

Political infotainment and emotional connectivity on YouTube

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Abstract

This research work focuses on the study of political “infotainment”, a genre related to television (Schudson, 1999; Blumler, Kavanagh, 1999; Brants, 1998; Delli Carpini, Williams, 2001; Holtz-Bacha, Norris, 2001; Baum, 2002), but which in recent years has achieved a presence in other mass media, including the Internet. This work shows the presence of a large number of political videos, which meet the features of infotainment on the YouTube platform. Specifically, an analysis is presented of the most popular videos according to the number of times they have been viewed, when information on the following political representatives of European politics in 2011 is searched on YouTube: Nicolas Sarkozy (France), Silvio Berlusconi (Italy), Gordon Brown (United Kingdom) or José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (Spain), as well as the USA President Barack Obama (EEUU).

The aim of this study is to determine whether the television infotainment phenomenon has been transferred to the Net on the international scene. For this purpose, 100 videos were studied from the perspective of Spanish researchers, which corresponded to the twenty most watched videos of each of the following political leaders or ex-leaders: Gordon Brown, Sarkozy, Berlusconi, Obama and Rodríguez Zapatero. The study carried out is a quantitative and descriptive analysis of the content. The analysis template has been designed using independent and dependent variables, with multiple choice or dichotomous answers. The data confirm that Political infotainment is a genre related to television which has been transferred to Internet. However, on Internet these videos emerge as a hybrid genre because they combine some of the videos produced and broadcast by television, and custom modifications of the people posting these videos on YouTube.

Keywords

Infotainment, Political Communication, Internet, *YouTube*, Online Video

1. Political infotainment on the internet

The Internet is considered as a source of news where users search and share information constantly. For this reason, politicians themselves, in an attempt to reach an increasingly wider group of people who meet on the net, have incorporated communication strategies, which address this new media. This task undertaken by a political source to approach citizens who access the Net is accompanied by the reaction of users, who search their “own” political information.

On the Net, along with the large search engines, co-exist information websites or networks, which are able to speed up the transmission of news of special interest for the virtual community. One of the most outstanding Webpages is *YouTube* (May, 2010), which defines itself as “the world's most popular online video community, allowing millions of people to discover watch and share originally-created videos” (*YouTube*, 2010). It is the video platform with most users who reproduce its contents (ComScore, 2008, 2009, 2010). This page, created in 2005, provides a forum where its users can connect, update themselves and inspire other people from all around the world. For Castells, the national and international TV channels maintain their own *YouTube* channel to capture new audiences and connect with people interested in their content, which makes this video platform the most important mass media in the world (2009). Every minute 24 hours of content is uploaded and every day two billion videos are viewed throughout the world. The number of viewers of these online videos increases every year and, for some authors, their consumption is totally integrated within the daily life of Internet users and has displaced slots usually reserved for traditional television (Madden, 2009).

According to the information provided by YouTube on its webpage, everyone can communicate in the *YouTube* community by watching, sharing and commenting on the videos. Users can watch current events first-hand, relive moments of their favourite television programmes, search for videos related to their hobbies and interests and discover eccentric and unusual things.

This freedom of choice, this “customized” decision (Sustein, 2002, 2007) of what a citizen decides to watch on YouTube in the political ambit is the starting point of this research. The field of study of Political Communication, which by necessity must attempt to study the new digital tools in the transmission and acquisition of political information, presents an increasing number of studies related to the consumption of this type of information on the Internet and this research is the first to analyse the most watched videos of some of the main representatives in international politics on

YouTube: Barack Obama (USA), Nicolas Sarkozy (France), Silvio Berlusconi (Italy), Gordon Brown (UK) and José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (Spain).

A previous reference is a rapprochement carried out by these researchers in Spain in 2010, and also a pioneer on the subject, that analysed which type of videos on José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero –leader of The Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español*, PSOE) and president of the Government– and Mariano Rajoy –leader of The Popular Party (*Partido Popular*, PP) and leader of the Opposition– were most watched by users. The conclusions of the research indicated that the most viewed political videos on *YouTube* were those which mostly corresponded to the genre of infotainment.

