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Politicisation and disinformation in Historical Memory. Perception of audiences on Twitter with regard to Vox's position on Federico García Lorca

Politización y desinformación en la Memoria Histórica. Percepción de las audiencias en Twitter ante la posición de Vox sobre Federico García Lorca

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Abstract

In August 2021, leaders of the far-right Vox party made statements claiming that Federico García Lorca would vote for this political force today. The poet, shot by Franco's side in 1936, accused of homosexuality, being a Freemason and a socialist, and buried in a mass grave, is a symbol of the Spanish and the Historical Memory that, in Spain, has been capitalised by the left. A new analysis of this personage, the construction of a new narrative of memory around the controversy of Vox and the digital debate is the subject of this research. It is intended to measure the impact that these statements achieved on Twitter and the reaction of digital users, investigating polarisation and misinformation. Through a quantitative-qualitative content analysis methodology applied to 1,311 tweets published on this controversy, variations in tone, virality, focus or the presence of disqualifications or insults are studied. The results highlight users' rejection of the declarations of Vox, the relevant presence of anonymous profiles, as well as a high percentage of insults towards Vox, the politicisation of memory, the creation of an interactive virtual history and the increase in misinformation and oblivion.

Keywords

Content analysis; Federico García Lorca; Historical memory; misinformation; Twitter; Vox

Resumen

En agosto de 2021, dirigentes del partido de ultraderecha Vox afirman que Federico García Lorca votaría a su fuerza política. El poeta, fusilado en 1936 por franquistas acusado de homosexual, masón y socialista, enterrado en una fosa común es un símbolo de lo español y de la Memoria Histórica que, en España, ha capitalizado la izquierda. La relectura de su figura, la construcción de una nueva narrativa de la memoria en torno a la polémica de Vox y su debate digital es el tema de este trabajo. Así, se pretende medir el impacto que alcanzaron estas afirmaciones en Twitter y la reacción de los usuarios digitales, indagando en la polarización y la desinformación. A través de una metodología de análisis de contenido cuantitativo-cualitativo aplicada a 1.311 tuits publicados sobre este episodio se estudian variables de tono, viralidad, enfoque o presencia de descalificaciones en el discurso. Los resultados avanzan un rechazo de los usuarios ante las declaraciones de Vox, una presencia relevante de perfiles anónimos, así como un alto porcentaje de insultos hacia Vox. También evidencian la politización de la memoria, la creación de una historia virtual interactiva y el avance de la desinformación y el olvido.

Palabras clave

Análisis de contenido; desinformación; Federico García Lorca; Memoria histórica; Twitter; Vox

1. Introduction

Figure 1. Tweet by Macarena Olona about García Lorca



Source: https://twitter.com/Macarena_Olona/status/1428415920205189120?s=20

In August 2021, coinciding with the eighty-fifth anniversary of the assassination of Federico García Lorca, leaders of the far-right Spanish party Vox (Turnbull-Dugarte, 2019; Ferreira, 2019) made a series of statements in which they claimed that Lorca, the poet, of having lived today, would vote for their political force; at the same time that they asked for his figure to be depoliticized for being "everyone's", not from the left (it was inferred). These statements caused great controversy, especially on social networks, where the issue of historical memory, the interpretation of the past and the use of anachronisms, as well as the politicization of history, were debated. And, apart from the electoral instrumentalization of the past and the interested construction of stories (Koselleck, 2016), what is perhaps the greatest challenge of current communication was deepened: misinformation and the circulation of fake news or hoaxes. But also in polarization, based on an emotional argument that, in this case, focuses on the impact of use and consumption around a symbol of freedom, repression and also of the Spanish, such as Lorca.

Shot shortly after the start of the Civil War, in 1936, by the Francoist side, the poet from Granada, homosexual and attached to both anti-fascist movements and initiatives linked to the Second Republic, is a symbol of the victims of Francoism (his body, buried in a mass grave, is missing); but also of the "anti-Spain" that the national side fought: homosexual, intellectual and icon of minorities and otherness. Lorca is, therefore, and has been interpreted in this way in the context of the Historical Memory Law promoted by the socialist government of Rodríguez Zapatero, which in 2009 tried to locate his body, an icon, as a victim, of freedom. And his figure and his name are metaphors, or at least that is how they have been used by various left-wing parties that have found their democratic legitimacy in their nation-building discourses, in particular PSOE and Unidas Podemos whom encrypted in the continuity with the Second Republic and in its commitment to antifascism, in opposition to parties such as the PP or Ciudadanos, and Vox, which have positioned themselves against the public policies of the identification of Spain with the problem of the repression and, in particular, of the fosses. Traditionally, the right-wing parties had positioned themselves against the memory of the Francoist repression, as breaking the consensus of the Transition, until its attempt to re-signify it by Vox, a party with a historical agenda related to the imperial past, with a nationalist discourse English similar to that of Francoism.

For this reason, we consider that this paper, which studies the reception of digital audiences about Vox's position on Lorca, allows us to investigate the politicization of history, the construction of the historical narrative through polarization, disinformation and interactivity, and measure the impact of these statements on social networks and the reaction of digital users. So that it is possible to think about the construction, use and management of memory in the virtual public space, in a topic as controversial and as special for the creation of a democratic national identity as the civil war and the questioning of the recent past. This study, therefore, allows us to investigate the construction of alternative, unofficial and official stories, in the public agora, which today goes through Twitter, the most political network (Alonso-Muñoz; Marcos-García; Casero-Ripollés, 2016; Campos-Domínguez, 2017), and which involves the development of a virtual history, influenced by hate speech, which is interested and politicized, but which is also fake and misinforms.

Ultimately, the goals are:

1. Study the construction of the historical narrative and memory in the digital setting.
2. Know the dynamics and perceptions of digital audiences in response to Vox's speech on the political ideology of Federico García Lorca.
3. Analyze the role of anonymous profiles on Twitter as a source of confrontation and disinformation against other accounts identified on the network.
4. Check the effects of the discourse of a far-right party like Vox through the citizen response on Twitter.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. The memory: *history is what hurts*

The issue of memory is fundamental in all societies, even more so in democratic ones. In totalitarian regimes, the past is configured according to the present, to fit into the ideal story that justifies and protects the current situation and the restriction of freedoms and rights. However, the relationship between history and politics is conflictive in itself and it is paradoxical that, in democracies, the past is a source of continuous conflicts, fundamentally identity conflicts. The reason is that history, understood as historiography as a story built from a selection of facts (Koselleck, 2016) by certain people with interests related to that story, is the basis of the nation building process. So history, the past, and the discipline that studies it, is continuously manipulated because it affects the creation of the national family and the nation as an imagined community (Anderson, 1993; Hobsbawm, 1983). In a simple way, it can be seen in the way in which peripheral nationalisms or secessionist movements in different countries understand it: they base their sovereignty arguments on the existence of an old identity, in tension with the great national identity of the nation-state. But these challenges to the bourgeois state as a result of the liberal revolutions of the long nineteenth century (Koselleck, 2016) are not the only issues in which history, memory, the past, find a political reinterpretation and re-assimilation, which is manipulative and conflictive.

