

---

## Miscellaneous

---

**María-Isabel Míguez-González**  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0580-8493>  
mabelm@uvigo.gal  
Universidade de Vigo

---

**Alberto Dafonte-Gómez**  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1076-4445>  
albertodafonte@uvigo.gal  
Universidade de Vigo

---

**Submitted**  
September 3rd, 2024  
**Approved**  
March 17th, 2025

---

© 2025  
Communication & Society  
ISSN 0214-0039  
E ISSN 2386-7876  
[www.communication-society.com](http://www.communication-society.com)

---

2025 – Vol. 38 (2)  
pp. 149-165

---

**How to cite this article:**  
Míguez-González, M.I., & Dafonte-Gómez, A. (2025). Political News on Facebook: Analysis of the Most Commented Posts from the Spanish Media During the 2023 General Election Campaign. *Communication & Society*, 38(2), 149-165. <https://doi.org/10.15581/003.38.2.011>

## Political News on Facebook: Analysis of the Most Commented Posts from the Spanish Media During the 2023 General Election Campaign

### Abstract

This study analyzes the interaction and comment patterns of Facebook users with posts from the main Spanish newspapers during the July 2023 General Election campaign. Using a dataset comprising 12,937 posts, we assessed the frequency and type of interactions, focusing mainly on comments, but also on likes, shares, and angry reactions. The analysis was conducted using R Commander to identify trends and correlations across different types of news content, distinguishing between political and non-political posts as well as hard and soft news. The results indicate that, despite the high posting frequency on Facebook by the ten leading Spanish newspapers—often publishing multiple times per day during the campaign—user engagement was generally modest. Political news posts, while less frequent, garnered more comments relative to other reactions compared to non-political posts. This trend was consistent across media outlets with different ideological orientations. Key findings reveal that hard news, particularly political content, elicited fewer interactions than soft news, contradicting the hypothesis that political content would drive higher engagement during the election period. However, political posts that did attract interaction were more likely to receive comments, suggesting a deeper engagement level among users interested in political discourse.

### Keywords

**Digital journalism, social media, facebook, political news, electoral campaigns, comments, engagement.**

### 1. Introduction

Social media allows audiences to share, recommend, and modify content published by the media, incorporating their own contributions (García-Perdomo et al., 2018). According to Kim & Yang (2017), there are three levels to classify behaviors on social media: consumption, contribution, and creation, each requiring a different level of cognitive effort. Different types of reactions to published content on social media are, according to this criterion, forms of contribution and are also significant mechanisms for content distribution (Dafonte-Gómez, 2018; Tenenboim & Cohen, 2015), as they can achieve greater exposure among an individual's contacts and are interpreted by social media

algorithms as indicators of the relevance of a post or profile. Thus, a simple like, sharing, or commenting are used to measure the engagement or interest a piece of content has generated for a user; this engagement can be related to the time spent on it, the interest in the topic, the user's involvement with the content, or the possibility of seeking further information by visiting the media's page. All these dimensions related to the concept of engagement make it a strategic priority for many newsrooms (Lawrence et al., 2018). According to Tenenboim (2022), engagement is important not only because it can amplify the diffusion of content but also because it can be a way to foster public deliberation and civic empowerment (though it can also become a fertile ground for misinformation or hate speech).

We must also consider that the main interactions on social media have a public dimension—variable, according to their typology—that is associated with the online image of the person executing them, so the mode of interaction a user chooses is not only related to the content or the network but also to the expected response from the group or groups they are part of (Bentivegna & Marchetti, 2019).

Academic research tends to consider comments as a type of interaction that more significantly reflects users' interest and involvement with content than other metrics that require less cognitive effort or level of commitment (Choi et al., 2020; Ksiazek, 2016). It is no coincidence that the most abundant interactions on social media are those that only involve pressing a button to show approval—such as the “like” on Facebook (Bentivegna & Marchetti, 2019)—in a discreet manner, not necessarily evident to followers and contacts (Larsson, 2018).

Since interaction is important for the media, numerous studies aim to understand what aspects of content and what user motivations can increase certain types of reactions, with particular emphasis on elements that increase the likelihood of content being shared and reaching larger audiences (Berger & Milkman, 2012; Cappella et al., 2015; Dafonte-Gómez, 2018; Valenzuela et al., 2017). In the case of comments on news—despite also having algorithmic weight—the motivations for their choice as a study object have been more related to their value as a form of interactive participation with content (Kim & Yang, 2017; Riskos et al., 2019) and as an indicator of a user more engaged with the information and journalistic activity; according to Ksiazek: “The practice of commenting highlights an active user that is challenging, supporting, or at very least reflecting on the news” (2016, p. 505), though online news comment sections also often host low-quality, uncivil participation, and even hate speech (Larsson, 2017).

Based on these premises, this article seeks to delve into the role of comments and their relationship with other reactions to news published by the main Spanish press outlets on their Facebook pages during a period of high informational intensity. The chosen period was the electoral campaign of July 2023. These general elections were called the day after the regional and municipal elections, in which the PSOE lost a significant number of autonomous communities and mayoralties of major cities to the Partido Popular. A total of 24 political parties participated, 11 of which obtained parliamentary representation. The most voted parties were PP, PSOE, Vox, and Sumar. However, in the end, the PSOE's alliance with various government partners allowed Pedro Sánchez to remain in the presidency. During the campaign, three major debates took place—two on RTVE and one on A3Media—as well as numerous political rallies, interviews, and statements that had a significant impact across various media outlets.

## **2. State of the Art**

### **2.1. Media context**

In recent years, native digital media have taken a central role in the media ecosystem (López et al., 2023), forcing traditional media to develop digital editions and share audience profiles as well

(Castro-Higueras et al., 2024). Thus, in July 2023, the 10 Spanish general-interest newspapers with the highest online reach, measured by the number of unique users according to official GFK data, were: *El País*, *El Español*, *El Mundo*, *El Confidencial*, *La Vanguardia*, *20 Minutos*, *Diario ABC*, *The Huffington Post*, *OK Diario*, and *El Periódico*. According to the classification proposed by Guerrero-Solé (2022), 50% of them show a predominant inclination towards the left-wing ideology (*El País*, *La Vanguardia*, *20 Minutos*, *The Huffington Post*, and *El Periódico*), while the other 50% lean predominantly towards the right (*El Español*, *El Mundo*, *El Confidencial*, *Diario ABC*, and *OK Diario*). This distinction is relevant considering that Spanish citizens consume media based on their ideological positioning (Humanes, 2016; Cardenal et al., 2019). Media outlets inspire varying degrees of trust depending on the ideological proximity attributed to them by citizens, who may even perceive ideologically distant media as sources of disinformation. Therefore, ideology plays a significant role in shaping media systems (Masip et al., 2020).

