), *Expansión* (33) and *Milenio* (9), mostly performed the “informative” role, and frequently published the reactions and counterreactions generated after the election process.

In contrast, *Al Jazeera English*, *Clarín*, *El País*, *El Economista*, *NYTimes en Español* and *The Washington Post* never played this type of role.

6.2. Analysis of the “secondary” role in the tweets posted by the selected media

In addition to including the statements of major politicians, the selected media also reported the reactions of personalities outside the world of politics, such as businessmen, citizens and students. The “secondary” role played by the Mexican *Expansión* (with 36 tweets) stands out, followed by *El Financiero* (with 25 tweets) and *Milenio* (with 14 tweets).

Way behind are the international media *CNN en Español* (with 7 tweets), *El País América* (with 7 tweets) and *DW español* (with 5 tweets), followed by *Excelsior* (with 3 tweets) and *BBC Mundo* (1), which also played this role when tweeting. On the other hand, media such as *Al Jazeera English*, *Clarín*, *El País*, *El Economista*, *Folha de S-Paulo*, *La Tercera*, *NYTimes en español*, *Washington Post* and *The Wall Street Journal* did not play the “secondary” role in any of their tweets.

In contrast to what happened in the previous case, where international media did not play the “informative” role, in this case, the international media did play the “secondary” role in their tweets, although to a lesser extent than the Mexican news media, which continue to show a greater predisposition to play this role.

6.3. Analysis of the “protagonist” role in the tweets posted by the selected media

As mentioned, this role has been divided into two types: *pro-government protagonist* and *critical protagonist*.

With regards to the pro-government protagonist role, some news media were interested in certain issues related to the electoral platform and Mexico’s political agenda. Accordingly, they intensified the number of tweets that contained opinions, judgments and assessments of these issues. *Expansión* (with 46 tweets) actively played a “protagonist” role focused on the promotion of issues of interest to the audience, followed by *El Financiero* (11) and *Milenio* (11). For their part, the international news media barely tweeted about these issues, although some cases were identified in *El País América* (6), *CNN en Español* (5), *DW español* (5) and *BBC News Mundo* (5).

The news media whose tweets were characterized by their pro-government function exhibited coincidences on several issues. In this sense, Mexican news media showed a greater interest in such issues as the transition, the business sector and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), while international news media focused on the new cabinet, the transition and security.

Regarding the critical “protagonist” role, the selected news media made different assessments of the events, from a judgmental point of view. In the selected period, they posted tweets that presented the social reality from their own points of view. *BBC News Mundo* (with 34 tweets) is the international news media outlet that played the most the critical “protagonist” role, followed by *Milenio* (with 27 tweets), while the last position was occupied by Argentina’s *El Clarín* (1), Spain’s *El País* (2) and Chile’s *La Tercera* (1).

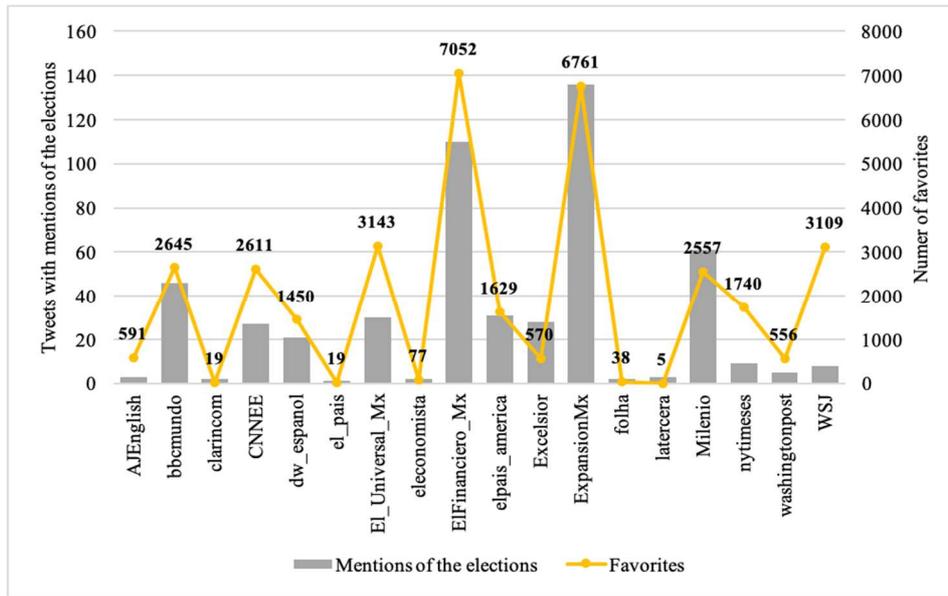
The influence of the materials tweeted by the selected news media during the election process depended directly on the feedback of their Twitter followers, as it will be shown below.