On the one hand, it is necessary to point out the thorny relationship between the citizens of a state and its past: what happens when society must confront and deal with the fact that in its recent past, and conditioning its present, there are totalitarianisms and dictatorships and, therefore, victims and executioners? What happens when the nation, which should be glorified for the great deeds of the past, cannot be? The paradigmatic case is that of Germany, its society and the Nazi dictatorship, although in turn this problem must be framed in the dynamics of the Cold War and in the issue of defeat in World War II. But the relationship of today's Spain with the Franco dictatorship and the Civil War is no less painful, as well as that of the generations born in democracy with the past of their own families, and the silences and absences. The processes of transitions to democracy, in which the Spanish case is framed, are therefore based on thorny reconstructions of the past and recent history, which at the same time go through the tensions of the celebration of a social pact that allows overcoming that past, which, on the other hand, leaves the victims without reparation. But, victims or not, interested parties or not, the debate about a past that belongs (or, better said, that is understood by the citizens in this way) to the community emerges permanently.

This supposes, on the other hand, another important challenge regarding memory. As Carr (2015: 32) points out, if we are historical beings, it is because we are "interwoven in history" in such a way that history is a way of being in the world, since it operates as the horizon and background of our daily experience. Thus, memory, the past, the historical narrative belong to everyone, since we are all part of it. However, the main challenge of this question to the truth of the past (although history does not seek the truth, which is a philosophical question, but the facts and their possible and plural interpretations: since it is not possible that there is a single story of something, but that the story must protect the plurality of stories) is that it trivializes and it does falling into political manipulation, by becoming a consumer

product that is not treated professionally but rather subjected to public debate by untrained actors for this they have their own agenda (whether personal, economic or political) in relation to history. The question of who can talk about history, who can remember the past or write the story of those events, thus becomes an important democratic question. After the emergence of contemporary phenomena such as the historical novel and, above all, historical cinema, badly received by professional historians for leaving the academic channels of history as a scientific discipline despite its value (Ferro, 2008; Sorlin, 2015; Rosenstone, 1997), from the 20th century onwards we witness the omnipresence of two forms of relationship with the past: one popular and the other elitist, often marginalized from each other.

However, as Rosenstone (1997: 29) points out, these criticisms of the popular and massive assimilation of history outside official academic channels (which are not impartial, either) would not matter if we did not live in a world dominated by images, where more and more people form their idea of the past through film and television, in a world almost completely free from the control of historians. So what we are witnessing is a *statu quo* in which writing history will be a kind of esoteric occupation and historians commentators on sacred texts, priests of a mysterious religion of no interest to most people (Rosenstone, 1997: 29) and, on the other hand, history or the past or memory will be objects of mass consumption, disconnected from rigor and scientific parameters. Currently, although Rosenstone already sensed that this would be growing, this phenomenon is even greater thanks to the multiplicity of online channels and discourses and, above all, by social networks and their potential for disinformation.

It cannot be ignored, in this way, that the new history is or must necessarily be virtual, since the online space is the public agora and, in the same way that democracy passes for being a cyberdemocracy, with numerous problems, individual users in networks are the ones who set the tone of the conversation, framed in turn in the new media agendas that different groups and individuals launch on the network. Due to its characteristics, Twitter is the most political and politicized social network (Alonso-Muñoz et al., 2016; Campos-Domínguez, 2017). And through it pass the new debates around history, which is at the same time a political issue easily manipulated by the different political ideologies, a matter of entertainment and positioning for users and voters who feel attacked or represented, and also a personal matter, which in turn flows into the community. The reason is that we are all part of history and we participate in the past through our ancestors and our tastes, opinions and affinities that give rise to different individual and collective identities.

In this way, we can conclude that history, memory, the past, are especially sensitive issues in our contemporary societies, with a capital importance for politics and citizenship. Also, it is necessary to influence the emotional concept that is associated with the past. As Fredric Jameson points out: "history is what hurts" (2002). The reason is that the myth about the collective past (national or family, which is another form of nation) connects with the tribal and with identity, so that any reflection or use of history goes through facing the desired, desirable and existing. As Koselleck (2016) pointed out, after the French Revolution, history, as an account of events, became historiography at the service of the nation because, after the end of the Old Regime, the nation is the nation in arms and the tribe protects itself, clearly defining who is in and who is out. These concepts in turn have to do with a Marxist and also a postmodern logic of history for which in contemporary times there is a crisis of historical metanarratives that had worked before. Now memory is simply a political construction of the present, since the engine of history is conflict. In this way, the historical debate in public opinion, although very necessary, becomes a harsh and emotional issue. And, by going through social networks, it is inscribed in its simplifying (lack of space), aggressive (to go viral) and seductive (to become popular) dynamics.

Furthermore, parallel to the growing plurality that professional historians apply to their work in order to enrich it, trying to combat Eurocentrism or Orientalism (Said, 1978), including gender and class perspectives, etc., history becomes an agenda indispensable policy to establish who they are, have been and will be, part of a state or community. And, in this way, memory is debated on public stages and constructed in a very intense way through social networks, which have brought new problems that written or audiovisual fiction only pointed out. History today is necessarily virtual. So the past goes through its politicization in an interactive present built on social networks and a symbiotic relationship is established whereby the past is the ideal to which one aspires in the present, building today from yesterday and yesterday from today as the historical account conditions the nation and its future.

2.2. Historical Memory: public policies of the past in Spain

Thus, in Spain the great theme of memory and of the different political and media agendas around the past is the Civil War and the Franco dictatorship. It is a particularly sensitive wound (Jameson, 2002) insofar as the trauma is greater because it is part of a very recent fratricidal conflict, which has had different visions for different generations throughout democracy. The importance of controlling the story, and therefore the interest in its study and dissemination, is evident to the rebels from the initial need to justify the coup against the legality of the Republic. To, subsequently, explain the war and its rigors and horrors, as well as silence, promote or justify the repression and position the other side as the

enemy (an internal enemy, moreover, in both senses: the "anti-Spain"). The concept of a crusade (Botti, 2008) or the myths about the establishment of a dictatorship at the service of the USSR, the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy or the inevitability of war were recurrent in the Francoist imaginary. Although the dictatorship also went through different stages and, protected by the dynamics of the Cold War, the anti-communist struggle and social peace became fundamental elements to silence past realities and offer a new face – defascistized after the defeat of the Axis Powers in 1945 (Gallego & Morente, 2005)– within the country and abroad, also promoted by developmentalism and tourism (Velasco-Molpeceres, 2020). Thirty years after the end of the Civil War, Franco issued Decree-Law 10/1969, which prescribed all crimes committed before April 1, 1939, establishing a new form of retroactive oblivion that equaled, in principle, the Spanish people again. But this is how the dead, the disappeared, the exiled, the lives suspended, terrified, saddened, mistreated and retaliated against, etc. also entered a new era.