The strategies employed by digital media to both improve journalistic quality and expand their reach involve fostering interaction with their audiences—not only on their own websites but, most importantly, on social media, which serve as essential extensions of these platforms (Castro-Higueras et al., 2024). Facebook, for example, boasts 2.11 billion daily active users, a 6% increase from the previous year (“Meta Reports Fourth Quarter and Full Year 2023 Results; Initiates Quarterly Dividend”, 2024), and continues to lead in news consumption by internet users—despite its slow decline in this aspect. Along with Google, it remains one of the main sources of traffic for news websites (Newman et al., 2023). From the perspective of the strategies employed by the outlets on Facebook, both native digital and traditional newspapers predominantly publish soft news, with proximity being the most common news value. However, the use of engaging texts and clickbait is more frequent in native digital media than in traditional outlets (Chaparro-Domínguez et al., 2022).

## 2.2. Commenting on News: How Much and Where?

According to the Digital News Report 2023, 31% of people report reading comments on news posts on social media during a typical week, and “compared to other forms of news engagement, reading online comments is one of the most common activities that the public regularly engages in” (Newman et al., 2023, p. 16). Over the past five years, passive news consumption has increased (from 42% in 2018 to 47% in 2023), while activities such as sharing news on social media have decreased by 7 percentage points over the same period (from 26% to 19%). Within this general decline in interaction levels, it is noteworthy that commenting on news content online, while still a minority activity, has decreased by only 1-2% in the same period, and the percentage of people commenting on news on social media is double that of those commenting on news websites (18% versus 9%) (Newman et al., 2023). Social media thus emerges as the space with the highest concentration of both the production and reading of comments on news, which could be due to multiple factors, such as the proliferation of paywalls on news websites (which prevents access to full news articles and the possibility of commenting on them) or the user identification and comment moderation policies increasingly applied by media outlets to promote civic discourse (Nelson et al., 2021) and which social media platforms often circumvent.

As Oeldorf-Hirsch and Sundar (2015) point out, Facebook has a series of features that favor its use as a forum for news discussion, to the extent that many journalistic organizations have discontinued comment sections on their corporate sites, seeking to build communities around their Facebook pages (Su et al., 2018). The issues of managing uncivil and low-quality comments on media sites were thus transferred to an external and separate space—with lesser association to their brand—where such interactions could also positively contribute to their algorithmic diffusion in a context of incidental consumption and drive traffic to the media sites (Larsson, 2017). However, this outsourcing of community-building and news commenting space has consequences. First, the reach

of the posts depends entirely on changing and opaque algorithmic criteria for news producers, meaning that being a follower of a media outlet does not guarantee that the user will see all its published content (Dafonte-Gómez et al., 2023). Second, specifically concerning comments, due to the way social media platforms display posts and their interactions, comments on news on social media have the capacity to generate perceptions and biases in users, predisposing them for or against the content, causing them to question its objectivity before reading it, or even inferring the dominant public opinion on the topic (Gearhart et al., 2020, 2023; Lee et al., 2021).

### *2.3. Reasons for commenting*

Fletcher & Park (2017) note that those with a low level of trust in news are more likely to share or comment on news online than people with high or moderate levels of trust. For the authors, this could be interpreted in two ways: either people with lower trust levels have a greater desire to publicly express their disapproval of content, or these same individuals seek to verify the news content by sharing their impressions with others. According to a study by Stroud et al. (2016), the primary motivation for people who comment is to express an emotion or opinion (56%), but other significant motivations include adding information (37.9%), correcting inaccurate information (35.1%), participating in the debate (31.4%), arguing with others (31.2%), or educating others (29.2%). Reading comments is done to learn from others' opinions (46.2%), for entertainment (40.1%), and to see how one's own opinion aligns with those expressed in the comments (33.9%). Both those who read and those who post comments focus on national politics, and partisans, both left and right, as well as those more interested in "serious" news or hard news, share and comment on news on social media to a greater extent (Kalogeropoulos et al., 2017).

Comments are more associated with content that generates negative emotions and controversy (Ksiazek, 2016); generally, Weber (2014) indicates that news with high social impact, a definable temporal structure, controversial, negative, and domestic news attract more comments. Complementarily, Choi et al. (2020) show that while news generating positive emotions attracts more reactions such as likes, it does not generate deeper participation in the form of comments, explaining that readers' social interactions (such as reactions, shares, and comments) with emotional content help them manage their own emotions. Tenenboim (2022) points out that "anger" is one of the strongest predictors of comments on content, and news focused on politics or government actions is also linked to a high volume of comments.

Boczkowski & Mitchelstein (2012) observed that during periods of intensified political activity—such as an election campaign—the most commented content in the press tended to concentrate on "public affairs" (politics, economy, business, and international news), unlike the most clicked and emailed content. As the elections approached, readers were more inclined to engage in any of these practices with public affairs news, although the variation was more marked in the most commented content. Bentivegna & Marchetti (2019) also demonstrate the preferential relationship between the act of commenting and political journalistic content, and the notable—though not exclusive—relationship between commenting and the "anger" reaction on Facebook. They also point to the possible use of the "haha" (laugh) reaction as mockery, accompanying negative comments about the content. Similarly, Segado-Boj et al. (2022), investigating the Facebook posts of four Spanish newspapers, show that news about government and political parties are among the most commented categories along with health and lifestyle. Political news receives the most "anger" reactions, and there are positive correlations between the number of "anger" reactions and the number of comments that posts receive in general. They also detect, as Bentivegna & Marchetti did, a notable number of "haha" reactions in national political news.

There is ample evidence that political news generates a higher volume of comments than other topics (Bentivegna & Marchetti, 2019; Boczkowski & Mitchelstein, 2012; Ksiazek, 2016; Su et al., 2018;

Tenenboim, 2022), and this relationship is independent of content popularity (Tenenboim & Cohen, 2015), since other reach-related variables, such as the number of views, may be more related to the curiosity the news generates (Fletcher & Park, 2017). Therefore, we must not forget that although this type of news—and hard news in general—tends to receive a higher proportion of comments, it is the soft news (gossip, human interest stories, peculiar events, etc.) that are more widely shared (García-Perdomo et al., 2018; Riskos et al., 2019) and accessed by readers (Urrutia et al., 2021).

### **3. Objectives and hypothesis**

Based on the main objective addressed on the introduction and on the results of these previous studies, the following specific objectives were set:

To determine the volume of comments received by Spanish news media on their Facebook posts relative to the size of their communities, to evaluate the proportion of these comments within the overall interactions, and to investigate their possible correlation with other reactions.

To examine the thematic characteristics of the publications with the highest comment ratio—distinguishing between hard news and soft news as well as between political and non-political content—with the aim of understanding the factors that contribute to higher levels of user engagement.