The origin of political infotainment is found in the 1990s in those countries with significant competition in the audio-visual sector. “The commencement of the phenomenon involves the presence of frivolous and superficial news on traditional television news programmes, which eliminate from the news serious matters concerning national and international politics. Added to this, is the appearance of programmes parodying politics and broadcasts in which political information is mixed with news related to events, crime or gossip” (Berrocal & Campos, 2012).

The importance of infotainment in the functioning of democracy, its repercussion for political parties and their leaders, as well as its influence on public opinion has lead, since the phenomenon was identified, to an increase in the publication of studies which attempt to analyse political infotainment in its various aspects (Kurz, 1993; Esser, 1999; Crisell, 2006; Thussu, 2007; Peterson, 2008; Gray, et al., 2009; Strangelove, 2010; Jones, 2010). All this studies agree in identifying television as the media where the phenomenon was born, and which continues to be its best showcase up to the present.

The political information televised has incorporated in recent years an approach, which is very much related to show business or sensationalism, with the presence of conflict and the increasing prominence of the trivial, anecdotal or risqué. A situation to which political personalization is added, a phenomenon that is reflected in an audio-visual bid focused on “informing” or “entertaining” by using a political leader and also which is reproduced in the “personalized” thematic selection carried out by the audience.

This research considers a parallel situation is presented for YouTube, where most of the videos selected by users have a political leader as the protagonist and only on rare occasions the political party. In these videos, the objective may be the political leader and his political acts, or the leader personal acts.

Therefore, it is possible to say that the success of the political infotainment genre has gone beyond television to find its way onto the Net. On YouTube, serious videos about politics, purely informative, are fused with clips from television programmes of infotainment that users upload, with slots of political parody newly created for the virtual showcase, or even, with the visual selection of certain programmes in which politicians have been involved showing non-conventional aspects.

The transfer of infotainment Internet has inspired yet few scientific studies that emphasize mainly on their advantages or disadvantages for political communication, but based on the television phenomenon.

Therefore, without knowing yet whether the infotainment on YouTube can lead to a better informed public policy, or conversely, citizens who remain in the non-political story in the true investigate backdrop, this research aims to be a starting point in these studies and to verify whether or not there is actually infotainment on YouTube, and allows to launch new questions to a new field of study.

2. Method

The aim of this study is to determine whether the television infotainment phenomenon has been transferred to the Net, on the international scene. For this purpose, 100 videos were studied from the perspective of Spanish researchers, which corresponded to the twenty most watched videos of each of the following political leaders: Gordon Brown, Sarkozy, Berlusconi, Obama and Rodríguez Zapatero.¹

The research begins with the following research hypotheses:

H1. The most reproduced political videos on YouTube belong mostly to the infotainment genre.

H2. The political infotainment YouTube in a national approach: Despite the possibilities of internationalization, analysed videos are centred aspects of the internal politics of each country. This is reflecting in:

- a) Political personalization is reflected in the selection of users when it comes to the consumption of infotainment on the Net: the most popular videos have the leader of the party as protagonist² and no other leaders discussed.
- b) There are not international connections on the infotainment videos, so that the same topics do not inspire humour videos about different prime ministers.

¹ This research is complementary to other published in Berrocal, Campos y Redondo (2012).

² This research bases on the search term is precisely the name of the politician. Considering this nuance, this work is to confirm that the videos searched by the name of the politician are led by him and not the party or third persons.

H3. - Users assume an active role in political infotainment YouTube; it is manifested beyond the view or comments on these videos. This predicts that most of the videos will be created³ by users not recognized as political institutions or media.

To carry out the selection of the videos on YouTube, the following search criteria were applied: in addition to the name of the political leader as a keyword, the search was restricted to videos ranked by volume of reproductions, uploaded to the platform at any time and, finally, for the features, duration and category criteria, “all” was selected in the filter selection option. The analysis was limited to the twenty most watched videos for each political leader, which resulted from a search with the criteria mentioned above. From the total number of videos, four were disregarded because although they appeared in the ranking of the most watched videos of some of the candidates, they were not related to the politicians –specifically two for both Barack Obama and Nicolas Sarkozy. Therefore, the analysis is comprised of 96 of the 100 videos selected.¹ The ranking of the videos was carried out on the 6th and 8th of April 2010.

