

Emotional involvement in political talk. Analysis of emotions in *Podemos* Facebook profile during the European elections campaign 2014

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Theoretical framework

Politics and the Internet

- Internet has deeply affected the model of mass communication by opening **new communication channels** between political actors and citizens that bypass traditional media outlets (Davis, 2001; Castells, 2009)
- Political use of the Internet, though, is still significantly **limited** (Anduiza et al., 2010)
- Social networks and **social movements**



Theoretical framework

ICT and electoral campaigns

- **Modernization** of electoral campaigns (Swanson et al., 1996)
- Integration of the Web as a campaign strategy tool (Dader, 2009; Bimber & Davis, 2003)



But still used to promote a **persuasive-strategic discourse** (Dader, 2009; Dader et al., 2001)

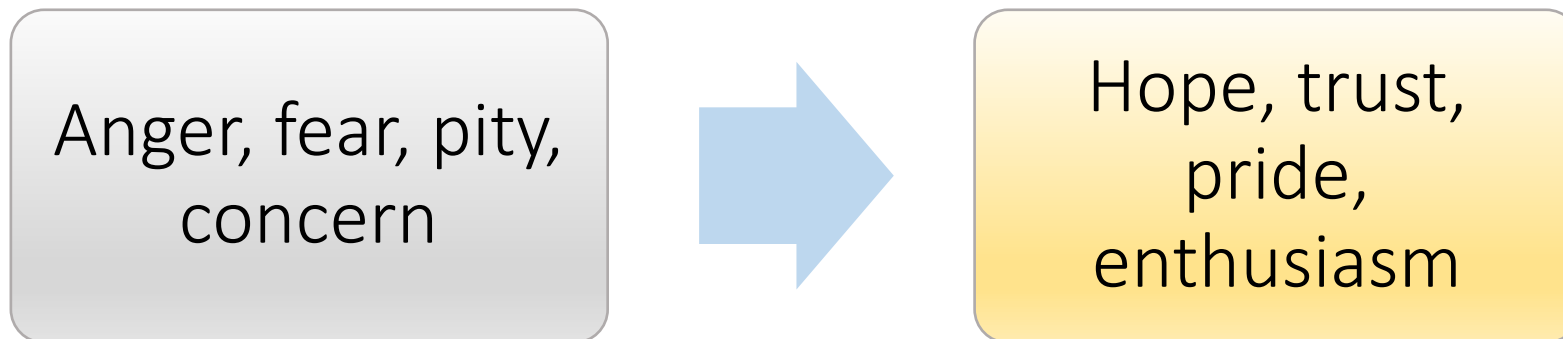
- Exceptions: **Obama's 2008 campaign** (Erkul & Erkul, 2009; Turiera-Puigbò, 2009)



Theoretical framework

Emotions in political discourse

- Understudied topic in communication research
- Very important in the sociological field: **sociology of emotions**
 - Emotions and **social movements** (Melucci, 1995; Belli et al., 2013)
 - Key role of emotions in the promotion of group identity, gather followers and attempt specific purposes
 - Emotional “evolution” of social movements (Collins, 2001)



Research questions

1. What is the **content** of *Podemos* political discourse on Facebook?
2. What kind of **emotions** do they convey through their Facebook profile? Do they harp on existing **negative feelings**? Or do they run an online campaign appealing to **positive emotions**?
3. Is there a relationship between the **content** of the post and the **emotion** conveyed by it?
4. Do the **followers'** comments exhibit emotional involvement? What kind of emotions do *Podemos* followers tend to express on their Facebook profile?

