

# Construction of political emotions: an analysis of the use of Twitter in electoral campaigns in Bogotá

## Construcción de emociones políticas: análisis del uso de Twitter en campañas electorales en Bogotá

### *Construção de emoções políticas: análise do uso do Twitter em campanhas eleitorais em Bogotá*

**Angie Katherine González González**, Universidad Externado de Colombia, Bogotá, Colombia ([angie.gonzalez@uexternado.edu.co](mailto:angie.gonzalez@uexternado.edu.co))

**Carme Ferré-Pavia**, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Departamento de Medios, Barcelona, España ([Carme.Ferre@uab.cat](mailto:Carme.Ferre@uab.cat))

**ABSTRACT** | This research seeks to show the main characteristics that define an electoral campaign nowadays, almost two decades after the emergence of social networks. The case focuses on examining all the messages posted on Twitter by the two most voted candidates running for mayor of Bogotá, Colombia, during the 2020-2023 election period. This article uses a mixed methodology, based on content analysis, and centers on the textual recurrences of 2,343 tweets. The main finding leads us to propose that we are in a multiplatform context that forces candidates to communicate in different languages and values, adopting a new trend of mixing hard and soft messages into a single tweet, and to reinforce the emotional side with the use of images and symbols. It can be concluded that, within the content, an emotional, highly persuasive narrative is imposed, focused on personal stories that blur the political parties and that involve agenda issues that mix premodern, modern, and postmodern values.

**KEYWORDS:** Colombia; political communication; electoral campaigns; Twitter; social media.

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**RESUMEN** | *Esta investigación busca mostrar las principales características que definen una campaña electoral en la actualidad, casi dos décadas después del surgimiento de las redes sociales. El caso se centra en examinar todos los mensajes publicados en Twitter por los dos candidatos a la alcaldía de Bogotá, Colombia, más votados durante el período electoral 2020-2023. Se utiliza una metodología mixta, basada en el análisis de contenido, centrada en las recurrencias textuales de 2343 tuits. Los hallazgos principales evidencian que estamos en un contexto multiplataforma que obliga a los candidatos a comunicarse en diferentes lenguajes y valores, adoptando una nueva tendencia a mezclar mensajes duros y suaves en un solo tuit, y a reforzar el lado emocional con el uso de imágenes y símbolos. Se puede concluir que dentro del contenido se impone una narrativa emocional, altamente persuasiva, enfocada en historias personales que desdibujan los partidos políticos y que involucran temas de agenda en los que se mezclan valores premodernos, modernos y posmodernos.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Colombia; comunicación política; campañas electorales; Twitter; redes sociales.

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**RESUMO** | *Esta pesquisa busca demonstrar as principais características que definem uma campanha eleitoral na atualidade, quase duas décadas após o surgimento das redes sociais. O caso se concentra em examinar todas as mensagens publicadas no Twitter pelos dois candidatos mais votados a prefeito de Bogotá, Colômbia, durante o período eleitoral 2020-2023. Este artigo usa uma metodologia mista, baseada na análise de conteúdo, e centra-se nas recorrências textuais de 2343 tweets. Os principais resultados mostram que estamos em um contexto multiplataforma que força os candidatos a se comunicarem em diferentes línguas e valores, adotando uma nova tendência de misturar mensagens duras e suaves em um único tweet, e reforçar o lado emocional com o uso de imagens e símbolos. Pode-se concluir que, dentro do conteúdo, se impõe uma narrativa emocional, altamente persuasiva, focada em histórias pessoais que confundem os partidos políticos e que envolvem questões de agenda em que valores pré-modernos, modernos e pós-modernos se misturam.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Colômbia; comunicação política; campanhas eleitorais; Twitter; mídias sociais.

## INTRODUCTION

In the mass media era of the 20th century, citizen-consumers were viewers and radio listeners. Today, in the digital age, people have accounts with an IP address that are part of a network of nodes within an web of connections through which information travels continuously. In these circumstances, Twitter has established itself as an arena, or political discussion ring, where arguments abound and where polarization is projected.

For example, statements by the current Bogota mayor, Claudia López, about Venezuelan migrants, whom she blamed for increased insecurity in the city, was the trigger that unleashed the highest number of xenophobic messages in Colombia in 2020. This statement caused a 274% increase, between October 29 and 31, in the number of xenophobic posts on Twitter at the national level (Cabrera et al., 2021).

Twitter has been also considered as a platform where image is not as important as rhetoric. It is the realm of words and the battle of public opinion; it is also the preferred social network of politicians, media, opinion leaders, and decision-makers (Yaqub et al., 2017; Park, 2013). In the case of Twitter, although the microblogging network does not disclose official figures, the industry estimates that close to four million Colombians use this service (We are social & Hootsuite, 2021). This figure places Colombia above countries such as France and Germany (González & Richard, 2020) in the number of users.

Social networks are currently a privileged tool for promoting political narratives without mediation and successfully disseminating messages (Barberá et al., 2015; Gainous & Wagner, 2014; Delli Carpini & Keeter, 2002). This trend has led some authors to suggest the possibility of a relational and contextual change based on the use of social networks as tools for political debate (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2010).

In this regard, the general objective of this research is to study how social networks have changed, or not, the way in which politicians relate to citizens, specifically during election time, through the processes of production and dissemination of messages in digital environments. It is necessary to understand that most comparative research in political communication has been guided by an overarching goal of generalization involving various quantitative approaches (Jungherr, 2014). The author reviews 115 studies on the use of Twitter in politics.