The study carried out is a quantitative and descriptive analysis of the content. To collect the information, analysis templates or check lists were employed which were structured in 16 variables organized according to the following research questions:

- What is the nature of the videos analysed? This is specified in the following questions of the template: When were they recorded? How many reproductions have they accumulated? Is the video humorous, informative, institutional or critical?
- What do those videos say? With the following questions in the template: What is the video about? Who is the protagonist? What is the behaviour of the politician presented? Who is the target of the video? In addition, what bias does it have?
- Who is the author? With the following questions: Is the author an anonymous, a mass media or an institutional user? Who has published the video on YouTube, the author him/herself or another user? Has the author created the video for the Internet? Has he/she made any kind of apparent modification –video and/or audio– to the original video for its publication on the platform?
- Finally, who consumes these videos and how? With the following questions: How many comments has the video obtained? When did the video receive the last comments? Moreover, among what type of users is the video popular?

³ In this research, user creativity means changing videos issued by another agent (medium or users) or self-created videos, without considering in this section or comments that users can make videos or its reproduction.

3. Results

The most watched video on *YouTube* among those analysed accumulated 74,756,154 visits, now of the analysis, and is a humorous musical which fantasises a hypothetical affair between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton.² On the other hand, the video that accumulated the lowest number of visits –128,569– corresponds to an informative video about the arrival of the British ex-prime minister at his official residence, Downing Street, on the 27th of June 2007 immediately after taking office.³ The number of visits to the 96 videos selected ranges between the two figures mentioned above.

To present the results, this text follows the order described in three main sections: description of the content of the video (3.1), analysis of the video authorship and participation of the users (3.2).

3.1. Content of the videos

This study allows us to discuss three types of videos:

Humorous videos: In this study, humorous videos are considered those, which, without having an explicit criticism, focus on a specific aspect of the politician, which causes laughter from the viewer. Some examples of these videos are the musical parodies, which Barack Obama impersonators interpret the president of the United States.⁴ **Critical videos:** In the category of critical videos, are included those which contain a reproving judgment of the political protagonist, and this feature prevail over the humorous element, if any. As an example, those videos are which attempt to ridicule the Spanish president for his supposed lack of knowledge of English.⁵

Informative videos: They are both those broadcasted by television information programs⁶ or those which having been created by other types of users, show the facts objectively; for example, images recorded by unknown users when the Italian president, Silvio Berlusconi, was struck by a person from the public with a heavy object after a political meeting in the Duomo square in Milan in December 2009.

Institutional videos: They present content prepared by the party itself or by a government institution.⁷

From the total number of videos analysed, 37 are considered humorous, 32 have an evident critical content –humour not being their defining characteristic–, 21 are informative and 6 institutional.

According to these characteristics, the politicians accumulating a greater number of humorous videos are the ex-prime minister of the United Kingdom, Gordon Brown, and the president of the United States, Barack Obama. As for the president of

the French Republic, Nicolas Sarkozy, he is the politician who has the highest number of informative videos. The American president also records the highest number, as well as humorous videos, of an informative type. Finally, the Italian president is, among those analysed, the politician who has the highest number of critical videos.

Table 1. Type of video detailed by politician

Politician	Humorous	Informative	Institutional	Critical	Total
Zapatero	8	3	0	9	20
Berlusconi	3	4	1	12	20
Sarkozy	8	6	0	4	18
Gordon Brown	9	4	2	5	20
Obama	9	4	3	2	18
Total	37	21	6	32	96

Source: Own elaboration from YouTube videos reproduced in April 2010

With regard to the subjects who inspire these videos, a great variety of topics can be observed among those analysed. Most videos are focused on issues of national importance, and therefore affecting only the country's political leader. The only issued that appears to be common in video of many leaders is the election campaign. Specifically -seven videos about Obama, and each one for Sarkozy and Berlusconi. The incident between the King of Spain, Juan Carlos I, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero and the president of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, during the Ibero-American Summit in 2007 is the subject, which inspired the greatest number of videos on Zapatero,⁸ followed by "Zapatero's daughters", referring to the gothic style of the daughters of the Spanish president.⁹ Regarding the Italian politician, the assault he received in December 2009 from an assailant with a miniature of the Milan Cathedral, the reputation of the Italian president as a supposed fun-loving partygoer, and arguments with journalists of some television channels are the focus for the largest part of the videos about this politician.¹⁰ With reference to the ex-Prime Minister Gordon Brown, the moment in which the politician is found in the House of Commons picking his nose and his plan based on multilateralism in order to create a new World order and confront the global crisis (November 2008) are the most repeated subjects in the videos about him.¹¹ The press conference in which Nicolas Sarkozy appeared inebriated, in 2007, after having a meeting with Putin at the G8 Summit, inspires various videos on the French president.¹² Lastly, Obama's campaign, principally the speeches given by the

then democrat candidate for the White House, inspires most of the videos about this politician.¹³