To explore the differences in interaction patterns based on the relevance and theme (political or non-political) in posts with the highest comment ratio, in order to identify how these factors influence audience engagement.

To evaluate the possible impact of ideological differences (right-left) and structural differences (native digital media vs. traditional media) of the media on the variables analyzed in the post with the highest comment ratio.

We propose the following hypotheses adapted to this specific study:

**H1.** Political news published on Facebook by major Spanish newspapers during the July 2023 electoral campaign received more comments than non-political news, indicating a higher level of audience engagement and debate on matters of public interest.

**H2.** In political news, interaction through comments predominates, whereas in non-political news, “likes” are the most frequent interaction, reflecting differences in audience engagement and emotional response depending on the topic.

**H3.** There is a positive correlation between the number of comments and the number of anger reactions in general, with this correlation being particularly strong in political news.

**H4.** The percentage of anger reactions is higher in political news than in non-political news.

**H5.** The ideological orientation of the media influences the reactions of their communities.

**H6.** The origin of the media (digital-native vs. traditional) influences the reactions of their communities.

### **4. Methods**

To conduct the study, the Facebook pages of the 10 Spanish generalist newspapers with the highest online circulation, measured by the number of unique users during July 2023, according to official GFK data, were selected: *El País*, *El Español*, *El Mundo*, *El Confidencial*, *La Vanguardia*, *20 Minutos*, *Diario ABC*, *El Huffington Post*, *OK Diario*, and *El Periódico*. Of them, four are native digital media (*El Confidencial*, *El Español*, *El Huffington Post*, and *Ok Diario*), and the rest are traditional outlets with a digital version. The Crowdtangle tool was used to download all posts published by each of the sampled media outlets between July 7, 2023, the start date of the electoral campaign, and July 22, the day before the election, resulting in a total of 12,937 posts.

Based on this general sample and in relation to objective 1, the basic publication data (total number of posts published, publishing rate, and dates of publication) and the impact data were

analyzed, paying special attention to comments through different variables: number of comments, comment ratio, percentage of comments out of total interactions, and correlation between comments and other relevant reactions such as like, share and angry reaction; other emotions, such as sadness, surprises or fun were excluded from the study due to their low presence in the sample. Beyond the absolute number of comments each post can receive, the consideration of the comment ratio and the percentage of comments out of interactions is significant; on one hand, the comment ratio relates the number of comments obtained to the size of the community; on the other, the weight of the comments out of the total interactions for each post contextualizes the relevance of this type of interaction within the general impact of the post, regardless of community size.

In a second phase, to address objectives 2 and 3, an analysis of the posts with the highest comment ratios was conducted. Initially, the post with the highest comment ratio published by each media outlet (10 outlets) each day (16 days) was selected. This process generated a sample (TopRC) of 160 posts, which were classified into posts with political content (44 posts) and posts with non-political content (116). The first group includes posts related to elections, political parties, candidates, public policies, statements from political figures, and any other information directly related to the political or governmental sphere; this category also includes messages aimed at mobilizing voters or generating political debate, posts that mention or are linked to political actors (such as party leaders, public officials, political organizations, etc.) or specific political events (such as elections, protests, legislative reforms), as well as those containing opinions about policies or political figures. The classification of the content was carried out by two researchers with experience in this field, with a result of  $K=1$  in the Cohen's inter-judge reliability test.

Given the article's interest in identifying the particularities of political news compared to other types of content, a second, more comprehensive sample (TopRC-thematic) was generated by selecting for each media outlet and each day two posts: the post with the highest comment ratio containing political content and the post with the highest comment ratio containing non-political content. Since *La Vanguardia* did not publish any posts related to politics on two of the analyzed days (July 7 and 15), the sample consisted of a total of 318 posts, 158 with political content and 160 with non-political content (classified by the two researchers with a result of  $K=1$  in the Cohen's inter-judge reliability test).

In summary, the sample compositions are as follows:

General sample (12,937 posts): all posts published by the 10 media outlets in the sample between July 7 and 22, 2023.

TopRC-thematic (318 posts): post with the highest comment ratio of non-political content per media outlet and day (160 posts) + post with the highest comment ratio of political content per media outlet and day (158 posts).

TopRC (160 posts): post with the highest comment ratio per media outlet and day, regardless of content.

To relate the comments to the weight and relevance of the published information, these posts were classified into hard news and soft news. Generally, hard news refers to topics that are political, economic, and social, requiring immediate publication due to their journalistic relevance, while soft news refers to gossip, human interest stories, or peculiar events of lesser journalistic importance (Riskos et al., 2019). Although political news tends to be considered hard news by definition, in the sample analysis, the relevance of the topic was prioritized, allowing for the possibility that certain political news could be classified as soft news, such as those related to politicians' private lives ("The video of Yolanda Díaz with the iron sparks creativity: these are the best memes") or comments from famous individuals about a party or candidate ("Roberto Soldado doesn't hold back and gives

Yolanda Díaz this nickname during the debate”). Following these criteria, all posts were coded by the two researchers and, after that process, the results were pooled; Cohen’s inter-rater reliability test yielded positive results ( $K=0.91$ ). Discrepancies between the classifications of the two researchers were discussed and resolved by consensus.

Considering both the distinction between political and non-political content and between hard news and soft news, in the TopRC-thematic sample, the comment ratio and the weight of comments and other interactions within the total interactions were analyzed.

In addition to analyzing the data by media outlet, the newspapers were also categorized based on their ideological inclination, following Guerrero-Solé’s (2022) proposal, and according their origin (digital and traditional).

The statistical processing of the information was carried out with R Commander.

## 5. Results

### 5.1. General data

The number of posts made on Facebook by the ten media outlets during the analyzed period totals 12,937, averaging 80.9 posts per outlet per day, although the publication rate and volume vary irregularly by outlet. *Ok Diario*’s page is the most active, accounting for 16.59% of the total posts (TP) and averaging 134 posts per day, followed by *La Vanguardia* (14.3% and a daily average of 115.6 posts). Conversely, outlets such as *El Huffington Post* and *El Periódico* post fewer than 55 times daily. Thus, the group of “right-leaning” media outlets contributes 54.16% of the total posts (Table 1). The contribution of posts is balanced between native digital media and traditional media: the four native outlets contribute 41% of the posts in the sample, while the six traditional ones contribute 59%.