This research presents a case study that complements research focused on the use of Twitter by candidates and whose relevance and originality is marked by the scarce research of this type that analyzes the content of messages in Twitter accounts in Latin America such as that of Pedro-Carañana and colleagues (2020) or that of García-Perdomo (2017), and by the inclusion within the analysis of the elements of what different authors qualify as postmodern campaigns.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Postmodern campaigns**

Studies on electoral campaigns and the influence of social networks in these processes have been characterized by prioritizing considerations on the possible impacts of digital political communication on: the operation of campaigns, electoral results, the impact on political participation and, to a lesser extent, its incidence on democracy (Graham & Schwanholz, 2020; Rodríguez-Estrada et al., 2020; Tang & Lee, 2013; Nielsen & Vaccari, 2013; Bimber & Davis, 2003; Norris, 2002).

Digital platforms such as Twitter or Facebook represent the greatest media concentration of all times (Zhuravskaya et al., 2020; Castells, 2009). Currently, digital networks have become an essential part of a political campaign strategy because, in addition to their role as social communication platforms, they are capable of self-generating content and creating new norms of social interaction (Shmargad & Sanchez, 2022; Maurer & Diehl, 2020; Kenski & Stroud, 2006). Thus, the current model of political communication inexorably includes the use that campaigns make of social networks and their leading role in the definition of campaign strategies.

Faced with this influence and contexts, some authors appealed to the idea of modernization to show that changes in political communication are closely related to processes of social change (Norris, 2019; Hallin & Mancini, 2011). For instance, Norris (2002) suggests that these changes are part of evolving modernization processes capable of transforming the electorate, as well as the media and campaign organization practices. The author stresses that not all campaigns follow the same processes and that these should be understood as part of the modernization process rooted in technological and political breakthroughs common to many post-industrial societies. She therefore identifies three types of campaigns: premodern, modern, and postmodern. The concept of a postmodern campaign implies a new form of highly professionalized political strategy with a strong presence of marketing techniques, hyper-personalized, and focused on targeting. Postmodern campaigns are characterized by employing professional consultants, the use of diverse communication channels, the fragmentation of messages (targeting), the irruption of the Internet, and the excessive personalization of the leader's character (Carrillo, 2009). Regarding the latter, Norris (2019) points out the strengthening of populism in the media and, consequently, in politics. This, in turn, is what makes the media exposure of these leaders focus on their private life and their feelings.

This approach is currently related with the phenomenon of personalization of politics. In this case, it is important to keep in mind that personalization responds

to many different approaches (Adam & Maier, 2010). For example, Holtz-Bacha and colleagues (2014) propose that personalization takes substantially different forms due to structural variations in the media and political systems, as well as the distinctive characteristics of campaigns and candidates. Nevertheless, the authors sustain that despite the differences, several factors have been identified as key drivers of personalization. Some are related to the media, such as the proliferation of television, but the most important drivers are linked to the modernization of society and the subsequent changes in the political system.

In this regard, hyper-exposure to convey the campaign narrative is a generalized factor that characterizes postmodern politics. It explains why the candidates use messages that combine emotional elements, related to their family or personal life, with hard elements or information linked to technical information, or political and programmatic proposals. In political communication studies, a large body of research has been accumulated on this kind of communication emphasis usually referred to as hard and soft news (Lehman-Wilzig & Seletzky, 2010; Prior, 2010). However, Reinemann and colleagues (2016) propose that there is no consensus about what exactly hard and soft news are, nor how they should be defined or measured. Moreover, the concept has not been clearly differentiated from similar phenomena, such as tabloidization and infotainment.

These characteristics imply that, in addition to programs and specific proposals, it is essential for a politician to think about the construction of identity and symbology to create a climate of opinion in favor of his or her campaign narrative and values that want he or she wants to rescue. As a consequence of this communication context, it is no longer a matter of having the best arguments to win the election, but of triggering of the right emotions, values, and feelings.

### **Twitter, emotions, and emotion mining**

At the political and electoral level, different effects of the use of social networks have been identified. In political and electoral issues, special attention has been paid to the use of Twitter. As an opinion-generating platform, and considering its growth rate, the large number of tweets shared by both candidates and citizens during an election campaign can be considered as research material (Arifiyanti et al., 2020; Calzado, 2020; Larsson, 2020; Graham & Schwanholz, 2020; Correa & Camargo, 2017). These point to the main issues of the campaign, the emotions that set the trends, the candidate's arguments and, even more importantly, the narratives they want to build. More recently, analyses of Twitter use at a political level have focused on issues related to public governance and trust, making predictions about the approval of governmental policies, up to the electoral arena, even attempting to make predictions about elections results (Jungherr, 2014).

For instance, Yaqub et al. (2017) have demonstrated the correlation between the behavior of the users regarding their Twitter profile and the attributes linked to their tweets to identify how their messages implicitly carry emotions that can lead to future behaviors at the political level. Other studies have also focused on developing models that attempt to understand the behavior of users on this social network (Boynton et al., 2014; O'Connor et al., 2010; Stromer-Galley, 2002).

Despite the different study approaches, most authors agree that emotions play a crucial role in the dissemination and distribution of content published on Twitter (Ferré-Pavia & Perales, 2015). In today's postmodern politics, marked by excessive hyper-leadership, the campaign narrative based on the emotions that successfully project a candidate's brand and personal story turns out to be a key element in engaging, building loyalty, conquering new audiences, and mobilizing followers (Norris, 2019). Primary or baseline emotions were originally stipulated by psychologist Paul Ekman and colleagues (1972). Several authors have highlighted the importance of the use of emotions and have defined them as one of the key elements when communicating (Emadi & Rahgozar, 2020; Vilares et al., 2015; Taddy, 2013).

Authors such as Ferrara and Yang (2015) and Peifer and Landreville (2020) have come to affirm that there is a positive bias in the dissemination of the tweets associated with positive emotions; they are retweeted more times and reach a larger audience compared to negative tweets. However, it is necessary to clarify that the use of negative content has not disappeared. Ituassu and colleagues (2019) suggest that in this new political scenario campaigns gain more freedom to disseminate negative content and rhetoric to certain audiences without other groups learning about these posts or directly associating them with their campaign or candidate. They take advantage of dark posts and fake accounts, with bots, whether real or not, to boost the use of antagonistic narratives or stories.