So a new era arose in the policies of the Francoist past (Alares, 2017), which were to continue in democracy, based on silence and on overcoming or closing the wounds of war. People from both sides were also equalized, as had happened when the Valle de los Caídos was inaugurated (1940-1959), when the exhumed remains of losing nationals, that is, Republicans, were added to the great work for the fallen national winners, turning the Valle into the largest mass grave in Spain. In it, almost 34,000 human remains are united, which cannot be exhumed because the bodies have merged with the structure forming an "indissoluble collective corpse" (Ferrándiz, 2011: 495), echo in turn of a collective silence (desired or forced). That, however, was answered with another past and another memory: that of the ancient myths of imperial Spain (Boyd, 2007), which equaled Franco (Zenobi, 2011: 251) with those deeds and Spain with its past glory and that emphasized two great episodes: the Reconquest as a crusade against the infidel, which was an echo of the civil war in Franco's story, and the conquest of America, as the beginning of the Empire and a civilizing and Christianizing force. Thus, the great symbols were, of course, the cross (Box, 2010) but also the apostle Santiago (Matamoros) (Dominguez García, 2008) or the queen Elisabeth the Catholic (Maza Zorrilla, 2014) and dates such as the discovery of America, the taking of Granada or Lepanto were important events, with fascist connotations, transmitted through education, understood as a way of nationalizing the masses (Castillejo, 2008) that involved a complex relationship of inheritance with the past. A past that was omnipresent thanks to its political interest and, at the same time, was scorching as it was made up of absences that hid victims.

That is why the main theme of the civil war and the Franco regime, in Spain, in relation to the past, is precisely who, why, how and where are the victims and what happened and is happening with their families and, through them, with the great national family, which must collect their stories. However, as in other countries, democracy passed by the history that hurts and damages (Jameson, 2002), in the name of national reconciliation and that oblivion would allow rebuilding a prosperous and democratic country. Thus, together with some regulations that tried to protect the victims of Francoism, really with the arrival of democracy, Law 46/1977, of October 15, on Amnesty was promulgated, which, although it gave amnesty to political prisoners and political crimes of the Franco regime, rejecting the previous legal order, it also gave amnesty to those who had violated the rights of the people. Silence was protected by democracy, which in turn activated a problematic relationship with memory. As in other countries, there was the paradox that the new story of modernity was based on silences (Wolf, 1982; Trouillot, 2017), which came from the dictatorship and re-victimized the victims with policies of (dis)memory. But, in addition, added to that interested silence was the question that removing the past became, in this way, a challenge to democratic Spain since it altered or rarefied national reconciliation. And, on the other hand, repeatedly insisting that the Spanish were not the idyllic photograph of modernity and social peace that was wanted by the new society of the Transition, but that there were executioners, traitors, informers, abusers, etc. and benefited from the misfortunes of other Spaniards, disenchantment with democracy increased (Vilarós, 2018), which led to new social tensions. And, the more he uncovered past events or challenged the order in which the majority of Spaniards had been raised, with the promotion of new tastes and the recognition of diversities that had not been tolerated before, the more a nostalgia for the immediate past was activated: the 'sociological Francoism', so that the new accounts of the past and present were unpleasant.

The Amnesty Law and the silencing around the history of Francoism, especially for the lack of reparation for those killed in mass graves, has been criticized as it is considered incompatible with international law for protecting crimes considered imprescriptible for violating human rights. However, to alleviate the collective forgetfulness promoted by the state, the PSOE, with José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero as Prime Minister, promoted the drafting of Law 52/2007, of December 26, which extended rights to victims of the Franco regime and measures were established in favor of those who were violated, insisting on the need to investigate the Francoist repression and to repair the oblivion. Known as the Historical Memory Law, it was received with controversy, especially by the Partido Popular which, when it came to government with Mariano Rajoy at its head, repealed it leaving it without a budget. However, on the part of the victims, memorial associations or the UN, the law was seen as insufficient, particularly due to its relationship with the mass graves with the remains of victims of reprisals, which was a matter treated as a private and family issue, despite the fact that it was said that the State would help with

the location and exhumation. Although there were also some issues that emphasized the public issue of memory, such as, for example, the obligation to remove Francoist symbols from public space and the depoliticization of the Valle de los Caídos, which had to be governed by the rules of cult places, honor the memory of those who suffered reprisals and not exalt Francoism.

With the arrival of Pedro Sánchez (PSOE) to the Government in 2018, political initiatives were concretized to channel action more directly on the issue of Historical Memory, a highly politicized concept that has become a recurring issue in politics, and therefore therefore on social media. Both for its detractors (PP, Ciudadanos and Vox) and for the parties that link their history to the Second Republic such as the PSOE and, above all, Unidas Podemos, which have made war and Francoism, as well as anti-fascism, one of its main themes. And the symbol of this new stage was the exhumation of the Valle de los Caídos, and relocation, of Franco's body in October 2019. In September 2020, the Sánchez government, in coalition with Unidas Podemos, presented a preliminary draft of the Law of Democratic Memory to replace the 2007 Historical Memory Law and, in November 2021, the debate on the crimes of Francoism was reopened as it was intended to nullify the 1977 Amnesty Law, by requesting that all state laws follow international law, according to which war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and torture are imprescriptible and not subject to amnesty. It is worth noting the controversy that has arisen around this, amplified by the accusations against the Government of using the past as a way of confronting the Spanish for propaganda, in a complex relationship between the conservative parties and the Francoist past. Well, although PP, Ciudadanos and Vox opposed Franco's exhumation, in the end only Vox voted against it in parliament (the others abstained), insisting on the other hand in their rejection of Francoism, which is an issue in which there is a certain consensus.

However, although no conservative leader or party wants to ascribe to the Francoist past, the evidence that the history of Francoism is a subject of highly politicized public debate, which generates political revenue, makes it omnipresent in the discourse and on the political agenda. and, therefore, media, especially in social networks. In them, as new spaces of history, polarization is fostered which, in a subject as sensitive as that of the victims, makes simple messages be transferred, which ignore the needs and pluralities of the professional historical account of the 21st century and which they encourage disinformation and the manipulation of memory, the past and history. Thus, if you look at the headlines of traditional media and the controversies on social networks, you can see that historical issues, with present manipulated rereadings, are ubiquitous and, moreover, transversal. Little by little, new controversies have been added to the tensions between the PSOE and the PP around the Second Republic, Francoism and the Law of Historical Memory (America, Al Andalus, prehistoric issues, etc.). But the speech of Podemos around these issues, vindicating the victims and Franco's "anti-Spain", has been especially opposed by Vox, for whom the imperial history of Spain is fundamental in its political program and, on the other hand, Francoism is perceived as a controversial and unpatriotic issue.