6.4. Analysis of feedback received by tweets posted by news media

The analysis of the feedback received by the tweets took into account the number of times they were retweeted and favorited by the followers of the news media.

In terms of the favorite tweets, there was greater success in the tweets posted by *El Financiero* (with 7,052) and *Expansión* (with 6,761) due to their large number of tweets mentioning the elections (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Trends of tweets posted by the selected news media (favorites).

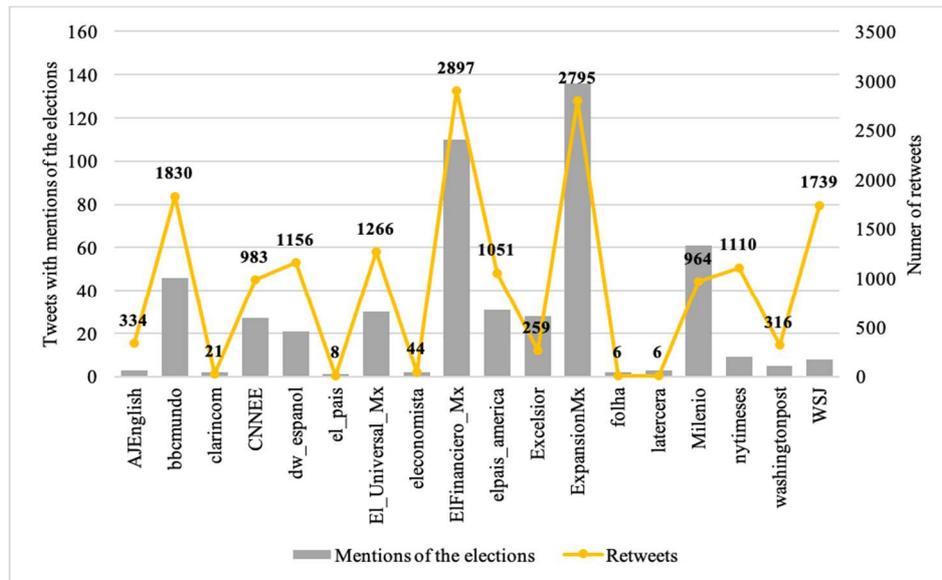


Source: Own elaboration.

However, there were also cases in which the news media generated a limited number of mentions to the elections and the response of their users-followers was high. For example, *El Universal* (with 3,143 favorites), the *Wall Street Journal* (with 3,109 favorites), *CNN en español* (with 2,611 favorites) and *NYTimes en español* (with 1,740 favorites). The opposite case is the Mexican *Excelsior*, which, despite its activity, with continuous mentions to the elections, did not receive a significant response from its users-followers (with 570 favorites).

With regards to the retweets generated, as shown in Figure 3, there is a greater trend in the news media that published a significant number of tweets about the elections, as is the case of *El Financiero* (with 2,897) and *Expansión* (with 2,795).

Figure 3: Trends of tweets posted by the selected news media (retweets).

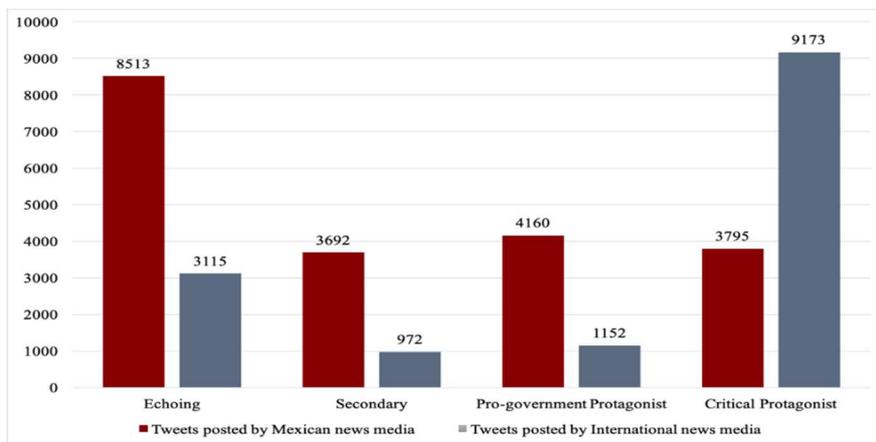


Source: Own elaboration.