Other researchers have conducted studies to find a correlation between tweet sentiment and public opinion polls. One study found a high correlation between Gallup's daily monitoring poll for President Barack Obama's performance approval rating and Twitter sentiment during 2009 (Allen & Denton, 2010). According to the authors, this high correlation between Twitter sentiment analysis and the public poll data points to the great potential of social networks analysis to replace traditional surveys.

In the same vein, Ceron and colleagues (2014) analyzed the online popularity of Italian political leaders throughout 2011, and the voting intention of French Internet users in the two presidential elections of 2012. They concluded that, although active Internet users are not necessarily representative of a country's entire population,

social networks have a remarkable ability to predict electoral results, as well as a significant correlation between social networks and the results of traditional mass polls. This same idea is taken up by authors such as Tumasjan and colleagues (2011) who, in the context of the German federal elections, sought to investigate whether Twitter was being used as a forum for political deliberation and whether Twitter posts reflected political sentiment outside of the social network. Their results show that Twitter is indeed widely used for political deliberation, and the analysis of the political sentiment of tweets shows a close correlation with the political positions of parties and politicians.

The emotional classification proposed in this article considers eight emotional categories: anger, anticipation, disgust, fear, joy, sadness, surprise, and trust, which were developed by Mohammad and Turney (2013). Both researchers managed to consolidate an emotional analysis mechanism through the creation of a lexicon based on the word-emotion association.

### **Contextualization: The Colombian case**

The elections that took place in Colombia in 2019 allowed citizens to elect the leaders and collegiate bodies that will govern during the period between 2020 and 2023 at the local and regional levels. These elections occurred within a context in which the candidacies of significant citizen groups increased considerably, evincing the distancing between the electorate and the traditional political parties. In many cases, this was evident in the sum of candidacies in electoral alliances.

Broadly speaking, it is possible to affirm that the electoral results showed important changes regarding the distribution of electoral forces at the national level and, above all, in relation to the consolidation of power structures in the regions (González & Richard 2020). In several of the regional capitals, a change was observed in the way the urban electorate voted, which gave victory to independent candidates without traditional partisan affiliation.

In the case of Bogotá, the main spokeswoman and candidate of the *Partido Verde* (center-left) coalition, Claudia López, won the election with less than a 3% difference with respect to Carlos Galán, an independent candidate (center-right) who collected enough signatures for a nomination by petition and built his own movement called *Bogotá Para la Gente* (Bogotá for the People). The two candidates tried to present themselves as centrist options and achieved an individual vote of more than one million votes<sup>1</sup>.

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1. According to the Colombia National Civil Registry the total number of votes at Bogota mayor elections was 3,219,343

## METHODOLOGY

This paper aims to understand the ways in which politicians present and adapt their messages to the specificities of different platforms, to generate deeper insights into how political communication is shaped, or not, by social media. For this, the Twitter accounts of Claudia López and Carlos Fernando Galán, the two most voted politicians in the 2019 elections for mayor of Bogotá, will be analyzed.

To achieve the general objective, this research is focused on:

- a. Defining the characteristics, soft and hard, and type of information of the messages disseminated via Twitter.
- b. Identifying the main emotions presented in the messages, and their weight in comparison with other types of posts.
- c. Establish the campaign narratives based on the emotions projected by the candidates on their Twitter account.

For this purpose, we conducted a mixed-method analysis of 2,343 tweets using the platform Tweet Binder to obtain data. For the analysis, all the tweets posted by the candidates' official accounts, @CarlosFGalan and @claudialopez, between August 1st and October 31st, 2019, were considered. This period corresponds to all the messages posted by each of the accounts during the official campaign time allowed by Colombian law (3 months).

The information for each candidate was downloaded separately. For each downloaded tweet, the following information was retrieved:

1. Date and time of creation.
2. Text of the tweet.
3. Username.
4. Number of retweets.
5. Image or video links per tweet.
6. Other data not relevant to the study.

For information processing, we used the R software. The data was structured using the Tidyverse library in R, and the Quanteda package was utilized to manipulate the text of each Tweet, removing unnecessary characters such as punctuation, numbers, and stopwords.

Once the database intended for use was debugged, the Get Nrc Sentiment feature from the Syuzhet library was executed in R. For this specific research, we used

the NRC Lexicon since it is the only one available in Spanish and also relates two feelings (positive or negative) and their associations with eight basic emotions (anger, anticipation, disgust, fear, joy, sadness, surprise, and trust). This dictionary also connects a set of words manually annotated through surveys with the maximum difference scaling technique, which evaluates preference in a series of alternatives.

In total, the library used for this analysis has 14,182 categorized words, which include common English terms translated into Spanish, as well as terms frequently used on social media platforms such as Twitter. As a result of the processing, the classification of each line of text in the different emotions and feelings was as follows: 0 (not associated) / 1 (associated) and, in addition, a final score for each tweet.

### **Categories and additional indicators**

To delve into the analysis of the type of content shared by the candidates, a manual collection was also carried out with the scaling technique by maximum difference to define a series of excluding and descriptive categories that required a low level of inference by the coders. For recording and measurement, a coding protocol was designed and pilot-tested by the three coders who conducted the final measurement<sup>2</sup>.