Figure 2. Tweet by Santiago Abascal about the use of the past by the Government



8:24 p. m. · 15 sept. 2020 · Twitter for Android

Source: https://twitter.com/santi_abascal/status/1305935444593573895

So these two political positions have different historical myths that become a field of battle and social discussion. Vox feels identified with the Spain of the Empire, which also claimed Francoism, a period that they treat with ambivalence, insisting that recovering it divides the Spanish and that their claim is part of the mainstream 'progressive' culture (Álvarez-Benavides & Jiménez- Aguilar, 2021) that seeks to criminalize and eliminate the Spanish from Spain in favor of an anti-national, secularist globalist agenda linked to the 'gender ideology' that a communist, Muslim, black and gay Spain wants. Vox, on the other hand, vindicates the Reconquest, Christianity against Islam and also against the prevailing secularism that hides the hatred of the majority faith in Spain with anti-fascist or anti-Francoist slogans. And, for its part, Podemos resumed a discourse on the past that insisted on connecting democracy with the Second Republic, eliminating the Transition and its (false) consensus and demanding the exhumations of those who had been murdered, stressing both history and national politics (for example in the elections to the community of Madrid in 2020) in a dynamic of fascism (Vox, with the complicity of the PP) vs. antifascism (left). A perspective contested by Vox, and also satirized by the PP, saying that whoever was fascist was really the left by refusing to contemplate Vox's political option. It is evident that the manipulation of history and the trivialization of a topic as dramatic as fascism is a scenario of current political communication in Spain and that, moreover, it is closely related to the nation model. And it can be seen, for example, in the tweet by Gabriel Rufián who, in a very different context, affirmed that 1-O 2017, on the independence of Catalonia, was the one that buried Francoism. Thus, although Vox maintains an ambivalent position on the opening of graves and the elimination of religious symbology (National Catholic), citing questions of faith, and in general around Francoism, its own rhetoric and behavior in networks power, precisely, the debate on the memory of the recent past of Spain. That, in their case, is erased and assimilated in a positive sense or without questioning, by preferring other deeds, as opposed to the traumatic memory, with which they identify (and in which they encrypt their program: a great and monarchical Spain -the imperial and homogeneous -against peripheral nationalisms-, ethnically and culturally 'Spanish', in opposition to immigration -fundamentally Muslim).

However, this discourse on history, both the one they promote (the Catholic Imperial) and the one they reject (the Civil War and the Franco regime), revolves around the concept of the 'cultural battle' against the progressive culture that they consider linked to the Transition and inoculated to the Spaniards from the traditional media (which they challenge from their social networks) and which they wish to combat. That is why their historical discourse has many edges and it should not be considered that they pose a historical model of silence around Francoism and its crimes, since they have active positions and open debates around different myths and icons of anti-fascism (the exhumation of the deaths and the elimination of symbols, above all). It is not surprising, therefore, that the figure of Lorca, an icon of anti-fascism and of the victims of Francoism, has become part of the Vox agenda, fundamentally linked to Macarena Olona (deputy for Granada). And that it is framed, in turn, in another myth of the party: Andalusia and the Andalusian, since the Andalusian elections of 2018 were a key moment in the conquest of power by Vox, that question (the Reconquest -of the authentic Spain- is a symbol, a motto and an icon of Vox (Turnbull-Dugarte, 2019) that feeds back to the universal Andalusian: Lorca. That is also why the question of the poet, who could be paradoxical as a claimed figure by Vox, must be understood within this context of electoral memorialism and political use of the past, as well as political nation building.

2.3. Lorca, the flag and the freedom

Lorca's case is paradigmatic of the numerous edges and sensitivities surrounding historical memory, as well as the impossibility of reducing memory to an exclusively private matter, of the question of the victims of Francoism and of the graves since his family did not is interested, on an individual level, in his exhumation. However, the poet is, on a collective level, a symbol both of Spain, in general, and of the Civil War (for his assassination by the national side) and, even more, of an alternative and anti-Franco Spain: for his homosexuality, his interest in the gypsies, a certain Jewish heritage, his lineage from Granada (Al Ándalus), as well as his avant-garde and the realization of an anti-fascist commitment, amplified by his interest in the disinherited and the popular classes. That is why Lorca has become an anti-fascist myth and a milestone in democratic Spain, and this is also due to the instrumentalization and ubiquity of his figure on the thematic agenda of contemporary Spain, as well as his rereading in Vox.

In 2015, a police report from 1965 was made public that investigated, by the Francoist authorities, the murder of Lorca and determined that he had indeed been shot by the national side, accused of being a socialist, Mason and homosexual. All of these traits have meant that, along with other orientaling readings, Lorca has traditionally been seen as a symbol on the left. This view also explains why, after Zapatero's Historical Memory Law in 2009, an attempt was made to recover the poet's remains, albeit without success; which again points to a politicization of his figure and to the public -or political- interest in turning him into a symbol of memory. However, although the studies on where his body can be found have continued, his family's refusal to exhume make Lorca a peculiar case, which raises new readings of the past, affecting the limits of the public, the private and the political.

On the other hand, Lorca's status as a symbol was immediate after his death, even during the war and the dictatorship, also finding recognition on both sides. Antonio Machado published in 1937 *El crimen fue en Granada* (The crime was in Granada) and Luis Hurtado Álvarez, an elegy in the Falangist newspaper *Unidad* entitled *A la España imperial le han asesinado su mejor poeta* (Imperial Spain has had its best poet assassinated). That is why the question of Lorca's reception is essential to talk about memory, memory and history, as well as politics. The greatest expert on Lorca, Ian Gibson, opens his biography (2011) with different views of the poet, since his status as a symbol of Spain is evident, and very particularly of Spain as a painful mother (Álvarez Junco, 2010), but also of the culture and therefore freedom. And, in addition, the theme of predestination appears, important in the story of the civil war, as well as in its configuration as a martyr, as a victim who in turn redeems and is a redeemer, with an almost mystical mission. This is how Vicente Aleixandre asserted it, still in the war, in 1937. Although that moan, that silence and that mystery, as Gibson points out, must also be understood in a queer key because in 1937, the date of that text, no friend of Lorca was then it would have happened to publicly refer to the murdered poet's homosexuality (2011: 31), which was taboo. Although in the context of the Transition this issue began to be made public, which today extends Lorca's status as a symbol. What makes his figure have an important political reading because it represents, encompasses and gives voice to the silenced, the violated and the losers, who were left out of the historical-political story of Francoism and also of the Transition, with its amnesty policies and oblivion.

In the context of a political party like Vox, which uses what they define as a 'cultural battle' against the 'cowardly right-wing' and the 'progressive' left (Álvarez-Benavides and Jiménez-Aguilar, 2021), the rereading of the figure of Lorca and his appropriation is inscribed in his public policies of history as a source of nationalization of what is Spanish and as a way of challenging the statu quo that, they consider, persecutes them. The fact that Lorca cannot symbolize Vox, or yes, does not matter. The reality of interest is the new story built with digital audiences (Castro-Martínez; Díaz-Morilla, 2021) that allow Vox to consider its presence in public space in a combat mode, which seems effective. Lorca is, in this way, akin to Vox because it is a symbol of Spain and therefore it is interesting and can be reappropriated from a political perspective and from the construction of a truth, which is false and manipulated, thanks and through the empowerment of a politicized, interactive and virtual past. This process is studied in this paper.