**Table 1.** General data.

Media outlet	Average number of fans	Number of posts	Average posts per day	% of total posts
<i>20 Minutos</i>	1.183.047	1066	66,6	8,24%
<i>ABC</i>	1.581.240	1399	87,4	10,81%
<i>El Confidencial</i>	1.110.686	1015	63,4	7,85%
<i>El Espanol</i>	789.832	1265	79,1	9,78%
<i>El HuffPost</i>	1.511.934	872	54,5	6,74%
<i>El Mundo</i>	2.746.651	1182	73,9	9,14%
<i>El País</i>	5.392.750	1272	79,5	9,83%
<i>El Periódico</i>	822.236	870	54,4	6,72%
<i>La Vanguardia</i>	4.415.804	1850	115,6	14,30%
<i>Ok Diario</i>	909.146	2146	134,1	16,59%
Right-leaning	1.360.954	7007	437,9	54,16%
Left-leaning	3.089.998	5930	370,7	45,84%
Native	1.018.482	5298	331,1	40,95%
Traditional	2.940.697	7639	477,4	59,05%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2.046.333</b>	<b>12937</b>	<b>808,6</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

Source: authors’ own elaboration.

The distribution of total posts published (TP) per day ranges from 718 on July 9 (5.6% of the total posts) to 879 on July 23 (6.8%), without significant variations attributable to the ideological inclination of the media outlets, type of media (native digital or traditional), campaign-related events, or other news events occurring on those dates.

Regarding interaction data, it is noteworthy that 92.37% of the posts generated fewer than 10 interactions. Considering the comments (Table 2), it is observed that the posts published during the period averaged 52 comments per post, with a very high standard deviation from the mean. The median drops to 11 comments per post, ranging from two comments per post for *El Periódico* to 23 for *El Mundo* or *La Vanguardia*; in fact, 11.2% of the posts received no comments. Although this analysis is intended to be purely descriptive, it can be stated that the differences in the number of comments between the various outlets are statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$  in the Kruskal-Wallis test, with normal distribution of comments rejected by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test).

When the comment data is related to community size, which varies greatly depending on the outlet, it is observed that the outlet with the best comment ratio is *Ok Diario*, with a median of 0.0013 (more than double the median of the entire sample), followed by *ABC*, *El Confidencial*, and *El Mundo*, all of which are right-leaning outlets. In contrast, left-leaning outlets such as *El País* or *El Periódico* have a median of 0.0002.

Furthermore, the percentage of comments relative to total interactions also varies greatly by outlet. The lowest percentages correspond to *La Vanguardia*, with 9.16% of comments out of total interactions, and *El País*, with 13.98%. The four native digital media outlets are the ones that achieve the highest percentage of comments, ranging from 28.8% for *Ok Diario* to 34.53% for *El Huffington Post*.

The significant differences among the various outlets do not allow for a reliable comparison between right-leaning and left-leaning outlets or native-traditional outlets, as the influence of outlets like *Ok Diario* skews the results.

**Table 2.** Comments by post, comment rate based on community size y % of comments on interactions.

Media outlet	Comments by post			Comment rate by post			% Comments on interactions
	Mean	SD	Median	Mean	SD	Median	
<i>20 Minutos</i>	23	60	8	0,0019	0,0051	0,0007	25,41%
<i>ABC</i>	47	149	13	0,0030	0,0094	0,0008	19,61%
<i>El Confidencial</i>	51	236	9	0,0046	0,0213	0,0008	33,10%
<i>El Espanol</i>	44	199	5	0,0056	0,0251	0,0006	32,78%
<i>El HuffPost</i>	38	253	7	0,0025	0,0167	0,0005	34,53%
<i>El Mundo</i>	63	129	23	0,0023	0,0047	0,0008	24,55%
<i>El País</i>	54	185	13	0,0010	0,0034	0,0002	13,98%
<i>El Periódico</i>	8	26	2	0,0009	0,0032	0,0002	25,41%
<i>La Vanguardia</i>	103	333	23	0,0023	0,0075	0,0005	9,16%
<i>Ok Diario</i>	49	209	12	0,0053	0,0229	0,0013	28,81%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0,0032</b>	<b>0,0152</b>	<b>0,0006</b>	<b>30,15%</b>

Source: authors' own elaboration.

In general, there exists a moderately positive correlation between comments and other analyzed reactions (likes, shares, and “angry” reactions) ( $p < 0.001$  for all Spearman’s Rho correlations). *El Confidencial* shows the highest correlation between comments and likes; *Ok Diario* exhibits the highest correlation between comments and shares; and *La Vanguardia* shows the highest correlation between comments and angry reactions (Table 3). The correlation levels based on the “right” and “left” groupings are similar, although the correlation between comments and angry reactions is slightly higher in right-leaning outlets. The differences between native digital media and traditional media are irrelevant.

**Table 3.** Correlation between comments and other reactions depending on the headline and ideology.

Media outlet	Correlations between number of comments and other reactions		
	Likes	Shares	Angry
<i>20 Minutos</i>	0,52	0,34	0,44
<i>ABC</i>	0,54	0,51	0,48
<i>El Confidencial</i>	0,68	0,51	0,56
<i>El Español</i>	0,63	0,55	0,53
<i>El HuffPost</i>	0,60	0,57	0,40
<i>El Mundo</i>	0,55	0,51	0,47
<i>El País</i>	0,55	0,50	0,51
<i>El Periódico</i>	0,45	0,41	0,39
<i>La Vanguardia</i>	0,64	0,49	0,64
<i>Ok Diario</i>	0,62	0,64	0,55
Right-leaning	0,375	0,429	0,611
Left-leaning	0,457	0,556	0,466
Native	0,384	0,495	0,5
Traditional	0,432	0,542	0,496
TOTAL POSTS	0,64	0,56	0,55

Source: authors’ own elaboration.

### 5.2. Analysis of political and non-political posts with highest comment ratios in each outlet each day

As indicated in the methodology, only 44 (27.5%) of the 160 posts with the highest comment ratios per outlet and day comprising the TopRC sample have political content. Only 17.5% of this group of posts are hard news, all of which are political, as all non-political news and even 16 posts of political content would classify as soft news. It is noteworthy that *Ok Diario* stands out, as its posts with the highest comment ratios per day are always political (although half of them are soft news), whereas in the case of *20 Minutos*, they are always non-political content. These peculiarities result in right-leaning outlets accumulating 66% of the political content posts in this sample.

Regarding the TopRC-thematic sample, which includes the political post with the highest comment ratio per outlet/day and the non-political post with the highest comment ratio per outlet/day, it should be noted that three-quarters of the 158 political posts correspond to hard news. Among these are contents related to electoral debates (20% of total political content) or

news focusing on statements made by politicians in various contexts such as rallies or TV interviews (15%); there are also contents related to opinion polls or surveys (9%) and campaign events (8%), among others. Only nine publications (5.7%) deal with the electoral programs of different parties, the same number of posts focusing on the controversy surrounding Núñez Feijoo's photograph with Marcial Dorado. Soft news in political content includes stories about politicians' lives or habits, controversies among journalists, and opinions of famous personalities. The four native digital media outlets contribute the most political soft news to the sample, accounting for 69% of this type of content, compared to the 31% contributed by the six traditional media outlets. Right-leaning outlets accumulate 65.8% of soft political content in this sample, due to the weight of the news provided by *Ok Diario* and *El Confidencial*.