For the content analysis, a code book was created to determine the soft and hard messages, mentions related to leadership attributes, mentions of political parties, and the tweets' type of content. In this regard, messages were classified considering:

- Thematic appeals: presentation of evidence, testimonials, statistics, visual evidence, or rational arguments.
- Image or character appeals: positive or negative comments regarding a candidate's abilities to perform the job, their credibility, honesty, reliability, intelligence, work ethic, altruism, fairness, competence, charisma, vitality, strength, courage, and other personality traits. They also appear in the form of personal life data.
- Emotional appeals: comments that attempt to evoke an emotional response in the audience. For example, messages that generate fear, anger, discontent, frustration, gratitude, hope, or pride, designed to provoke negative or positive emotions.
- Mixed: tweets that combined thematic, image, and emotional appeals.
- None of the above: messages that do not have any of the above appeals.

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2.Special acknowledgement to Carolina Meneses, Yesenia Villanueva, and Juan Camilo Novoa, who helped with the codification process.

Regarding the trustworthiness of the analysis, we followed the Lemish and Tidhar (1999) model, a formula based on consensus among coders to choose a single entry or category for each variable. In situations where the coders could not fully agree, the procedure of Garramone and colleagues (1991) was followed, and the disagreement was resolved by choosing the coding selected by two of the three coders.

## RESULTS

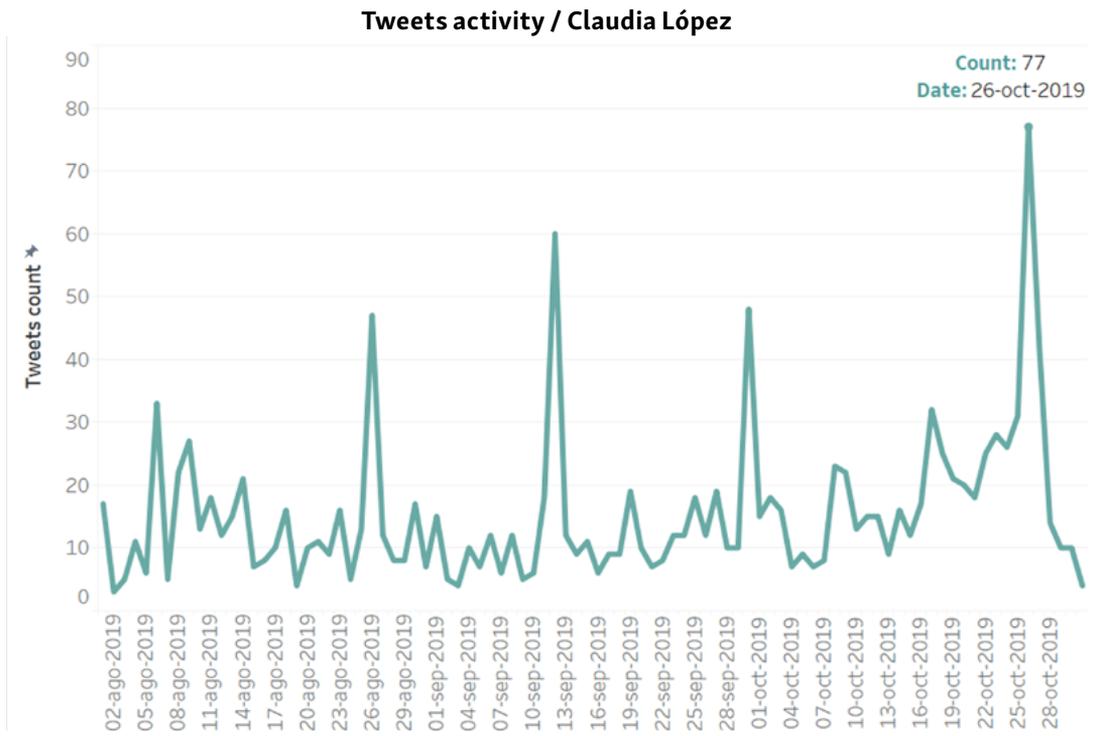
The results presented below are differentiated according to the following categories: hard news and soft news; Tweet content characteristics; candidate leadership attributes; emotional appeals and, lastly, mentions of a political party or movement. Additionally, information on variables related to specific Twitter metrics is included.

### The use of Twitter by each candidate

To begin, it is relevant to stipulate that, although there was not a significant difference in terms of total votes obtained between the two candidates mentioned above, there was in terms of the capacity of use and reach of their messages on Twitter. Claudia López sent 36% more messages than Carlos Galán: while López sent 1,422 tweets during the analysed period, the total number of tweets sent by Galán was 921.