3. Methodology

In a context of growing political polarization (Waisbord, 2020), the construction of alternative narratives about historical events (Koselleck, 2016), the use of social networks as a place of confrontation (Bail et al., 2018) and impoliteness (Kaul de Marlangeon; Cordisco, 2014), the debate generated after Vox's statements about Lorca allows us to analyze the dynamics and behavior of users in the face of this type of political strategy.

Taking this into account, the following research questions are formulated:

RQ.1. Are Vox's statements about Lorca considered a strategy that favors disinformation and polarization in the networks?

RQ.2. What role do anonymous users play as viralizers and detractors of Vox's speech against the accounts of politicians and the media on Twitter?

RQ.3. Are the disqualifications and insults towards Vox a characteristic feature of citizen discourse on the network?

Based on these approaches, it is decided to apply a quantitative-qualitative (Silverman, 2016; Krippendorff, 2004; Neuendorf, 2017) and discursive (Flowerdew; Richardson, 2017; Van-Dijk, 2015) content analysis methodology. In order to delve into the response of digital audiences to the statements made by leaders of the far-right party about the poet from Granada, those tweets containing the words "Vox" and "Lorca" are compiled. For this study, the social network Twitter is chosen because of its relevance in political communication (Alonso-Muñoz et al., 2017; Campos-Domínguez, 2017).

The time frame has as its start date the day on which the leader of Vox, Macarena Olona, publishes her first tweet in reference to Federico García Lorca (08/18/2021) and as a closing date ten days later (08/28/2021), in order to collect the reactions of the audience to the statements of the deputy Mireia Borrás in the Congress of Deputies (08/25/2021). With this time frame, a sufficient sample is obtained to achieve consistent results and to be able to reach conclusions.

Regarding the process of obtaining the data, a first screening of the sample of located tweets (n=1,543) is made to eliminate those publications that do not make direct reference to Vox's statements about Lorca, obtaining a general sample (n= 1,311) that constitutes the corpus of the investigation. The tweets

are tracked using the T-Hoarder17 application (Congosto; Basanta-Val; Sánchez-Fernández, 2017) and the statistical software used for the data analysis is IBM SPSS Statistics, version 25. Intercoder reliability is calculated using Scott's Pi formula, reaching an error level of 0.98.

At this point, a coding manual is designed that includes eleven variables (see Table 1), which allow the statistical program SPSS to obtain contingency and frequency tables. With these instruments, localized messages are analyzed in depth and aspects related to their broadcast (date of publication and type of user), their dissemination (retweets, likes and responses) or the hypertext elements used (audiovisual content, use of hashtags) are studied. and type of tweet). In addition, other variables that delve into the content of the messages are also collected, such as the tone (users' position regarding Vox's statements), the approach or the use of disqualifications or insults.

Table 1. Variables used in content analysis

| Variable | Values |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Date | DD-MM-YYYY |
| Type of user | Citizens; Journalists; Media; Politicians; Political parties; Others, Unidentifiables |
| Retweets | Open numeric variable |
| Likes | Open numeric variable |
| Replies | Open numeric variable |
| Audiovisual content | Video; image; link; none |
| Hashtag | Yes; no |
| Type of tweet | Reply; quoted tweet; own tweet |
| Tone | Positive; neutral; negative |
| Approach | Political; historical; literary; humor; others |
| Presence of disqualifications | Yes; no |

Fuente: Own elaboration.

In order to calculate the viralization or commitment capacity of the publications, a formula applied in previous studies is used (Carrasco; Villar; Tejedor, 2018; Pérez-Curiel; Domínguez-García; Velasco-Molpeceres, 2021): value of retweets versus to likes (Viralization capacity = (SUM retweets*2+SUM likes)/ SUM published tweets). This is because Twitter gives the retweet greater visibility and increases its dissemination capacity by showing it on the sharer's timeline.

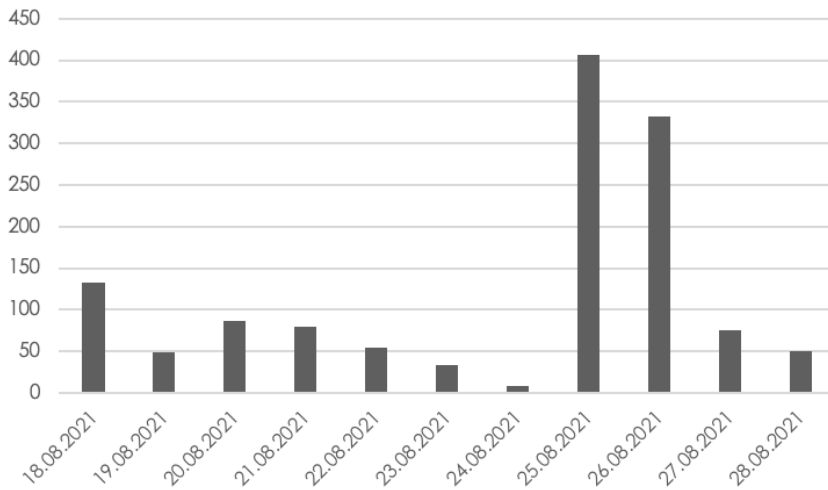
4. Results

4.1. Composition and characteristics of the conversation

The data obtained from the analysis of the messages published on Twitter between 08/18/2021 and 08/28/2021 as a result of the declarations of Vox leaders in reference to Lorca in which they affirmed that he would be a voter of the far-right party allows us to observe a series of tendencies on this contentious debate. Thus, the number of tweets collected (n1=1,311) and their impact on the network, both for their retweets (n2= 24,169), likes (n3=76,288) and responses (n4=8,664), show that it is an event that sparked an important debate in Spanish society and are sufficient to obtain coherent and well-founded results.

Regarding the temporal distribution of messages, this discussion on the social network has two critical moments (see Chart 1). In the first place, on August 18 and 19, 2021, the leader of Vox Macarena Olona publishes a series of tweets claiming the figure of Federico García Lorca and alleging that the poet today would vote for his party. Later, on the 25th of that same month, another deputy from this party, Mireia Borrás, repeated that same assertion in the Congress. The results obtained show that the impact of this statement by Vox on the social network Twitter is greater when it is made in parliament and, therefore, there is an audiovisual testimony that is later broadcast by the media. In fact, of the total of 1,311 messages that are launched during the ten days studied, the data shows that 407 of them (31%) are published on that day.