Finally, it is possible to refer to other questions related to the content analysis, such as, who the protagonist of the videos is in what manner is he shown and who is the target of the videos –the political party, the leader in political acts or the leader in personal acts– and what bias the video has.

In this sense, concerning the total results, most of the videos have the political leader as protagonist. This is logical if one considers that the name of the politician was the keyword search on YouTube, but this research shows that no leader appears as a protagonist starring in the videos.

The politician is generally presented showing amusing behaviour, the objective is the representative in political acts and the bias of these videos is, generally, negative.

In detail, in 84 of the 96 videos analysed, the protagonist is the politician [Table 2], none are the political party and in 12 of the 96 videos the protagonists are third persons –for instance the King of Spain and the ex-president of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez; the Spanish president’s daughters, and also Tony Blair in some of the videos of Gordon Brown and Carla Bruni in those of Sarkozy.

Table 2. Details related to the content of the videos analysed

Number of videos in which the protagonist is:				
The political leader = 84	The party = 0	Third persons = 12		Total = 96
Number of videos in which the political leader is presented in a certain type of manner:				
Humorous = 35	Neutral = 25	Favourable = 17	Unfavourable = 19	Total = 96
Number of videos in which the objective is:				
Party = 6	Political acts of the leader = 54	Personal acts of the leader = 47		Total = 107*
Number of videos in which the bias of the video is:				
Positive = 20	Neutral = 26	Negative = 50		Total = 96

Source: Own elaboration from YouTube videos reproduced in April 2010 [] In 11 of the 96 videos analysed, the objective is equally the leader in his political acts and the party, or else the political and personal acts of the leader.*

On the other hand, the politician is presented most times showing humorous (35) or neutral behaviour (25) and the videos in which the politician appears in a favourable demeanour constitute the minority (17). Apart from who is the protagonist in the videos, it has to be also considered who the target of the video is: those focused on the leader and his political acts (54) or on his personal side (47) are more numerous than those in which the target is the political party (6). As we said, none of these videos appears one of the leaders analysed. Finally, looking at the bias of the videos, most of

them have a negative bias, 50 of the 96, against 26 being neutral and 20 being positive.

If data are broken down by political leaders, it can be observed [Table 3] that Berlusconi is the politician who appears the most times as protagonist in his videos –in all of them–, followed by Obama –who is protagonist in all his videos except for one in which the protagonist is a republican soldier who writes a letter to him showing his distrust towards the democrat leader–,¹⁴ Sarkozy –who is also protagonist in all his videos, except for one in which his wife Carla Bruni is the protagonist– and Gordon Brown –who is also the protagonist in all his videos except for three in which the protagonists are Tony Blair and the passengers in two plane crashes, the Air France accident in June 2009 and the crash at Heathrow in January 2008.¹⁵ On the contrary, the Spanish president is the representative appearing fewest times as protagonist –he is the leader who accumulates the highest number of videos in which third persons are the protagonists: the King of Spain, the president of Venezuela or his daughters–.

Table 3. Details by politician related to the content of the videos analysed

Number of videos in which the protagonist is (Total=84 of 96):

Zapatero=13 Berlusconi=20 Sarkozy=17 Gordon Brown=17 Obama=17

Number of videos in which the political leader is presented in certain type of manner:

Humorous (Total=35 of 96):

Zapatero=5 Berlusconi=10 Sarkozy=7 Gordon Brown=11 Obama=2

Favourable (Total=17 de 96):

Zapatero=3 Berlusconi=2 Sarkozy=1 Gordon Brown=3 Obama=8

Unfavourable (Total=19 of 96):

Zapatero=3 Berlusconi=4 Sarkozy=8 Gordon Brown=2 Obama=2

Neutral (Total=25 of 96):