Furthermore, all non-political content posts in the TopRC-thematic sample (the 160 posts with the highest comment ratio per outlet and day) fall into the category of soft content; this is logical, as excluding politics leaves few "serious" or relevant topics that can generate enough interest to rank high in comments for a given outlet and day. Of these non-political content posts, 17.5% are related to events, 8% to sports, and the rest to society news, entertainment, or easily viral content.

### 5.2.1. Analysis of number of comments and comment rate

The posts included in the TopRC-thematic sample totaled 195,645 comments. Hard political news received the lowest average number of comments (one-third of those received by non-political news and one-fourth of those received by soft political news). Although the distribution of these averages varies depending on the outlets, the detailed analysis of each outlet confirms that political news is not the most commented on in any of them. While non-political posts accumulated the most comments in *20 Minutos*, *El Confidencial*, *El Mundo*, *El País*, *El Periódico*, and *La Vanguardia*, soft political news was the most commented on in *ABC*, *El Español*, *El Huffington Post*, and *Ok Diario* (Table 4).

Contextualizing these data based on community size reinforces the previous conclusion, as soft political publications achieve a higher comment ratio than non-political and hard political ones. By way of illustration, the news with the highest comment ratio of each type were: a post from *Ok Diario* about the video that Anabel Alonso and other artists launched against Vox (political soft news, comment rate = 0.81), a post from *El Confidencial* about a shopper from Murcia who doesn't understand the receipt at a supermarket in Catalonia (non-political post, comment rate = 0.36), and a post from *El Español* with statements from Alberto Núñez Feijoo in an interview with that outlet (political hard news, comment rate = 0.267).

However, the detailed analysis by outlet reveals some differences in comment patterns based on content type. *Ok Diario* stands out as the outlet with the highest comment ratio in political news, both hard and soft, with a marked difference compared to other outlets, while *El Español* achieves the highest comment ratio in non-political posts and ranks second in soft political news. Accumulating results based on the ideological orientation of the outlets shows that the comment ratio is higher in right-leaning outlets than in left-leaning outlets for all types of content and higher in native digital media than in traditional media, for all types of content. (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Average number of comments and comment ratio depending on the type of post in the Top RC-thematic sample.

	Average number of comments by post				Comment rate by post			
	Non-political posts	Soft political posts	Hard political posts	Total	Non-political posts	Soft political posts	Hard political posts	Total
<i>20 Minutos</i>	328	27	64	<b>195</b>	0,0277	0,0023	0,0054	<b>0,0165</b>
<i>ABC</i>	733	1249	221	<b>573</b>	0,0463	0,0790	0,014	<b>0,0363</b>
<i>El Confidencial</i>	<b>945</b>	938	193	<b>732</b>	0,0851	0,0845	0,0174	<b>0,0659</b>
<i>El Español</i>	926	1027	344	<b>763</b>	0,1173	0,1300	0,0436	<b>0,0966</b>
<i>El HuffPost</i>	455	1409	121	<b>489</b>	0,0301	0,0932	0,008	<b>0,0324</b>
<i>El Mundo</i>	612	287	347	<b>477</b>	0,0223	0,0105	0,0126	<b>0,0174</b>
<i>El País</i>	827	368	376	<b>601</b>	0,0153	0,0068	0,007	<b>0,0111</b>
<i>El Periódico</i>	104	30	16	<b>61</b>	0,0126	0,0037	0,002	<b>0,0075</b>
<i>La Vanguardia</i>	2315	58	249	<b>1332</b>	0,0524	0,0013	0,0056	<b>0,0302</b>
<i>Ok Diario</i>	393	2151	952	<b>972</b>	0,0432	0,2366	0,1047	<b>0,1069</b>
Right-leaning	722	1359	379	<b>704</b>	0,0629	0,1405	0,0327	<b>0,0646</b>
Lef-leaning	806	593	167	<b>526</b>	0,0276	0,0377	0,0056	<b>0,0194</b>
Native	680	1423	372	<b>739</b>	0,0689	0,1435	0,0399	<b>0,0755</b>
Traditional	820	391	215	<b>532</b>	0,0294	0,0226	0,0079	<b>0,0197</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>764</b>	<b>1097</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>0,0452</b>	0,1053	0,018	<b>0,0421</b>

Source: authors' own elaboration.

### 5.2.2. Analysis of the Weight of Main Interactions

Although the previous section established that, overall, the comment rate for hard political news is the lowest, the weight of comments in the total interactions obtained is significantly higher in political posts. Specifically, political news generates nearly 31% more comments as a proportion of its interactions compared to non-political posts (41.26% of interactions from political posts are comments, whereas this percentage drops to 10.64% for non-political posts). Within political news, comments constitute a higher proportion of total interactions in hard news (46.82%) compared to soft news (38.66%). For example, in five political hard news posts, comments exceed 90% of the interactions, with the highest percentage (92.8%) being a post from *20minutos.es* that provides a comparison of electoral programs. While varying significantly in magnitude, this pattern repeats across most outlets, with particularly high percentages of comments on hard political news at *El Confidencial* (83.1%) and *El Español* (71%); only *Ok Diario*, *El Huffington Post*, and *La Vanguardia* accumulate a higher percentage of comments on soft political news than on hard political news. Furthermore, *Ok Diario* is the only outlet where non-political posts receive a higher proportion of comments compared to other types; in fact, it stands out for the low percentage of comments it receives on hard political news compared to other outlets (only 28.9% compared to 83.1% at *El Confidencial*, for instance) (Table 5).

In non-political content, the bulk of interactions are likes, accounting for 61.28% of total interactions, compared to 32.08% in political posts; within political news, the percentage of likes is lower in hard news (20.79%) than in soft news (37.99%). Although detailed analysis by outlets shows that in some cases soft political news surpasses non-political posts in percentage of likes,

this is not the case with hard political news, which consistently lags behind in percentage of likes except for *Ok Diario*.

It's also noteworthy that, in general, political news achieves a higher percentage of shares, particularly in hard news compared to soft news, although this pattern varies considerably across outlets. The percentage of shares relative to total interactions in political content posted by right-leaning outlets doubles that of left-leaning outlets, but this data is influenced by the high percentage of shares obtained by *Ok Diario* posts.

Regarding the “angry” reaction, in most outlets, the percentage of this reaction relative to total interactions is higher in hard political news than in other types of content. Regardless of content type, it's observed that communities of some outlets such as *El Periódico* are more prone to the angry reaction, whereas in others like *20 Minutos*, this reaction is minimal.