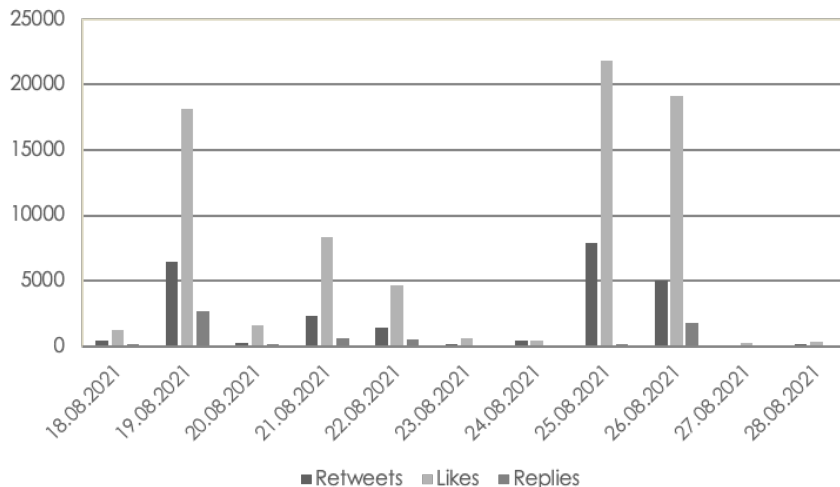
Chart 1. Frequency of Tweet Posts by Date



Source: Own elaboration.

The impact of these statements by the far-right party on the poet in digital audiences is studied through the retweets, likes and responses that each of the located tweets get. This crossing of variables reinforces the previous statement, since the total sums (see Graph 2) also show a greater range of the debate that took place in the Congress of Deputies compared to the assertions that Olona made days before on Twitter. Regarding the impact or engagement of the messages about the controversy between Vox and Granada, the metrics point to a greater tendency of Twitter users to interact by liking these publications (65.01 on average) than to retweet them (20.01). 86). In this sense, when interacting, digital audiences would tend more to support this type of message than to make it their own. In addition to this, the low capacity to generate responses (7.98) that the analyzed publications have is also noteworthy.

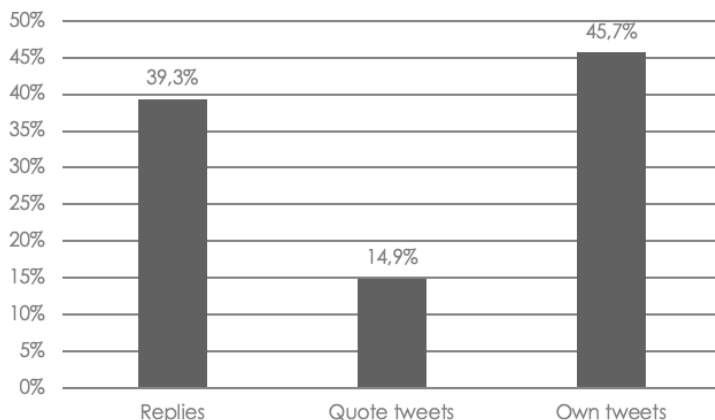
Chart 2. Engagement generated by tweets based on publication date



Source: Own elaboration.

On the other hand, from the analysis of the hypertextual characteristics of the sample made up of the tweets published by Twitter users in relation to Vox's statements about Lorca (see Chart 3), it can be deduced that a high percentage corresponds to responses to other tweets. (39.3), which added to the citations to other messages (14.9%) exceed the tweets published by the users themselves (45.7%). In this sense, these results indicate that an important part of the debate on Vox and Lorca in the social network has as its origin a response from the Twitter community to messages from accounts of great influence and repercussion, as is the case of the politicians Macarena Olona and Gabriel Rufián, the actress and presenter Anabel Alonso or the humor account @Gerardotc.

Chart 3. Typology of tweets

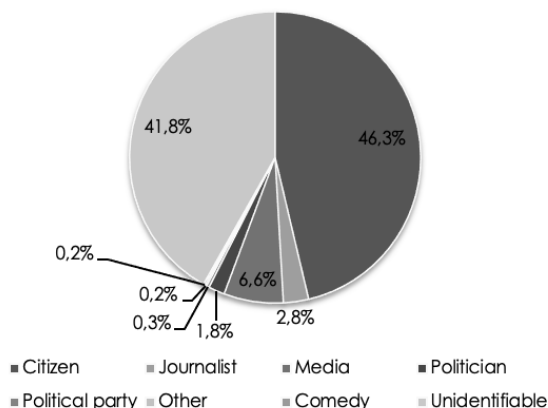


Source: Own elaboration.

Faced with the current trend to use various audiovisual resources to enrich the messages of this social network, it is observed that the majority of the tweets that refer to the controversial statements of Vox (67.1%) are not accompanied by any type of material audiovisual. It is only remarkable that in two out of ten cases (21.8%) links are incorporated, generally to news related to these statements. On the contrary, the very low percentages of tweets that are reinforced with images (8.5%) or videos (2.7%) are noteworthy. Along these lines, the results also indicate that users barely use hashtags (5.3%) that would allow these messages to be categorized and grouped. All these data would point to a spontaneous and uncoordinated reaction of the public of this social network against the position of the far-right party before the figure of Lorca.

The study of the typology of users who participate in this conversation reveals a high presence of anonymous profiles (see Chart 4), which contribute 41.8% of the publications (550 tweets), only behind accounts of accredited citizens (44.9%). At this point, it should be noted that these unidentifiable accounts do not have to be fake accounts or bots, as there is a tendency to use these types of profiles to comment on current affairs. Faced with the high participation of anonymous accounts and accredited citizens, there are few messages published by the media (87 tweets) and journalists (37). In addition, the low involvement of relevant political figures (23 tweets) and especially of official party accounts is notable. In fact, only 4 messages (0.2% of the total) from profiles of political forces have been located and all of them belong to Vox.

Chart 4. Typology of users



Source: Own elaboration.

Regarding the viral capacity generated by the messages of these accounts, the enormous engagement of the profiles that comment on current affairs from humor is observed (see Table 2). This is the case of the profiles @gerardotc and @MALACARASEV, whose messages about Lorca and Vox reach average figures much higher than any other category. To a lesser extent, this also occurs with

the tweets of the accounts of political actors, although it should be noted that within this typology there are great differences between the tweets of national figures such as Macarena Olona or Gabriel Rufián, which reach high levels of virality, and the of other organic or institutional positions that are more unknown. Regarding the rest of the categories, it should be noted that the media and journalists have a considerable capacity for engagement, while that of the accounts of anonymous users and identified citizens is very small and no considerable differences are observed between the two.