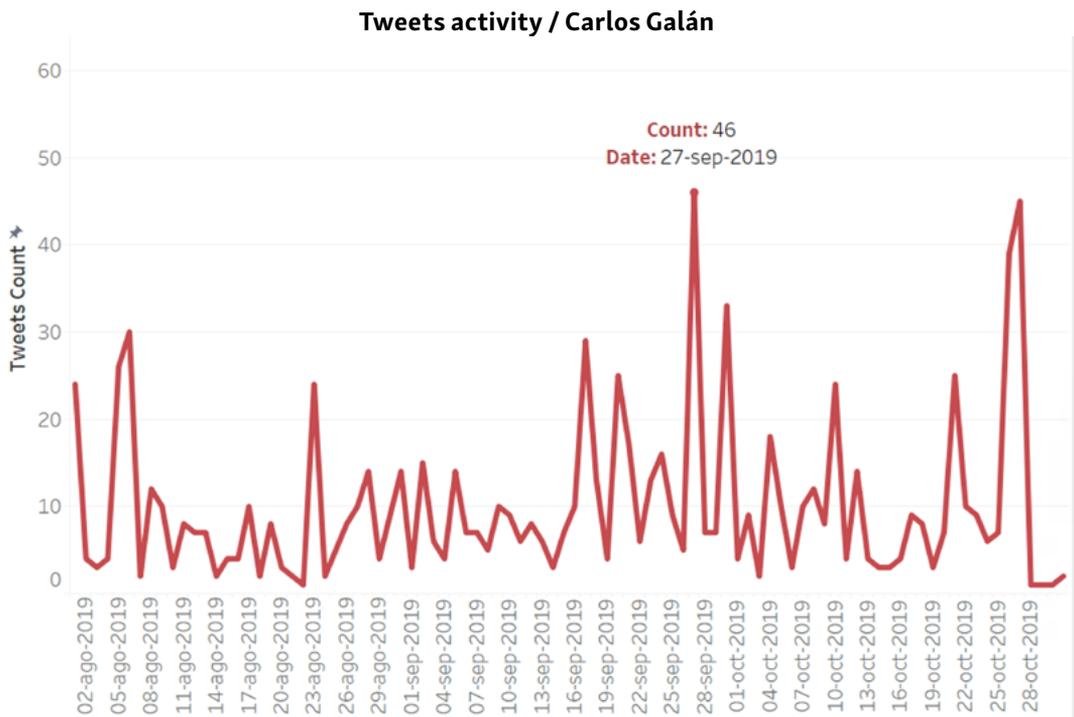
In the same vein, the results show little engagement with citizens and a reiterated response to those accounts of political or opinion leaders who had previously expressed their support to López and Galán. By inspecting the platform's general metrics, it is possible to note that the three most frequently mentioned accounts in López's tweets were @activistaco, the account of her current Secretary of Government, @maferojas, current Bogota councilwoman for the *Partido Verde*, and @cloquis, environmental activist and current director of Planning and Environmental Information Systems of the Mayor's Office of Bogotá. In the case of Galán, the three most mentioned accounts were those of @angelagarzonc, daughter of former vice president Angelino Garzón and a pre-candidate of the *Partido Centro Democrático* for Bogota's Mayor's Office; @claudialopez, current mayor and then-candidate for mayor of Bogota, and @camaracomerciobog, official account of the city's chamber of commerce.

Regarding the total number of tweets posted by each of the accounts that included additional content such as photos or videos, 2,343 in total, it can be observed that 65% of López's tweets had additional content, compared to 45% of Galán's.



**Figure 1. Tweets posted by @claudialopez**

Source: Own elaboration based on data from Claudia López' Twitter account.



**Figure 2. Tweets posted by @CarlosFGalan**

Source: Own elaboration based on data from Carlos Galán's Twitter account.

### Hard and soft messages on Twitter

The content categories specified in tables 1, 2, and 3 were established through an inductive method based on previous work by García and colleagues (2016). The grouping between the type of soft and hard messages for this analysis is presented in Table 1.

It is necessary to stipulate that the coding includes the “other” option, since there is a small number of messages that cannot be correctly classified within any of the other categories. Regarding Claudia López, table 2 shows that there is virtually a balance between the type of soft (45%) and hard (55%) content shared on her Twitter account. The contents that stand out the most are the presentation of campaign proposals and, in this regard, the programmatic issues most repeated are the ones related to education, mobility, safety, and environmental issues. The messages that refer to personal feelings stand out for being related to the gratitude for the support received throughout the campaign, to highlight her team’s work, or to emphasize the role of women and girls in building a better and fairer future.

Galán’s case is different: table 3 shows a majority of soft messages over the total communication of his account, 87%. In this case, personal or campaign anecdotes, along with the category of personal feelings, lead the messages shared in Twitter by the candidate. In his case, expressions of acknowledgment towards his team and to the citizens who manifested their support on social networks are in the majority, in addition to messages specifically aimed at lowering the tone of the campaign and avoiding polarization.

Soft information (soft)	Hard information (hard)
Private life matters	Presentation of campaign proposals
Anecdotes (campaign or personal)	Discussion/presentation of data
Personal feelings	Presentation of their stance/views
Sports/Music	Allegations of corruption
	Allegations of defamation
	Results of election polls

**Table 1. Analysis categories for soft news and hard news**

*Source: Own elaboration.*

Type of information	%	Total tweets
Soft type information (soft news)	45	589
Hard information (hard news)	55	730

**Table 2. Total soft news and hard news in the official @claudialopez’ account**

*Source: Own elaboration based on data from Claudia López’ Twitter account.*

Type of information	%	Total tweets
Soft type information (soft news)	87	746
Hard information (hard news)	13	107