Retweeting is one of the main ways of propagating information on Twitter, but an effective feedback depends to a great extent on the users-followers. In this respect, as Figure 3 shows, there is a relatively high participation among the users-followers of *BBC News Mundo*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *El Universal*, *DW español*, *NYTimes en español* and *El País América*, who retweeted each posts many times. In contrast, *Excelsior* and *Milenio* barely triggered any reactions among their users-followers despite tweeting constantly.

In view of these findings and due to the close link between the tweets' content and their subsequent follow-up, now it is important to analyze the relation between the three roles object of study and the number of mentions and favorites identified in the sample.

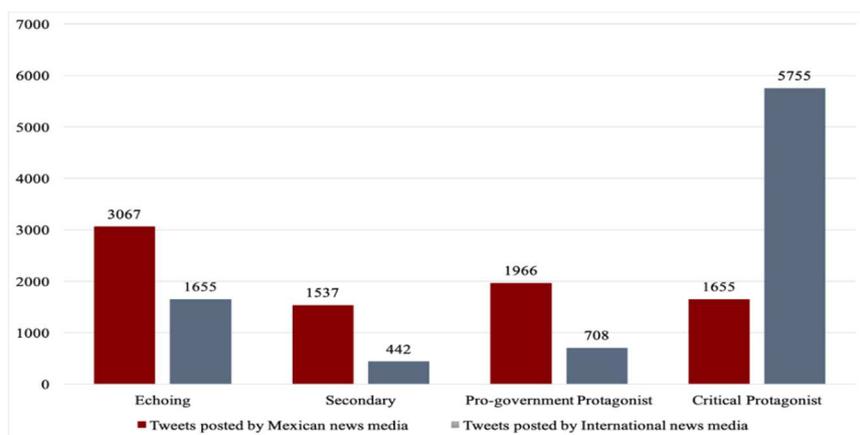
Figure 4: Relationship between the “informative,” “secondary” and “protagonist” roles and number of favorited tweets.



Source: Own elaboration.

As shown in Figure 4, citizens' feedback in terms of favorites exhibits significant differences between Mexican and international news media. The analysis of these posts in relation to the “informative, secondary and protagonist” roles indicates that “informative” tweets posted by Mexican news media have been favourited more times than the other tweets about the elections. In the case of international news media, the tweets that played the critical protagonist role were the most favorited.

Figure 5: Relationship between the “informative,” “secondary” and “protagonist” roles and the number retweets.



Source: Own elaboration.

As Figure 5 shows, the relationship between the “informative,” “secondary” and “protagonist” roles and the number retweets is similar to the one detected in the previous case. Once again, Mexican news media received a larger number of retweets when their posts played an “informative” role, while the international news media obtained more retweets when their tweets played the “critical protagonist” role.

7. Discussion and conclusions

Based on the previous analysis we have drawn a series of conclusions related to our initial research hypotheses:

In relation to the first hypothesis, which states that the roles identified by Vallés (2007) can be extrapolated to the publications made on Twitter by news media outlets, it has been partially confirmed. The results show that it is possible to continue using the three concepts (“informative,” “secondary” and “protagonist”), but also that they are differently played by Mexican and international news media, particularly in the case of the “informative” role, which was not performed by international news media. The other two roles, “secondary” and “protagonist,” are played by Mexican and foreign news media, although the former play these roles to a greater extent, which is an interesting aspect due to their opinion-shaping power.

However, the in-depth analysis of this aspect requires the study of the ideological variable of the media, which has not been considered here. This aspect has been researched by Said-Hung, Prati and Cancino-Borbón (2017), who have found that the progressive or left-wing ideological position has a greater presence than the conservative or right-wing position on Twitter during the 24-M in Spain. Likewise, Congosto, Fernández and Moro (2011) argue that Twitter, among other things, allows researchers to see how users are grouped together according to ideological affinity.