Table 2. Virality capacity according to the type of user

| | Citizens | Journalists | Media | Politicians | Political party | Other | Comedy | Unidentifiables | Total |
|----------------------------|----------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------------|-------|---------|-----------------|-------|
| Tweets (total) | 607 | 37 | 87 | 23 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 548 | 1312 |
| Retweets (average) | 4,19 | 47,57 | 72,44 | 356,91 | 35,25 | 4,67 | 1417 | 4,33 | 20,86 |
| Likes (average) | 19,02 | 155,86 | 168,30 | 975,48 | 76,50 | 24,33 | 5863,00 | 17,87 | 65,01 |
| Responses (average) | 0,89 | 10,95 | 33,92 | 161,26 | 6,00 | 0,67 | 113,50 | 1,47 | 7,98 |
| Virallization | 27,39 | 251,00 | 313,17 | 1688,70 | 147,00 | 33,67 | 8697,00 | 26,53 | 94,99 |

Source: Own elaboration.

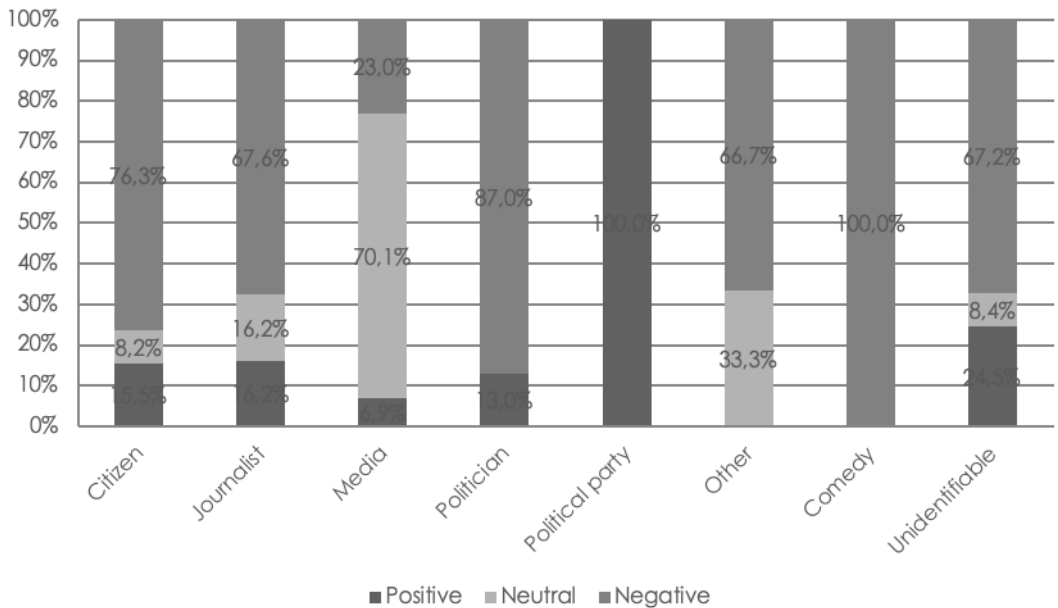
In addition, it should be noted that the figures show that the ability to generate responses is much lower in all the categories studied. From the study of the tweets published about the controversy between Vox and Lorca, it can be deduced that, except in the case of humor accounts, political figures and the media, there are practically no replies to the messages. In general terms, it can be seen that digital audiences tend to interact more easily by supporting third-party tweets (like), than by making that message their own (retweet) or contributing their own opinion (response).

4.2 The positioning of the audiences

From the study of the tone of the localized tweets in which the digital audiences commented on the statements made by leaders of the far-right Vox party in which they said that Lorca would vote for their party today, a majority rejection by Twitter users emerges. In this sense, the vast majority of localized messages (900 tweets representing 68.6% of the total) adopt a critical tone or reject these assertions. On the contrary, there is a minority that supports Vox's position (18.9%) or that remains neutral towards it (12.5%).

If the positions of the public are delved into, taking into account the tone adopted in this conversation according to each of the user typologies, it is observed (see Chart 5) that this majority rejection occurs, to a greater or lesser extent, in all the typologies, except in the case of political parties, since all accounts belong to Vox and, therefore, are in favor of these statements. In the case of the official profiles of the media, it should be noted that the majority opt for neutrality (70.1%), which does not happen with the personal accounts of the journalists, who are clearly opposed to this position of Vox (67.6%). Another very noteworthy fact is that, despite the fact that in both cases the majority reject the statements of the extreme right-wing party, the number of anonymous users who support them (24.5%) is much higher than that of identifiable users (15.5%).

Chart 5. Tone of tweets according to users



Source: Own elaboration.

Regarding the viral capacity of the tweets according to the position they adopt in response to Vox's statement about Lorca, the figures show fewer differences, due to the fact that the categories are broader and the behavior observed is more homogeneous. However, it has been detected that the engagement of the messages of users who reject the position of the far-right party is certainly higher (107.29) than that of those who support it (71.06) or who remain neutral (64.12). If we analyze the variations according to each of the metrics (see Table 3), the figures point to a practically similar behavior in terms of the retweets obtained by the publications depending on the tone adopted. However, it is detected that those messages that reject Vox's claims about the poet get more than twice as many likes as the rest. In addition, it should be noted that the ability to generate debate is greater in tweets that do not take a position on this issue and very low in the case of those that reject Vox's positions. In general terms, once again, the trend of Twitter audiences to interact by liking, rather than retweeting or replying, is confirmed.

Table 3. Virality capacity of tweets according to the tone adopted

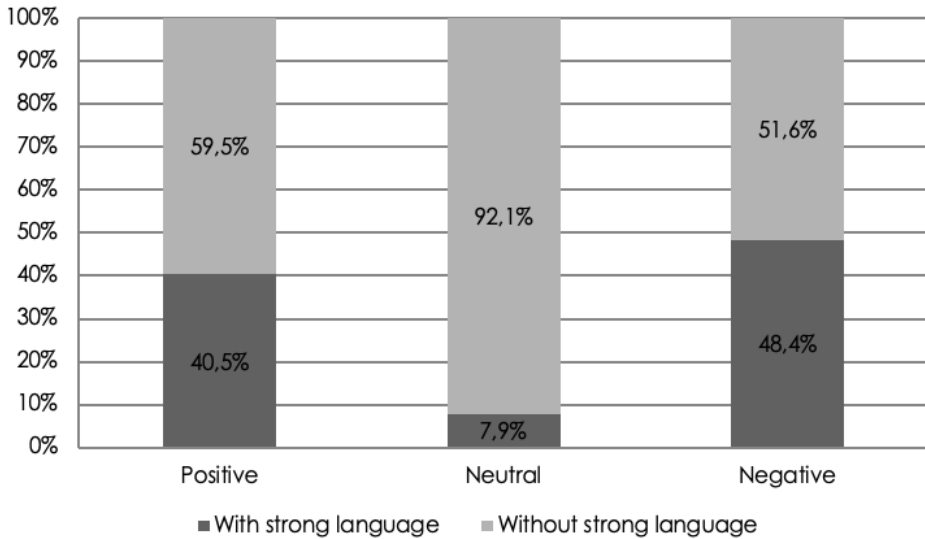
| | Positivo | Neutro | Negativo | Total |
|--------------------------|----------|--------|----------|-------|
| Tweets (total) | 247 | 164 | 900 | 1312 |
| Retweets (media) | 18,14 | 19,23 | 18,37 | 20,86 |
| Likes (media) | 34,79 | 25,66 | 70,54 | 65,01 |
| Responses (Media) | 10,42 | 14,93 | 4,05 | 7,98 |
| Viralization | 71,06 | 64,12 | 107,29 | 94,99 |

Source: Own elaboration.