**Table 3. Total soft news and hard news in the official @CarlosFGalan account**

*Source: Own elaboration based on data from Carlos Galán's Twitter account.*

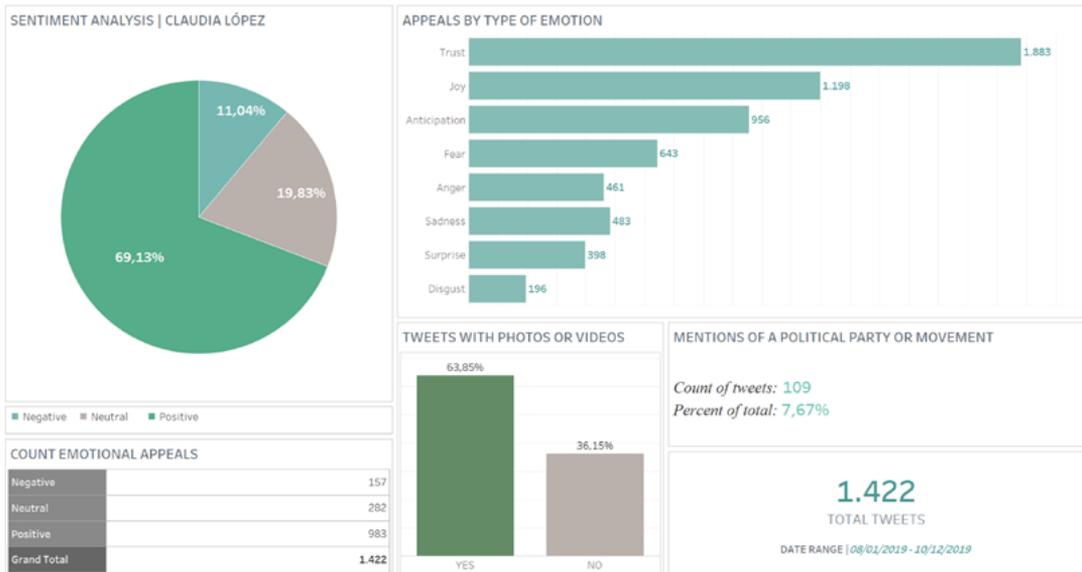
### Emotional appeals

In this regard, the emotional classification stipulated to analyze the type of content used by each of the candidates in the Twitter accounts shows the use of positive emotions in the crafting of the messages was the common denominator. Figure 3 show that Claudia López's campaign used a greater number of messages appealing to positive emotions (69.13%). On the candidate's Twitter account, the predominant emotions were trust, followed by joy and anticipation. These values revolve mainly around the candidate's capacity and preparation, the support that the campaign received from recognized political and academic leaders, and the knowledge that López had of the city and the problems of Bogota's citizens.

Figure 4 shows the use of positive emotions was also present in Carlos Galán's campaign (55.16%), where the most used values were the same ones as those of López. In this case, and according to the type of content found across the messages, Galán used his Twitter account to make known and publicly thank the support of his campaign, as well as to thank and demonstrate the favorable trend shown by the polls, and the perception that the candidate obtained from citizens in the streets.

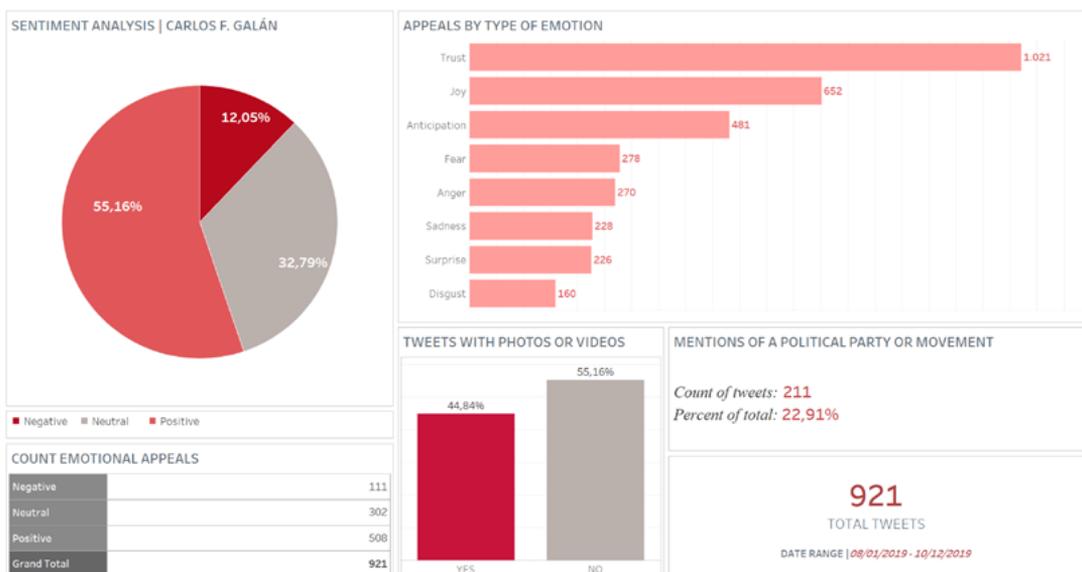
The following figures (5 and 6) show a polynomial trend line that allows us to understand the emotional trajectory of the tweets during the campaign. Although there are several fluctuating data, the curve allows to fit the fluctuations of the amount of data to the mean (colored line). The X-axis of the figure (emotional valence) shows the score achieved by each tweet within the NRC lexicon methodology; scores above 0 are positive feelings, scores below 0 are negative feelings, and scores equal to 0 are neutral.

In both cases, it is observed that most of the tweets are classified as positive within the timeline and, in addition, there is a notorious activation of positive feelings in the days prior to the elections. The main difference between these two candidates is that the emotional narrative of candidate Galán (figure 6), compared to that of López (figure 5), tends to be flatter and closer to 0 throughout the campaign.



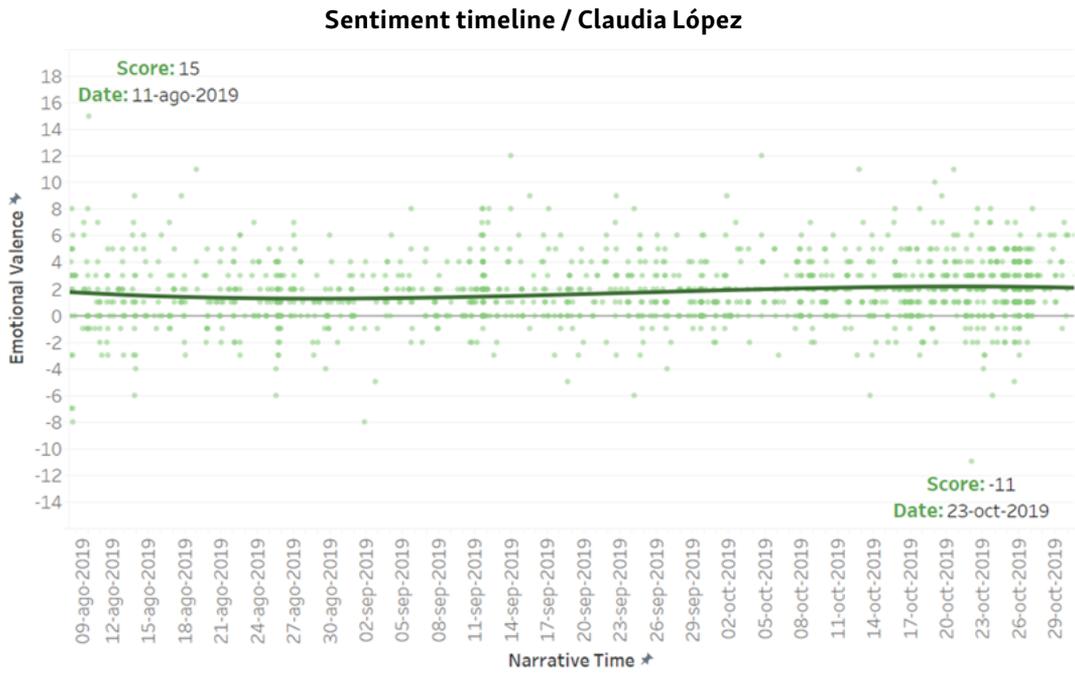
**Figure 3. Sentiment analysis, type of content and party mentions by @claudialopez**