In left-leaning media, non-political posts receive a much higher percentage of likes than comments, and this pattern reverses (although with a less pronounced difference) in political news (both soft and hard); the same happens in traditional media (which include only two right-leaning outlets). Among right-leaning media, the percentage of likes is higher than that of comments in soft news (both political and non-political), but in hard political news, comments once again become the clearly predominant reaction. In native media, the percentages of likes and comments do not differ significantly in soft news; in hard political news, comments account for a higher percentage, though they do not exceed 40%.

For any type of content, the percentage of shares and angry reactions is higher in right-leaning media than in left-leaning ones, although the differences are small. Regarding native and traditional media, percentage differences in these two reactions are minimal, except in the case of shares for hard political news, which are significantly higher in native media.

**Table 5.** Percentage of likes, comments, shares and angry over the total interactions (Top RC- thematic sample; n=318).

	Non-political posts (soft)				Soft political posts				Hard political posts			
	L	C	S	A	L	C	S	A	L	C	S	A
<i>20 Minutos</i>	38,2	27,6	6,1	2,69	25,0	42,2	0,0	1,56	15,2	67,8	2,7	1,90
<i>ABC</i>	57,2	9,5	6,7	0,71	26,4	56,5	2,5	6,81	13,5	60,7	2,2	7,42
<i>El Confidencial</i>	32,4	46,5	1,7	4,53	53,1	29,9	5,4	0,55	9,1	83,1	1,0	1,39
<i>El Espanol</i>	37,2	31,0	5,0	4,44	42,7	40,8	4,2	0,81	9,9	71,0	5,2	4,97
<i>El HuffPost</i>	34,5	33,0	4,9	3,58	34,5	55,3	4,4	0,38	30,8	44,8	9,1	2,39
<i>El Mundo</i>	36,7	18,6	10,5	0,34	17,2	52,0	1,6	1,63	13,9	56,7	7,4	3,85
<i>El País</i>	66,3	5,6	9,7	0,63	44,8	35,9	9,2	0,10	23,2	49,8	9,1	4,29
<i>El Periódico</i>	27,9	40,8	3,9	4,32	27,3	48,7	4,8	10,16	19,7	55,1	3,6	9,35
<i>La Vanguardia</i>	68,9	6,2	3,1	0,88	11,5	69,4	2,0	0,40	18,2	60,3	3,0	6,48
<i>Ok Diario</i>	20,8	36,9	4,7	1,73	35,0	33,3	9,0	3,61	26,0	28,9	29,0	6,87
Right-leaning	44,5	21,2	6,4	1,81	39,7	35,4	6,9	2,68	20,0	44,2	18,4	5,82
Left-leaning	66,5	7,4	5	0,93	34,7	54,0	4,7	0,50	22,6	52,7	7,2	4,43
Native	33,0	36,5	4,0	3,9	40,0	36,5	6,9	2,1	23,3	39,0	22,6	5,9
Traditional	64,6	7,6	5,5	0,8	27,6	53,9	3,2	5,5	18,0	55,8	6,3	4,8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>61,28</b>	<b>10,64</b>	<b>5,34</b>	<b>1,14</b>	<b>37,99</b>	<b>38,66</b>	<b>6,56</b>	<b>2,47</b>	<b>20,79</b>	<b>46,82</b>	<b>15,01</b>	<b>5,40</b>

L= likes. C = comments. S = shares. A = angry.

Source: authors' own elaboration.

Lastly, in this set of posts with high comment ratios, the correlation between comments and “likes” or shares is positive and high ( $\rho=0.81$  and  $\rho=0.82$  respectively), while the correlation between comments and “angry” reactions is positive and moderate ( $\rho=0.62$ ). These correlations are significant ( $p<0.001$  in the Rho Spearman coefficient for all correlations) and higher in the Top RC-thematic sample than in the total posts published by the outlets in the analyzed period (see Table 3). When observing the results based on content type, it is noted that correlations are higher for soft political news, with a particularly marked difference in the case of angry reactions. However, the correlation between comments and “angry” reactions in hard political news is lower than in the others ( $\rho=0.80$  in soft political posts compared to  $\rho=0.61$  in non-political posts and  $\rho=0.47$  in hard posts). Correlations between comments and other reactions are not significant. Additionally, differences between right-leaning and left-leaning outlets or native digital and traditional outlets are negligible, and due to the limited number of posts per outlet, correlation analysis by each outlet is also not significant.

## **6. Discussion and conclusions**

During the July 2023 electoral campaign, Spain’s major newspapers maintained a high and consistent publication rate on their Facebook pages, with *Ok Diario* and *La Vanguardia* standing out for exceeding 100 posts per day. Despite the period’s high news intensity, overall interaction levels were modest, with a significant number of posts receiving minimal reactions. This finding reinforces the premise that social media engagement is not necessarily linked to the volume of posts but rather to the type of content published and the level of interest it generates among audiences.

Regarding the first objective, despite the fact that Facebook is the favorite network for checking news and that twice as many comments are made on social media as on newspaper websites (Newman et al., 2023), the analysis shows a low volume of comments per post, with an average of 52 comments per publication, very low comment ratios for all media, and a percentage of comments relative to total interactions below 30%. This suggests that most of these media’s Facebook audiences engage in passive news consumption, preferring simpler forms of interaction such as “likes.” Commenting behavior varies significantly across media outlets. However, hypothesis 5 (the ideological orientation of the media influences reactions within its community) is not conclusively confirmed, as media outlets with the same ideological leaning show significant differences in their comment proportions. This suggests that factors beyond ideological alignment, such as audience composition and editorial strategies, may play a role in shaping engagement levels.

Correlations between comments and other reactions are positive and moderate across all cases, slightly higher for “likes” than for shares or “angry” reactions. Although the differences between media outlets are statistically significant, they are small and do not allow for any relevant conclusions regarding audience behavior.

Regarding objective 2, a key finding is that political news, despite an electoral context in which almost all media published at least one such story daily on Facebook, was not the most commented category. While *Ok Diario*’s audience showed a high propensity to engage with political content, this pattern was not replicated across all media. Instead, *soft news*—whether political or not—generally garnered a higher number and ratio of comments. This contradicts the assumption that political news inherently generates more user engagement (disproving hypothesis 1) and reinforces previous studies suggesting that lighter, human-interest stories tend to dominate engagement metrics (García-Perdomo et al., 2018; Riskos et al., 2019; Urrutia et al., 2021).