Background information: the Spanish context

- Deep economic crisis
- Austerity policies imposed by the EC
- Radicalization of the Catalan nationalist movement
- Corruption scandals affecting politicians and the Monarchy
- Mistrust and cynicism against politics
- Preoccupation on corruption



Background information: *Podemos*

- Officially founded January 16th 2014
- Leader: Pablo Iglesias
 - He was a well-known talk-show guest
- One of the parties inheritors of the *Indignados* movement
- Rapid rise in popularity
- Outstanding results in the European elections (8% votes, 5 seats)



Method

- Sample

- 163 *Podemos* Facebook posts during the European campaign 2014 (09/05/2014-23/05/2014).
- 215 followers' comments (all the comments of five posts)

- Classification

- Content of the posts following Valera and López (2014) classification scheme
- Political density (Valera, 2014)

- Emotional content

- Pragmatic approach (Caffi et al., 1994)
 - Evaluation devices (distinction between *positive* and *negative* evaluation)
 - Proximity devices (distinction between *near* and *far*)

Example: political density

DELIBERABLE

Queremos infraestructuras públicas de calidad y no proyectos destinados a la especulación. La casta es muy aficionada a gastar lo que es de todos en concesiones a sus amigos [...]. La corrupción no casos aislados si no [sic] el método de los políticos mafiosos para enriquecerse a costa de la mayoría. Ya es hora de echarles.

(post number 12, published 10.05.2014).

NON-DELIBERABLE

Mañana a las 18:00 hacemos un gran acto de Podemos en OVIEDO con Pablo Iglesias, Tania González, Estefanía Torres y más. ¿Te lo vas a perder? ¡Comparte y participa!

(post number 55, published 13.05.2014).

Example: emotional content

PROXIMITY DEVICES

- Name of the party: *Podemos* (first person plural)
- Distinction between “we” and “they”

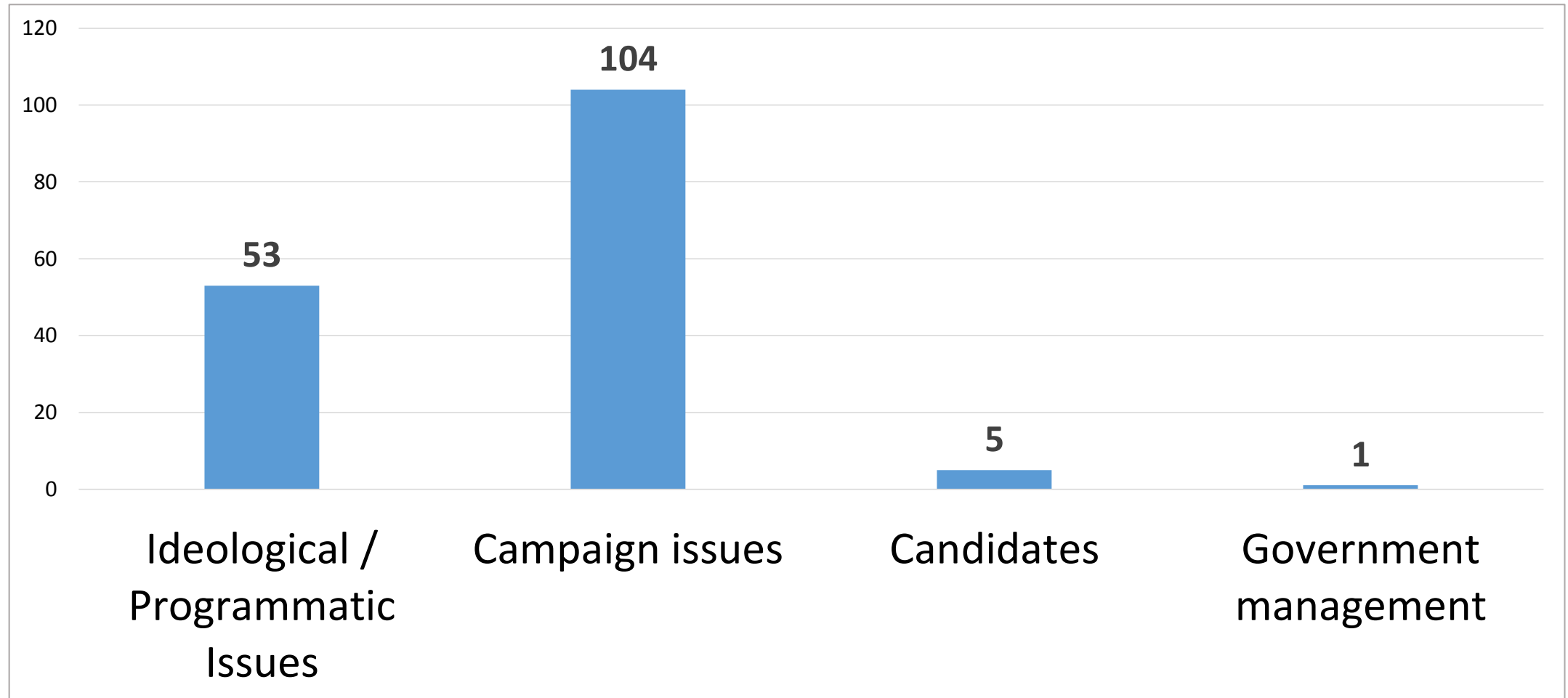
Nos dicen que hemos vivido por encima de nuestras posibilidades, nos exigen trabajar más y cobrar menos