Source: Own elaboration based on data from Claudia López' Twitter account.



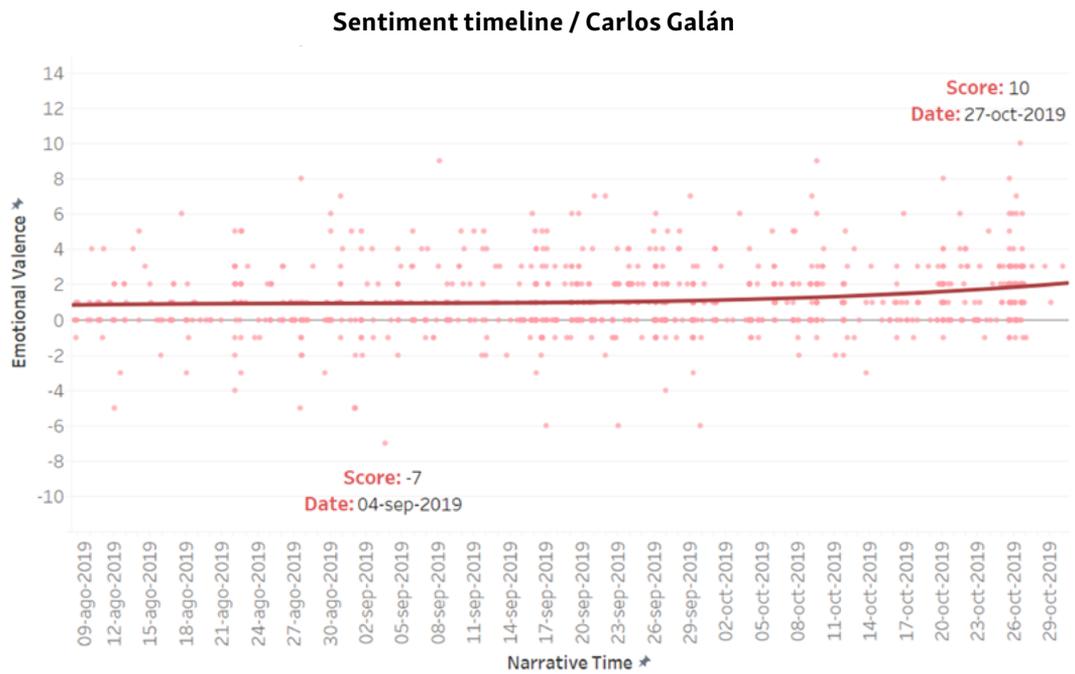
**Figure 4. Sentiment analysis, type of content and party mentions by @CarlosFGalan**

Source: Own elaboration based on data from Carlos Galán's Twitter account.



**Figure 5. Emotional trajectory of tweets by @claudialopez**

Source: Own elaboration based on data from Claudia López' Twitter account.



**Figure 6. Emotional trajectory of tweets by @CarlosFgalan**

Source: Own elaboration based on data from Carlos Galán's Twitter account.

### Mentions of a political party or movement

This research also sought to confirm the mention of political parties or movements that supported each of the candidates. The results of figures 3 and 4 show that, in most cases, there was a clear absence of this type of mentions by both candidates. In her Tweets, Claudia López mentioned the parties that supported her only 7.67% of the time, while Carlos Galán did so in 14.84% of his tweets.

### Leadership attributes

In this case, the goal is to establish, through a series of attributes, the type of leadership projected by each of the candidates; to define whether they project a style focused on strategic, technical, and executive competencies and skills (hard skills), or, on the contrary, whether they seek to project a leadership style focused on empathy with others, emotional intelligence, transparency and teamwork (soft skills).

In this case, tables 4 and 5 show that the two candidates shared the same three attributes (warmth/compassion, competence/skills, honesty/integrity), although in a different order. The results show that, regarding the leadership variable, the communication of less traditional skills (soft skills) and those more related to the candidates' values and ability to demonstrate closeness predominates in both.

Character and/or image appeal of the candidate	%	N= 1,422
Warmth/compassion	29	409
Competence/skill	22	306
Honesty/ integrity	17	243
Active individual	13	188
(being) a common man/woman	8	109
Toughness/strength	5	78
Performance/success	3	48
None of the above	2	23
Patriotism	1	18

**Table 4. Character and/or image appeals of @claudialopez**

*Source: Own elaboration based on data from Claudia López' Twitter account.*

Character and/or image appeal of the candidate	%	N= 921
Warmth/compassion	26	243
Competence/skill	17	153
Honesty/ integrity	15	141
Active individual	14	126
(being) a common man/woman	12	109
Toughness/strength	7	64
Performance/success	5	46
None of the above	2	20
Patriotism	2	19

**Table 5. Character and/or image appeals of @CarlosFGalan**

*Source: Own elaboration based on data from Carlos Galán's Twitter account.*

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The results presented above make it evident that most shared and liked content for each of the candidates' accounts are those that include a photo or a video to reinforce the message to be delivered. Additionally, this preliminary result on the use of additional content to accompany the messages is linked to the fact that the most popular and shared tweets, as well as those that obtained the most likes for each account, bear a high percentage of emotional appeals and soft information.