However, regarding the third objective, it was observed that political content had a higher proportion of comments relative to total interactions, especially in the case of hard news, confirming hypothesis 2. This indicates that while, in general, political news generates less interest than other types of content among audiences, those who engage with political news do so with greater intensity and commitment, preferring to comment rather than limiting themselves to more superficial reactions (validating hypothesis 2). This finding is consistent with results from Segado-Boj et al. (2022), which identify news about the government and political parties as key drivers of comments. It also aligns with existing literature highlighting the deliberative potential of political news comments, although within a broader context of declining interaction levels on social media platforms (Bentivegna & Marchetti, 2019; Boczkowski & Mitchelstein, 2012; Ksiazek, 2016; Su et al., 2018; Tenenboim, 2022).

Once again, *Ok Diario* stands out as the only outlet where the percentage of comments is higher for non-political news. This suggests that its community, which shows a high interest in politics, is particularly prone to expressing a variety of reactions to this type of content. In the case of *hard political news*, its audience is significantly more willing to share them compared to other media outlets' communities. In fact, except for *Ok Diario*, *El Español*, and *El Huffington Post*, most other newspapers follow the pattern that *soft news* is shared more than *hard news*, according to previous studies (García-Perdomo et al., 2018; Riskos et al., 2019).

Regarding hypothesis 3, it can be considered partially confirmed, as there is a positive and moderate correlation between the number of comments a news post receives and the number of "angry" reactions, as also noted by Segado-Boj et al. (2022). However, this correlation is similar or even higher in the case of other reactions analyzed ("likes" and shares), so this finding should be interpreted with caution. Analyzing the posts with the highest comment ratios by topic indicates that for *soft political news*, the correlation between comments and angry reactions is quite high. However, for *hard political news*, while a correlation exists, it is lower and inferior to the correlation between comments and "likes" or comments and shares.

Nonetheless, emotional reactions, particularly the "angry" reaction, were more prevalent in political content, especially in *hard news*, corroborating the hypothesis that political discourse generates more intense emotional responses (hypothesis 4), aligning with Segado-Boj et al. (2022).

Regarding objective 4, the ideological orientation of media outlets had a noticeable but nuanced impact on engagement patterns. Right-wing media exhibited higher comment and emotional reaction rates, though the differences were not drastic, making it impossible to validate hypothesis 5. Therefore, while ideology plays a significant role in shaping the media system (Humanes, 2016; Cardenal et al., 2019; Masip et al., 2020), it does not seem to translate clearly into interaction patterns among these media's Facebook communities.

Instead, the distinction between digital-native and traditional media emerged as a more significant factor. Digital-native outlets consistently recorded higher engagement rates across all interaction metrics—comments, shares, and emotional reactions—corroborating hypothesis 6. This suggests that their content strategies may be better optimized for social media virality and that techniques such as clickbait or engaging text, as pointed out by Chaparro-Domínguez et al. (2022), help them maximize interactions on social platforms.

This distinction is particularly evident in *hard political news*, where digital-native outlets significantly outperformed traditional media in terms of shares and engagement. This finding, in line with López et al. (2023) and Castro-Higueras et al. (2024), underscores the evolving dynamics of digital journalism, where traditional media must adapt to changes in audience behavior and platform algorithms to maintain their relevance in online discussions.

This study has limitations related to the short period analyzed, which is also linked to a specific electoral process with its particular characteristics, and to the need to focus the analysis on posts with the highest levels of engagement.

Despite this, these results highlight the complexity of user behavior on social media and confirm that most posts made by media outlets on Facebook go virtually unnoticed by their audiences, given the interaction levels they generate among readers (despite Facebook being the main platform used for news consumption).

Overall, the study reaffirms that while political news attracts a highly engaged subset of users, it does not inherently generate the highest levels of engagement on social media, even during what could be considered the country's most significant electoral campaign. Instead, *soft news* dominates the engagement landscape, whereas political news stands out more for the intensity of engagement than for its absolute volume. Only when analyzing politically themed posts that achieved high engagement levels and comparing them with other types of news do we observe the significant role that comments play in overall interactions and, consequently, in their potential reach due to Facebook's algorithm.

Moreover, the emotional dimension of political engagement remains a key factor, with anger serving as a primary driver of discussion and content amplification. This raises important questions about the role of the media in fostering constructive political discourse versus incentivizing engagement driven by outrage.

Finally, the study highlights the need to consider factors such as content strategy and audience composition beyond ideology or outlet type (traditional vs. digital). Future research could focus on the qualitative analysis of comment content to determine whether it represents genuine civic discussion or merely reproduces patterns of polarization and partisan confrontation. Additionally, examining the role of Facebook's algorithmic changes in shaping these interaction patterns would provide deeper insights into the evolving landscape of digital political communication.

## References

- Bentivegna, S., & Marchetti, R. (2019). News Users on Facebook: Interaction Strategies on the Pages of El País, la Repubblica, Le Monde, and The Guardian. *Journalism Studies*, 20(15), 2182–2199. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2019.1580149>
- Berger, J., & Milkman, K. L. (2012). What Makes Online Content Viral? *Journal of Marketing Research*, 49(2), 192–205. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1509/jmr.10.0353>
- Boczkowski, P. J., & Mitchelstein, E. (2012). How users take advantage of different forms of interactivity on online news sites: Clicking, e-mailing, and commenting. *Human Communication Research*, 38(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.2011.01418.x>
- Cappella, J. N., Kim, H. S., & Albarracín, D. (2015). Selection and Transmission Processes for Information in the Emerging Media Environment: Psychological Motives and Message Characteristics. *Media Psychology*, 18(3), 396–424. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15213269.2014.941112>
- Cardenal, A.S.; Aguilar-Paredes, C.; Galais, C.; Pérez-Montoro, M. (2019). Digital technologies and selective exposure: How choice and filter bubbles shape news media exposure. *The international journal of press/politics*, 24(4), pp. 465–486. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161219862988>
- Castro-Higueras, A.; Pérez-Rufí, J.P.; Rodríguez-Vázquez, A.I.; López-García, X. (2024). Medios Nativos Digitales y Sus Comunidades Virtuales: Estrategias de Interacción y Participación en Redes Sociales. *Profesional de la información*, 33(1), e330015. <https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2024.0015>