Continuing with the analysis of user responses, the figures show that more than four out of ten messages published by users (41.9%) contain different types of disqualifications or insults. This figure comes to reflect the polarization and conflict that mark the debate on the position of Vox before the figure of Lorca. In this way, it is observed (see Chart 6) that the profiles that reject these affirmations tend more to use disqualifications (48.4%) than those that support them (40.5%). On the other hand, in messages with a neutral tone, insults or disqualifications are practically non-existent (7.9%). Following this line, if the data is disaggregated by type of user, it can be concluded that the highest percentages of disqualifications occur in users who are politicians (52.2%) or in humor accounts (50%) and the lowest

figures are observed in the media (9.2%) or journalists (32.4%). If the behavior of the identified accounts (44.6%) and the anonymous ones (42.2%) is compared, it should be noted that there are practically no differences in terms of the use of disqualifications.

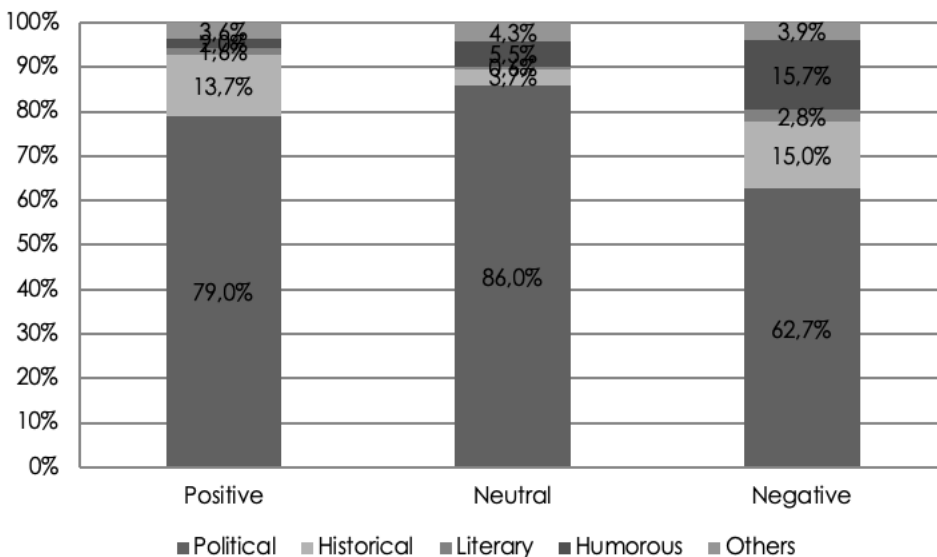
Chart 6. Use of disqualifications according to tone



Source: Own elaboration.

Finally, from the analysis of the focus that users give to the tweets they publish in relation to Vox's statements about Lorca, it can be deduced that the majority of the tweets have a clearly political focus (62.7%), while a minority support historical arguments (13.3%) or use humor and irony (11.8%) to position themselves on the matter. In addition, it is noteworthy that the messages that are based on literary texts of the poet are practically non-existent (1.6%). If this data is disaggregated according to the tone used (see Graph 7), the metrics show that neutral tweets have an approach that is even more focused on political issues (86%), while those texts that support Vox's statements sometimes include references (13.7%) and those who reject it also choose to rely on historical issues (15.0%) and on humor or irony (15.7%).

Chart 7. Focus according to tone



Source: Own elaboration.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The analysis of the conversation generated on Twitter before the declarations of Vox leaders in which they affirmed that Lorca would vote for this political force today indicates that it is an issue that generated a notable debate among the users of this social network. From the study of the hypertext characteristics of these publications, it can be deduced that the majority are messages in response to accounts of great influence, that they hardly contain audiovisual elements and that they are not grouped under a hashtag or label. All this suggests that it is an individual and unorganized reaction of users to an issue they consider controversial. Along these lines, the data shows very small percentages of the media, which do not particularly focus their attention on this issue, and of political parties, which, beyond Vox, decide not to enter into the confrontation.

On the other hand, the high number of anonymous accounts, which almost equals the identifiable profiles, points to the tendency to use this type of account to discuss political or current affairs anonymously. In addition, it is observed that the viralization and response capacity of influential accounts (humor and politicians), followed by institutional accounts (media and parties), is much greater than that of private users (identifiable or anonymous).

As for the response of the audience on Twitter to Vox's statements about the poet, the rejection is unquestionable. This conclusion is reinforced by the attitude of users towards publications that reject these assertions, since they reach higher figures of influence and viralization than the rest. On the other hand, the fact that almost half of the messages studied contain disqualifications demonstrates the polarization generated by this debate promoted by the far-right party.

In summary, it is observed that the response of critical users to these statements about Lorca exceeds, in number and impact, the conversation generated by the Vox supporters themselves and even the dissemination of this fact by the media. All in all, it can be concluded by highlighting the ability of the extreme right to generate -without much effort (Aladro-Vico; Requeijo Rey, 2020)- controversial, polarizing debates that set the agenda, thanks to the reaction they manage to arouse in opposing users. to their positions.

From a historical perspective, on memory we can conclude that the past passes through an interactive present, built fundamentally through debate on social networks, which in turn responds to issues on the political agenda of the different parties. Also that polarization and emotional discourse are encouraged because, as Jameson (2002) points out, "history is what hurts" and that means that, in politics, the past is seen as the ideal reflection of the present, so that it requires a re-construction. Thus yesterday and today have a symbiotic, manipulated and partial relationship, which results in the construction of the nation/nations, insofar as these are imagined communities and spaces of power. In short, memory is a political matter of cyberdemocracy and history is a virtual recreation, in which the debate is not inclusive but rather an electoral combat. For this reason, the historical events are not important (Lorca is just an object of consumption) and only the story matters, which in turn is spectacularized to achieve the follow-up and interaction of the audience, which reacts to the polarization (spontaneously), thanks to social networks. It is, therefore, a false democratization of history, which in reality supposes a politicization of the past with a future perspective, and a dynamic of misinformation, hatred and power that further contributes to victimizing the victims and to silence the truth.

6. Specific contribution of each author

| Contributions | People responsible |
|---|---|
| Study concept and design | Ana Velasco-Molpeceres |
| Documentary research | Concha Pérez-Curiel |
| Data collection | Concha Pérez-Curiel |
| Critical analysis and interpretation of the data | Ricardo Domínguez-García |
| Drafting, formatting, revising and approving versions | Ana Velasco-Molpeceres, Ricardo Domínguez-García, Concha Pérez-Curiel |

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