With regards to the second hypothesis, the contributions that emerge from this analysis are the following:

During the selected post-election period there was a high participation among Twitter followers in terms of mentions (number of retweets) and favorites, which has also been detected by authors such as Moya and Herrera (2015). To be precise, the publications made by the selected international news media were retweeted 8,560 times while the publications made by the sample of Mexican news media were retweeted 8,225 times. With regards to favorited tweets, the Mexican news media generated a total of 20,160, while their international counterparts generated 14,412. The results also show differences between the two groups of news media outlets.

It is significant to be able to extrapolate the three traditional roles (“informative, secondary and protagonist”) to the publications made by the media on Twitter, but what makes the difference between traditional media and the social network is the possibility offered by the latter of collecting feedback from citizens, in the form of mentions and favorites.

In this regard, the analysis shows that there is a relationship between a greater number of publications and a greater number of favorites and retweets, although with some exceptions. That is why the second part of the study, focused on the content analysis of the tweets, complements the previous analysis by correlating data of the tweets’ “informative, secondary and protagonist” roles with the number of favorites and retweets received by such publications. This second analysis has allowed us to observe that tweets playing the “protagonist” role generate the most feedback among citizens.

These issues connect with research focusing on Twitter as a conversation tool (Boyd, Golder & Lotan, 2010; Honeycutt & Henring, 2009) and with the so-called “peripheral public sphere” (Moya & Herrera, 2015), where citizen empowerment is highlighted within the new political communication context in which traditional political actors (parties, politicians, the media and citizens) begin to redefine their functions (Fung, Gilman & Shkabatur, 2013).

In short, it can be argued that, within the analyzed context, the media took advantage of Twitter to generate currents of opinion and judgment on different issues, by adding value to what they do. However, this study leaves unexplored some variables related to this issue and that have to do with the feedback generated by media publications in citizens, which would complement the results presented here.

References

- Aguilera, M. & Casero-Ripollés, A. (2018). ¿Tecnologías para la transformación? Los medios sociales ante el cambio político y social. Presentación. *Icono 14*, 16(1), 1-21. <https://www.doi.org/10.7195/ri14.v16i1.1162>
- Boyd, D., Golder, S. & Lotan, G. (2010). Tweet, tweet, retweet: Conversational aspects of retweeting on Twitter. *System Sciences (HICSS)*, 2010 43rd Hawaii International Conference on. <https://www.doi.org/10.1109/HICSS.2010.412>
- Califano, B. (2015). Los medios de comunicación, las noticias y su influencia sobre el sistema político. *Revista mexicana de opinión pública*, 19, 61-78. <https://www.doi.org/10.1016/j.rmop.2015.02.001>
- Chadwick, A. (2013). *The hybrid media system: Politics and power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Coddington, M., Molyneux, L. & Lawrence, R. G. (2014). Fact checking the campaign: How political reporters use Twitter to set the record straight (or not). *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 19(4), 391-409. <https://www.doi.org/10.1177/1940161214540942>
- Congosto, M. L., Fernández, M. & Moro, E. (2011). Twitter y política: información, opinión y ¿predicción? *Cuadernos de comunicación Evoca*, 4, 11-16. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2K54PbF>
- Engesser, S. & Humprecht, E. (2015). Frequency or skillfulness: How professional news media use Twitter in five Western countries. *Journalism studies*, 16(4), 513-529. <https://www.doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2014.939849>
- English, P. (2016). Twitter's diffusion in sports journalism: Role models, laggards and followers of the social media innovation. *New media & society*, 18(3), 484-501. <https://www.doi.org/10.1177/1461444814544886>
- Fung, A., Gilman, H. R. & Shkabatur, J. (2013). Six Models for the Internet Politics. *International Studies Review*, 15(1), 30-47. <https://www.doi.org/10.1111/misr.12028>
- Gibson, R. K. & McAllister, I. (2011). Do Online Election Campaigns Win Votes? The 2007 Australian "YouTube" Election. *Political Communication*, 28(2), 227-244. <https://www.doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2011.568042>
- Gutiérrez-Rubí, A. (2011, July 4th). Twitter, mucho más que la CNN. *El Periódico de Catalunya*. Retrieved from <https://goo.gl/Zda2sN>
- Justel-Vázquez, S., Fernández-Planells, A., Victoria-Mas, M. & Lacasa-Mas, I. (2018). Twitter e información política en la prensa digital: la red social como fuente de declaraciones en la era Trump. *El profesional de la información*, 27(5), 984-992. <https://www.doi.org/10.3145/epi.2018.sep.03>
- Heravi, B. R. & Harrower, N. (2016). Twitter journalism in Ireland: sourcing and trust in the age of social media. *Information, communication & society*, 19(9), 1194-1213. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1187649>
- Honeycutt, C. & Herring, S. C. (2009). Beyond microblogging: Conversation and collaboration via Twitter. *System Sciences, 2009. HICSS'09. 42nd Hawaii International Conference on*. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2Uytawk>
- Kruikemeier, S. (2014). How political candidates use Twitter and the impact on votes. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 34, 131-139. <https://www.doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.01.025>
- McGregor, S. C., Mourão, R. R. & Molyneux, L. (2017). Twitter as a tool for and object of political and electoral activity: Considering electoral context and variance among actors. *Journal*