Zapatero=9 Berlusconi=4 Sarkozy=2 Gordon Brown=4 Obama=6

Number of videos in which the objective is:

The party (Total=6 of 107*):

Zapatero=2 Berlusconi=0 Sarkozy=0 Gordon Brown=0 Obama=4

Political acts of the leader (Total= 54 of 107*):

Zapatero=13 Berlusconi=12 Sarkozy=4 Gordon Brown=14 Obama=11

Personal acts of the leader (Total= 47 of 107*):

Zapatero=6 Berlusconi=10 Sarkozy=13 Gordon Brown=11 Obama=7

Number of videos in which the bias is:

Positive (Total= 20 of 96)

Zapatero=5 Berlusconi=2 Sarkozy=1 Gordon Brown=2 Obama=10

Neutral (Total=26 of 96)

Zapatero=4 Berlusconi=7 Sarkozy=4 Gordon Brown=6 Obama=5

Negative (Total=50 of 96)

Zapatero=11 Berlusconi=11 Sarkozy=13 Gordon Brown=12 Obama=3

Total videos analysed (Total=96)

Zapatero=20 Berlusconi=20 Sarkozy=18 Gordon Brown=20 Obama=18

Source: Own elaboration from YouTube videos reproduced in April 2010 [] In 11 of the 96 videos analysed, the objective is equally the leader in his political acts and the party, or else the political and personal acts of the leader.*

About the behaviour, which the leaders show in the videos, Gordon Brown and Berlusconi, appeared in the highest number of videos showing humorous behaviour. Obama is the politician that is presented more times in a favourable demeanour and Sarkozy leads the number of videos showing unfavourable behaviour. The Spanish president is the one that appears on the most occasions in a neutral demeanour.

Regarding the target of the videos, only the Democratic Party (USA) and the *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE) are the target in some of the videos analysed. Neither Sarkozy's party (UMP, *Union pour un mouvement populaire*), Gordon Brown's party (Labour Party) or Berlusconi's party (*Il Popolo della Libertà*) are the target of any of the videos analysed.

Finally, with regards to the bias of the videos, Barack Obama is the politician who appears in the greatest number of videos with a positive bias; Sarkozy, on the other hand, is the politician who accumulates the most videos with a negative bias and Berlusconi is the representative with the most videos showing behaviour with a neutral bias.

3.2. User participation

Who creates the message and who uploads it onto *YouTube* are two necessary aspects to assess the video as a whole. Thus, it has to be considered on the one hand who is the real and original author of the video and, on the other hand, who the user is, modifying or not the original video, that makes it public on the platform.

With regards to the original author of the video, in most of the 96 videos analysed the authorship corresponds to unknown authors registered on *YouTube* who create the videos themselves,¹⁶ followed by those coming from mass media, mainly news programmes or talk shows.

In accordance with the data itemized by political leaders [Table 4], the French president is the politician who has more videos with anonymous authors, whereas Zapatero and Berlusconi accumulate more coming from mass media. Institutional

videos belong mostly to Obama and Gordon Brown. Finally, the British ex-prime minister has more videos in the category “others”, mainly political lobbies and freelance journalists.¹⁷

Table 4. Authorship of the videos detailed by politician and user who makes them public on YouTube

		Unknown	Mass Media	Institutional	Other	Total
Zapatero	Author of the video	8	3	2	0	13
	Other user	0	6	1	0	7
	Total of videos	8	9	3	0	20
Berlusconi	Author of the video	7	1	0	1	9
	Other user	1	8	2	0	11
	Total of videos	8	9	2	1	20
Sarkozy	Author of the video	1	1	0	1	3
	Other user	15	0	0	0	15
	Total of videos	16	1	0	1	18
Gordon Brown	Author of the video	2	0	2	4	8
	Other user	4	4	3	1	12
	Total of videos	6	4	5	5	20
Obama	Author of the video	2	4	4	3	13
	Other user	2	1	2	0	5
	Total of videos	4	5	6	3	18
Total		42	28	16	10	96

Source: Own elaboration from YouTube videos reproduced in April 2010.

Regarding the user who just publishes the video on *YouTube*, data shows that on most occasions a user different from the author of the video uploads them, although the number of these is also significant: 46 of the 96 videos were uploaded to the platform by the author and the remaining 50 by other users.

