FAR-RIGHT POPULISM IN SPAIN AND SOCIAL MEDIA:

Main conclusions of DATAPOP research project (PGC2018-097352-A-I00)

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Within the DATAPOP research project, a series of investigations have been carried out that have shed light on how populism has evolved in Spain these last years. More specifically, the impact of far-right populism in the context of social networks has been analyzed. The main conclusions drawn are the following:

1 There are certain characteristics of populist communication, such as chameleonism and the central position of the 'people', that help populism to overcome some difficulties posed by social media, in particular, those derived from the context collapse (Guerrero-Solé et al., 2020).

2 Far-right populism takes advantage of the data analysis from social media to find characteristics shared by massive audiences –named as the "greatest common divisor"– and appeal to them when formulating their messages in order to reach the 'people'. This populism has been called data-driven populism (Guerrero-Solé et al., 2020).

3 The irruption of the Spanish far-right political party Vox in the November 2019 elections had an impact on the structure of relations between political actors on Twitter, increasing the distance between the two main Spanish political blocs – the one formed by the right-wing parties Cs, PP and Vox and the one formed by the left-wing ones and the nationalists (Guerrero-Solé, Mas-Manchón, et al., 2022).

4 Despite its recent emergence, Vox has acquired a central position in the cluster of right-wing parties on Twitter (Guerrero-Solé, Mas-Manchón, et al., 2022)

5 The Spanish media are politically polarized, with two well-defined groups or clusters: one very close to the left-wing parties (UP and PSOE), and another very close to the right-wing ones (Cs, PP and Vox) (Guerrero-Solé, 2022).

6 The most polarized media outlets maintain their political ideology over time (Guerrero-Solé, 2022).

7 The method used for this study –RON method– can be constituted as a solid methodological option for measuring the ideology of the Spanish media outlets (Guerrero-Solé, 2022).

8 During the state of alarm declared by the COVID-19 pandemic in Spain, between March and June 2020, Vox was the party that published the most toxic messages on Twitter – followed by PP (Guerrero-Solé & Philippe, 2020).

9 Spanish male politicians were more likely to post toxic messages on Twitter than female politicians (Guerrero-Solé & Philippe, 2020).

10 Spanish male politicians have a greater audience and amplification on social networks such as Twitter (Guerrero-Solé & Perales-García, 2021).

11 In general, both male and female politicians retweet men more frequently than women (Guerrero-Solé & Perales-García, 2021).

12 The female leadership of a political party tends to balance the gender differences observed on Twitter (Guerrero-Solé & Perales-García, 2021).

13 Finally, the participation of celebrities in political debates on Twitter can have a great impact on audiences that have not previously shown political preferences online (Guerrero-Solé, Pujadas, et al., 2022).

14 Generally, celebrity followers have less political activity on social media than non-followers (Guerrero-Solé, Pujadas, et al., 2022).

15 To conclude, celebrities can be a resource to combat the far-right discourse due to the impact that they have on audiences that may be oblivious to politics and political debate (Guerrero-Solé, Pujadas, et al., 2022).

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