EVALUATION DEVICES

- Metaphors (e.g. allusions to the “caste”)
- Positive self-evaluation (hope, confidence, trust)
- Hashtag: *#ClaroQuePodemos*
- Slogans

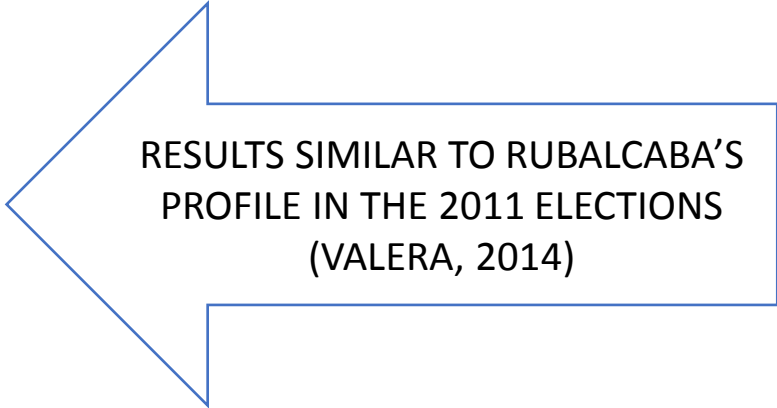


Results: thematic content



Results: political density

Content	Count	Relative frequency
Deliberable	79	48%
Non-deliberable	84	52%



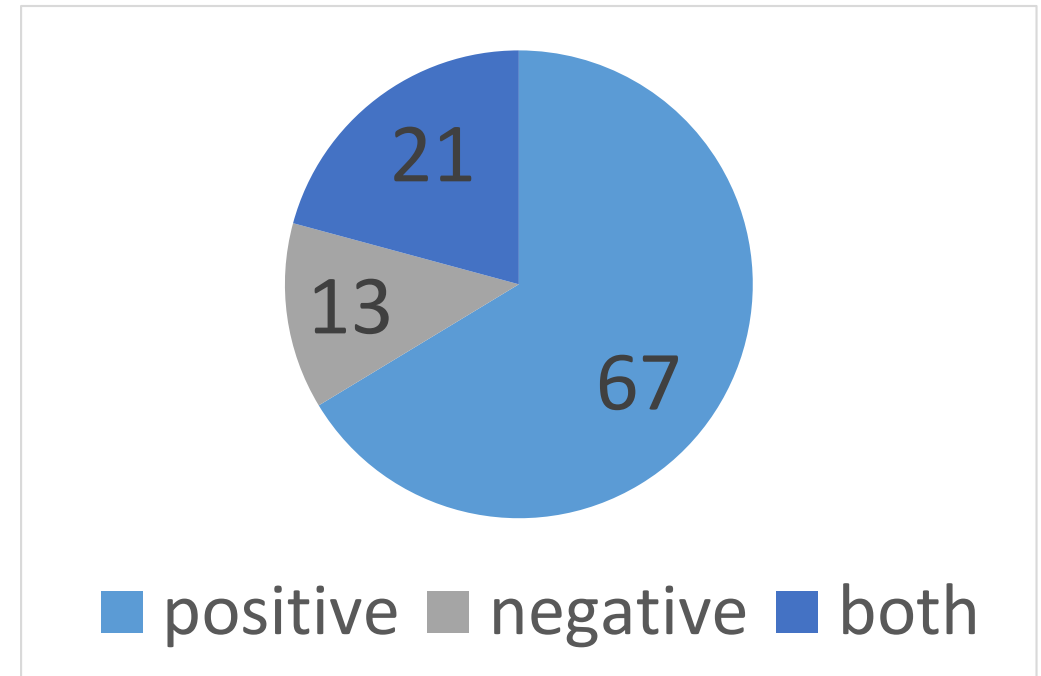
RESULTS SIMILAR TO RUBALCABA'S
PROFILE IN THE 2011 ELECTIONS
(VALERA, 2014)