- Chaparro-Domínguez, M.A., Segado-Boj, F., & González-Aguilar, J.M. (2022). Análisis de las estrategias promocionales en Facebook de los diarios tradicionales y nativos digitales. *Comunicação Mídia E Consumo*, 19(56). <https://doi.org/10.18568/cmc.v19i56.2610>
- Choi, J., Lee, S. Y., & Ji, S. W. (2020). Engagement in Emotional News on Social Media: Intensity and Type of Emotions. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 98(4) <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699020959718>
- CrowdTangle Team. CrowdTangle: Facebook. [discontinued].
- Dafonte-Gómez, A. (2018). Audience as Medium: Motivations and Emotions in News Sharing. *International Journal of Communication*, 12(0), 2134-2152. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/11093/1062>
- Dafonte-Gómez, A., García-Crespo, O., & Ramahí-García, D. (2023). Using video for fact-checking on Facebook. Analysis of the trend and reach of Ibero-American production (2016-2021). *Profesional de la información*, 32(5). <https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2023.sep.11>
- Fletcher, R., & Park, S. (2017). The Impact of Trust in the News Media on Online News Consumption and Participation. *Digital Journalism*, 5(10), 1281-1299. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2017.1279979>
- García-Perdomo, V., Salaverría, R., Kilgo, D. K., & Harlow, S. (2018). To Share or Not to Share: The influence of news values and topics on popular social media content in the United States, Brazil, and Argentina. *Journalism Studies*, 19(8), 1180-1201. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2016.1265896>
- Gearhart, S., Coman, I. A., Moe, A., & Brammer, S. (2023). Facebook Comments Influence Perceptions of Journalistic Bias: Testing Hostile Media Bias in the COVID-19 Social Media Environment. *Electronic News*, 17(1), 3-18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19312431221103127>
- Gearhart, S., Moe, A., & Zhang, B. (2020). Hostile media bias on social media: Testing the effect of user comments on perceptions of news bias and credibility. *Hum Behav & Emerg Tech.*, 2, 140-148. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hbe2.185>
- Guerrero-Solé, F. (2022). The ideology of media. Measuring the political leaning of Spanish news media through Twitter users' interactions. *Communication & Society*, 35(1). <https://doi.org/10.15581/003.35.1.29-43>
- Humanes, M.L. (2016). Exposición selectiva, partidismo y polarización de las audiencias de los medios en España. En: Casero-Ripollés, Andreu (coord.). *Periodismo y democracia en el entorno digital*. (pp. 37-52). Madrid: SEP. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303942022\\_Exposicion\\_selectiva\\_partidismo\\_y\\_polarizacion\\_de\\_las\\_audiencias\\_de\\_los\\_medios\\_en\\_Espana](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303942022_Exposicion_selectiva_partidismo_y_polarizacion_de_las_audiencias_de_los_medios_en_Espana)
- Kalogeropoulos, A., Negrodo, S., Picone, I., & Nielsen, R. K. (2017). Who Shares and Comments on News?: A Cross-National Comparative Analysis of Online and Social Media Participation. *Social Media + Society*, 3(4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305117735754>
- Kim, C., & Yang, S.-U. (2017). Like, comment, and share on Facebook: How each behavior differs from the other. *Public Relations Review*, 43(2), 441-449. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2017.02.006>
- Ksiazek, T. B. (2016). Commenting on the News: Explaining the degree and quality of user comments on news websites. *Journalism Studies*, 19(5), 650-673. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2016.1209977>
- Larsson, A. O. (2017). Diversifying Likes: Relating reactions to commenting and sharing on newspaper Facebook pages. *Journalism Practice*, 12(3), 326-343. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2017.1285244>
- Larsson, A. O. (2018). The News User on Social Media: A comparative study of interacting with media organizations on Facebook and Instagram. *Journalism Studies*, 19(15), 2225-2242. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2017.1332957>
- Lawrence, R. G., Radcliffe, D., & Schmidt, T. R. (2018). Practicing Engagement. *Journalism Practice*, 12(10), 1220-1240. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2017.1391712>

- Lee, E.-J., Jang, Y. J., & Chung, M. (2021). When and How User Comments Affect News Readers' Personal Opinion: Perceived Public Opinion and Perceived News Position as Mediators. *Digital Journalism*, 9(1), 42-63. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2020.1837638>
- López-García, X.; Silva-Rodríguez, A.; Vázquez-Herrero, J. (2023). Evolution, trends and future of native media: From avant-garde to the epicenter of the communications ecosystem. *Profesional de la Información*, 32(2), e320202. <https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2023.mar.06>
- Masip, P.; Suau, J.; Ruiz-Caballero, C. (2020). Percepciones sobre medios de comunicación y desinformación: ideología y polarización en el sistema mediático español. *Profesional de la información*, 29(5), e290527. <https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2020.sep.27>
- Meta Reports Fourth Quarter and Full Year 2023 Results; Initiates Quarterly Dividend. (2024, february 1). *Meta Investor Relations*. Retrieved from <https://investor.fb.com/investor-news/press-release-details/2024/Meta-Reports-Fourth-Quarter-and-Full-Year-2023-Results-Initiates-Quarterly-Dividend/default.aspx>
- Nelson, M. N., Ksiazek, T. B., & Springer, N. (2021). Killing the Comments: Why Do News Organizations Remove User Commentary Functions? *Journalism and Media*, 2(4). <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia2040034>
- Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Eddy, K., Robertson, C. T., & Nielsen, R. K. (2023). *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2023*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. Retrieved from <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2023>
- Riskos, K., Dekoulou, P., & Tsourvakas, G. (2019). User interactivity in online newspapers: Exploring the relationship between content features and user response. *Newspaper Research Journal*, 40(2), 155-176. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739532918814465>
- Segado-Boj, F. S., Chaparro-Domínguez, M.-Á., & González-Aguilar, J.-M. (2022). Diarios españoles en Facebook y engagement: Temas, valores noticiosos, sensacionalismo y reacciones emocionales. *Estudios sobre el Mensaje Periodístico*, 28(2). <https://doi.org/10.5209/esmp.75526>
- Stroud, N. J., Van Duyn, E., & Peacock, C. (2016). *News Commenters and News Comment Readers*. Center for Media Engagement. Retrieved from <https://mediaengagement.org/research/survey-of-commenters-and-comment-readers/>
- Su, L. Y.-F., Xenos, M. A., Rose, K. M., Wirz, C., Scheufele, D. A., & Brossard, D. (2018). Uncivil and personal? Comparing patterns of incivility in comments on the Facebook pages of news outlets. *New Media and Society*, 20(10), 3678-3699. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444818757205>
- Tenenboim, O. (2022). Comments, Shares, or Likes: What Makes News Posts Engaging in Different Ways. *Social Media + Society*, 8(4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051221130282>
- Tenenboim, O., & Cohen, A. A. (2015). What prompts users to click and comment: A longitudinal study of online news. *Journalism*, 16(2), 198-217. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884913513996>
- Urrutia, S., Zalbidea, B., Camacho, I., & Pastor, J. M. (2021). Editors versus audiences facing news: Is this discrepancy also repeated on social news networks? *Journalism*, 22(9), 2332-2349. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884919853740>
- Valenzuela, S., Piña, M., & Ramírez, J. (2017). Behavioral Effects of Framing on Social Media Users: How Conflict, Economic, Human Interest, and Morality Frames Drive News Sharing. *Journal of Communication*, 67(5), 803-826. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12325>