Positive emotional appeals were the most relevant in this campaign, and both candidates resorted to this type of positive appeals to give coherence to their personas. These results are consistent with research in social networks and political advertising that demonstrate that, mostly, campaigns should focus more strategically in disseminating and sharing emotional messages (García et al., 2016; Suresh & Ramkrishnan, 2015; Meyen et al., 2014), and that the candidates' personal narrative will impact the entire campaign and its communication strategy to bring their story closer to citizens.

This statement is clear in the Galán case and, although it is less evident for the López case, it is also present. In the latter, it is important to clarify that many of the messages that were classified as hard information presented campaign proposals, made reference to facts, figures or specific projects, but at the same time were framed into a personal tone that reflected the candidate's character.

Regarding the use of negative emotions, although several tweets show that it was a highly polarized campaign, these emotions were not especially present, or were not strong enough in the official campaign accounts. The results of this research show that the candidates do not frequently mention their opponents, and instead focus more on themselves or their specific issues. This reinforces Crespo and colleagues' position (2020) that campaigns of extreme polarization, lack of connection with the issues that the voters want, and absence of positive messages or stories are stepping aside in the new postmodern campaigns models.

Regarding the role of political movements or parties, it is observed that the candidates' attributes, their personal history and their ability to trigger empathy and closeness with the micro-targets has displaced the need to demonstrate partisan support. This confirms Howard's thesis (2006), who affirms that in this more complex and fragmented media system, with a more volatile electorate, the hyper-personalization of campaigns is being favored, as well as a new form of communication or political action focused on obtaining the support of minorities instead of trying to obtain majorities closer in ideological terms.

The analysis highlights a great challenge regarding the use of Twitter. While it is true that this social network has the ability to improve the exchange with voters, mobilize the electorate and introduce certain agendas and trends, the information analysis process allowed to observe that the people who maintain more interactions with each candidate's account are closely related to or work for the campaign. These results reaffirm Carpini's (2002) spill over hypothesis, which posits that citizens with offline political engagement use online tools to exert a greater influence. This means that those people who were already involved offline extend their online engagement in campaigns, which would lead to reformulate the idea of the capacity of social networks, specifically Twitter, to retain and mobilize new voters.

Campaigns may use new channels but anchored in the use of premodern or modern values, as they face an expansion of campaign resources. In this case, the real difference among the stories built in social media are the values used to project the candidate's brand. It could be said that, in general, all campaigns have schemes that mix topics and premodern, modern, and postmodern values, which is why it is impossible to pigeonhole them in one of these scenarios.

As per the authors' interpretation concerning the values linked to premodern and postmodern narratives, when these are framed within the territory, God, family, property, and paternal authority, they could be defined as a premodern campaign (Norris, 2019). However, when stories are developed from values such as equality, justice, and freedom, there would be a modern approach. Campaigns

focused on values such as feminism, environment, and the new sexualities could be considered as postmodern.

It is essential for future research to analyze the values used to identify the type of campaign being developed and where the emphasis is placed. It is possible to confirm Crespo and colleagues' position (2020) that we are in a multiplatform context that forces candidates to communicate in different languages.

Likewise, it is necessary to show that the concentration of messages on certain topics does not always mean that candidates offer arguments that are exclusively hard information or that only refer to complex political issues. There is a new trend that tends to mix both types of hard and soft messages into a single tweet, and to reinforce the emotional side with the use of images and symbols and exaggerating political personalization. As has been observed for years, almost everything that is communicated on this social network is based on emotion (Lehman-Wilzig & Seletzky, 2010; Prior, 2010). A few messages have traditional political content or appeal to objective reasons for voting, which is why it is necessary to insist on the creation of new analysis categories that enable the understanding of digital platforms and their logic. This would have the purpose of contributing not just to their analysis, but to shed light for consultants and politicians on what type of content should be produced.

To conclude, it can be stated that there are open lines of research to improve the classification of tweets, specifically in Spanish. Furthermore, although important data can be collected by using EmoLex (NRC Word-emotion Association Lexicon) for preliminary research, it would be useful and relevant to adapt this study to machine learning techniques. Currently, there are numerous texts datasets that can provide greater accuracy in sentiment analysis through training and testing, e.g., using the TASS lexicon, a dictionary generated through the initiative of the Spanish Society for Natural Language Processing.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**ANGIE K. GONZÁLEZ**, docente investigadora de la Facultad de Finanzas, Gobierno y Relaciones Internacionales de la Universidad Externado de Colombia. Magíster en Comunicación Política e Institucional y estudiante de Doctorado en Medios, Comunicación y Cultura de la Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona. Sus líneas de investigación son los procesos político-electorales, la comunicación política, el liderazgo político femenino, las redes y lo transmedia.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3248-9256>

**DRA CARME FERRÉ-PAVIA**, profesora titular del departamento de Medios, Comunicación y Cultura de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Comunicación de la UAB. Dirige el grupo de investigación en comunicación y responsabilidad social Compress-Incom UAB. Autora de nueve monografías y decenas de artículos en diversos idiomas. Sus líneas de investigación primordiales son la ética de la comunicación, la espectacularización, el infoentretenimiento, las redes y lo transmedia.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7258-6376>