Results: emotions (posts)

EMOTIONAL CONTENT

Type of post	Count	Relative frequency
Emotional posts	101	62%
Non emotional posts	62	38%
Total	163	

TYPE OF EMOTIONS

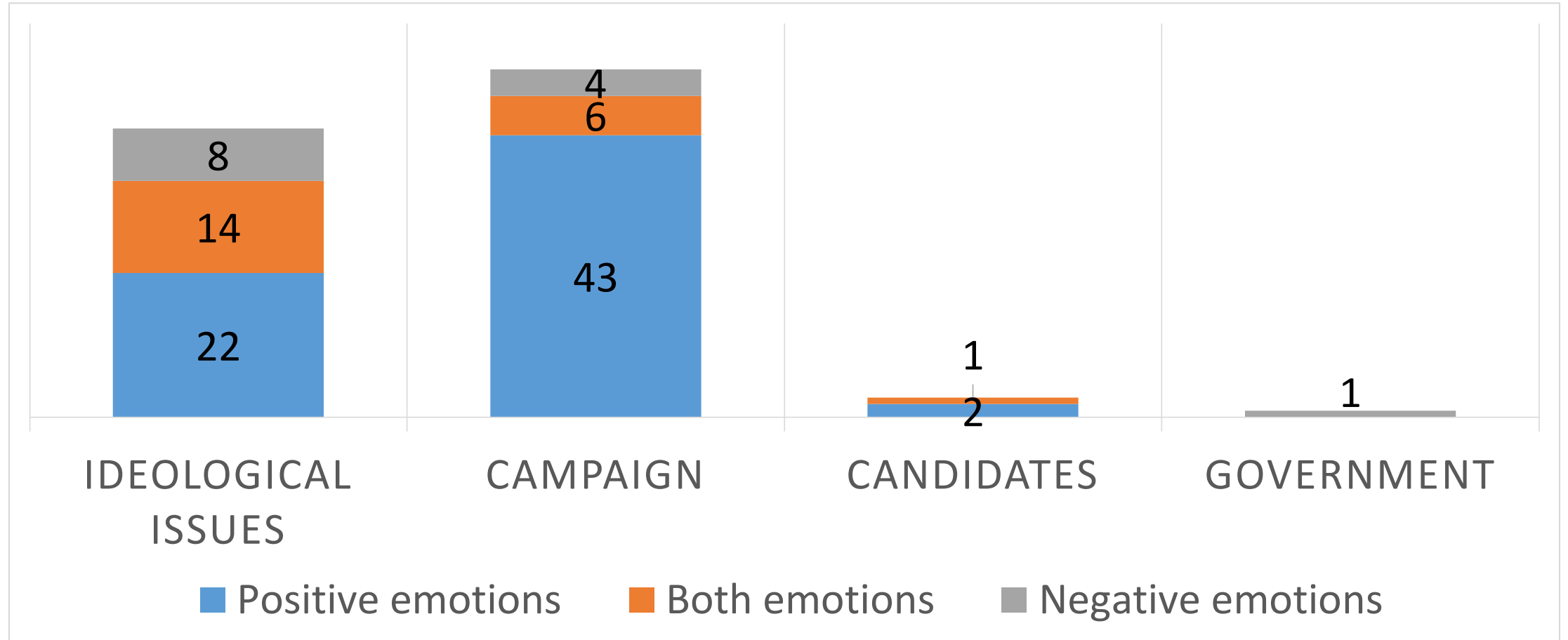


Results: topic and emotional content

Topic	No emotions	Emotions	Total
Ideologic/ programmatic issues	9	44	53
Campaign	51	53	104
Candidates	2	3	5
Government	0	1	1
Total	62	101	163

83% OF THE POSTS ON
IDEOLOGIC ISSUES HAVE
EMOTIONAL CONTENT

Results: topic and emotional content



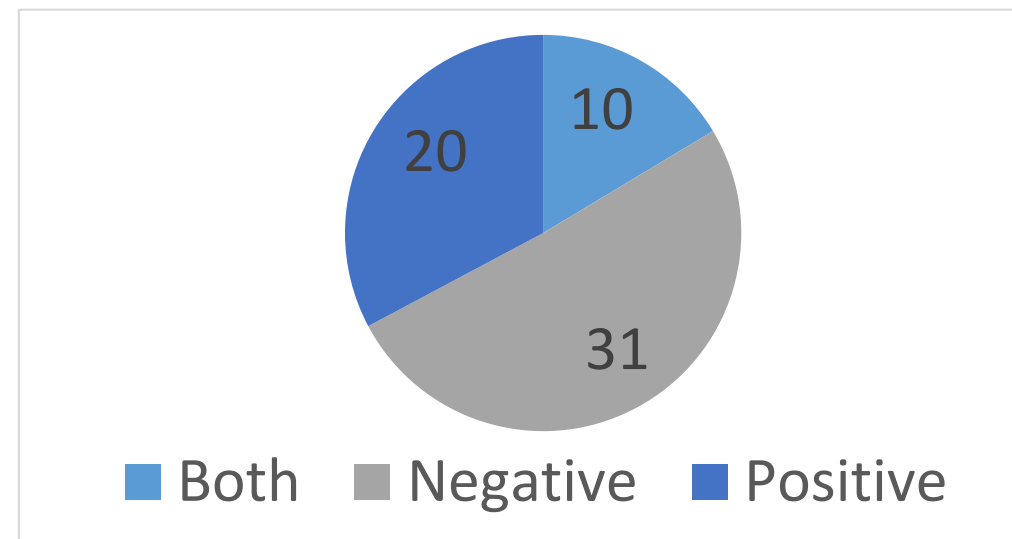
Results: emotional content (comments)

EMOTIONS IN THE COMMENTS

Emotions	Count	Relative frequency
Without emotions	154	72%
With emotions	61	28%
Total	215	

Most of the followers commented only once as in Valera (2014) and only repeated the electoral slogans.

TYPE OF EMOTIONS



Conclusion

- Electoral discourse is still dominated by propagandistic issues
- Social networks and the Internet do not have changed political participation (Anduiza et al., 2010) but are simply symbolic (Mazzoleni, 2001)
- Approach to the study of emotions in political discourse
 - Ideological issues permeated by emotional content
 - Tension between party's positive orientation and citizens' negative emotions
- Emotions and selective exposition to information
- Future work
 - Study of emotions in other political parties' discourse
 - Deliberative analysis (comments)
 - Study of emotions in non-electoral periods

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Thank you for your attention

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