

COVID-19 IN YOUTUBE: DEBATES AND POLARISATION IN THE DIGITAL SPHERE

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INTRODUCTION



Social networks

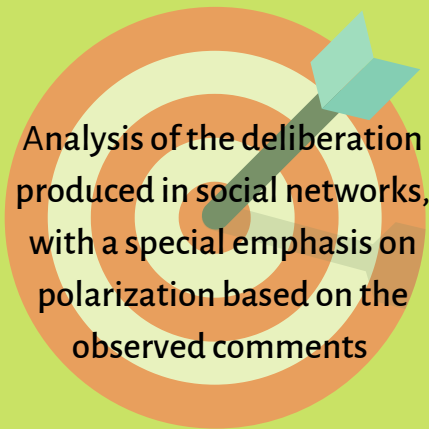
have transformed the way
have transformed the way in which
political dialogue takes place by
driving a digital configuration of the
public sphere



Affective polarization

has been incorporated as one of the
main features of social and political
phenomena, influential in the field
of communication

OBJECTS AND METODHOLOGY



Analysis of the deliberation
produced in social networks,
with a special emphasis on
polarization based on the
observed comments



Sample of 111,808 comments on YouTube
about COVID-19 during 2020
in Spain, Italy and the UK

Quantitative methodology
novel in this field of study:
automatic analysis techniques based on
algorithms

RESULTS

Table 1. Summary of the sample by country						
Country	Videos (n)	Comments	Authors	Comments/ Author (DT)	“Likes”	“Likes”/ Comments
Spain	50	15.933	7.291	2.18 (3.97)	49.102	3.08
Italy	50	27.468	9.578	2.87 (6.51)	83.972	4.69
United Kingdom	50	68.407	31.137	2.20 (5.05)	347.837	9.33

Greater polarization is
observed in Spain and Italy
than in the United Kingdom

At the disaggregated level, the
most polarizing activity obtains
the highest approval in the
Mediterranean countries of the
sample

CONCLUSIONS

1

There is a growth of filter bubbles, which
play a role of ideological legitimization of
the social networks themselves and of the
so-called "platform society"

2

Social networks help to form islands of
information that constitute a sounding
board to generate communication linkage
and saturation

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