- of Information Technology & Politics*, 14(2), 154-167. <https://www.doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2017.1308289>
- Miquel-Segarra, S., Alonso-Muñoz, L. & Marcos-García, S. (2017). Buscando la interacción. partidos y candidatos en Twitter durante las elecciones generales de 2015. *Prisma Social*, 18, 34-54. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2UgEaN3>
- Molyneux, L. & Mourão, R. R. (2017). Political Journalists' Normalization of Twitter. *Journalism Studies*, 20(2), 248-266. <https://www.doi.org/1461670X.2017.1370978>
- Moya, M. & Herrera, S. (2015). Cómo puede contribuir Twitter a una comunicación política más avanzada. *Arbor*, 191(774), a257, 1-14. <https://www.doi.org/10.3989/arbor.2015.774n4012>
- Orihuela, J. L. (2011). *Mundo Twitter*. Barcelona: Alienta.
- Percastre-Mendizábal, S. (2018). Twitter en campaña. Actores mediáticos en Twitter durante la campaña electoral intermedia en México en el año 2015. *Hipertext.net*, 17, 95-102. <https://www.doi.org/10.31009/hipertext.net.2018.i17.09>
- Pérez-Soler, S. & Micó, J. L. (2015). El mito de la conversación global. Usos de Twitter en las redacciones periodísticas catalanas y belgas. *El profesional de la información*, 24(3), 246-255. <https://www.doi.org/10.3145/epi.2015.may.04>
- Rovira, G. (2017). *Activismo en red y multitudes conectadas*. Barcelona: Icaria.
- Said-Hung, E. M., Prati, R. C. & Cancino-Borbón, A. (2017). La orientación ideológica de los mensajes publicados en Twitter durante el 24M en España. *Palabra Clave*, 20(1), 213-238. <https://www.doi.org/10.14201/fjc2017155773>
- Schulz, W. (2004). Reconstructing mediatization as an analytical concept. *European Journal of Communication*, 19(1), 87-101. <https://www.doi.org/10.1177/0267323104040696>
- Stier, S., Bleier, A., Lietz, H. & Strohmaier, M. (2018). Election campaigning on social media: Politicians, audiences and the mediation of political communication on Facebook and Twitter. *Political Communication*, 35(1), 50-74. <https://www.doi.org/10.1177/1461444817709282>
- Torcal, M., Montero, J. R. & Teorell, J. (2006). La participación política en España: modos y niveles en perspectiva comparada. *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, 132, 7-41.
- Túñez, M. & Sixto, J. (2011). Redes sociales, política y Compromiso 2.0: La comunicación de los diputados españoles en Facebook. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 66, 210-234. <https://www.doi.org/10.4185/RLCS-66-2011-930-210-246>
- Ureña, D. (2011). Decálogo para un candidato 2.0. *Cuadernos de Comunicación Evoca*, 4, 29-33. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/1eiLZXp>
- Vallés, J. M. (2007). *Ciencia Política. Una introducción*. Barcelona: Ariel.
- Zugasti, R. & Pérez J. (2015). La interacción política en Twitter: el caso de @ppopular y @ahorapodemos durante la campaña para las Elecciones Europeas de 2014. *Ámbitos*, 28, 1-14. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2Ur6zjg>