Taking into account who publishes the videos, broken down by political leaders, it is observed (Table 4) that most of the Zapatero and Obama videos were published by the same author of the video, whereas those of Berlusconi, Sarkozy and Gordon Brown were published by a user different from the author.

Furthermore, most of the videos analysed were not specifically created for the Internet (55 of 96), and come from television programs or other audio-visual sources.

In addition, most of the 96 videos analysed (54) were published without any type of alteration, whereas the remaining 42 were modified. From these 42, the majority incorporate modifications to both the audio and video (27).

Table 5. Participation of the user: modification of the videos

	Audio	Video	Both	None	Total
Zapatero	3	1	3	13	20
Berlusconi	0	4	4	12	20
Sarkozy	1	2	6	9	18
Gordon Brown	2	2	5	11	20
Obama	0	0	9	9	18
Total	6	9	27	54	96

Source: Own elaboration from YouTube videos reproduced in April 2010.

Therefore, despite the existence of a tendency of a group of creative users to not just create videos ad hoc, but also to modify those videos, which were recorded or created by other authors, the reality is that most users publish the original videos without any kind of modification or editing.

User participation has to be understood not only with regard to the number of times viewers reproduce the video –a question already dealt with above– or the capacity to create and modify these videos –a subject dealt with in the previous section–, but also with regard to the capacity of the user to comment on these videos. In this respect, in this section, data related to the comments made by users about videos that have this option available are presented.

An aspect that is interesting to mention is the date of publication of the videos [Table 6]: most of them were published on *YouTube* during 2007 and 2008, followed by those in 2009, 2006 and 2005. None of those, which were published in the year 2010, is still among the most reproduced videos on the platform analysed. The oldest of the analysed videos corresponds to the Italian president.¹⁸

Table 6. Date of publication of the videos, detailed by politician

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
Zapatero	0	5	7	5	3	0	20
Berlusconi	1	2	9	5	3	0	20
Sarkozy	0	1	12	5	0	0	18
Gordon Brown	0	1	8	7	4	0	20
Obama	0	0	1	10	7	0	18
Total	1	9	37	32	17	0	96

Source: Own elaboration from YouTube videos reproduced in April 2010.

This data could be considered not relevant if it is understood that the longer the time a video is published on the Internet, the more possibilities it has of being reproduced. Nevertheless, the characteristic which makes these videos topical is the date of the comments made about them [Table 7]: the majority of these videos received their latest comments the same week this analysis was carried out, some even a few hours before. These data recall the “echo chambers” to which Sunstein (2002) refers, in the sense that the most viewed videos are those, which appeared on the first page of the platform, and thus, in a circle effect, they will be once again the most reproduced and commented on.

Table 7. Date of publication of the video and date of the last comments received

Date of publication	Last comments received at the moment of the analysis			Total
	Last week	Last month	Last year or more	
2005	1	0	0	1
2006	7	0	1	8
2007	23	8	0	31
2008	19	5	0	24
2009	9	1	3	13
2010	0	0	0	0
Total	59	14	4	77

Source: Own elaboration from YouTube videos reproduced in April 2010.

With regard to those videos which permitted, all of them recorded some comments. This option was restricted by the author or by the YouTube platform itself in 27 of the 96 videos analysed. In the remaining 69 videos which admitted comments, the users’ participation was relatively high:

Table 8. Number of comments from registered users in *n* videos

Number of comments registered	Number of videos with <i>n</i> comments
Less than 100	2
Between 101 and 500	14
Between 501 and 1,000	9
Between 1,001 and 2,000	10
Between 2,001 and 3,000	11
Between 3,001 and 4,000	4
Between 4,001 and 5,000	4
Between 5,001 and 6,000	0
Between 6,001 and 7,000	1
Between 7,001 and 8,000	2

More than 8,001	12
Total number of videos with comments	69

Source: Own elaboration from YouTube videos reproduced in April 2010.

In total 14 of the 69 videos with comments recorded between 101 and 500 opinions, and 12 of the 69 videos recorded more than 8,000 comments per video. One of the videos about Obama reached 130,273 comments –specifically a video which tries to dismantle the image of the president of the United States.¹⁹ The mean is 3.9 comments for every 1,000 reproductions of the video.

Furthermore, and considering the profile of users, it is interesting to rescue the data provided by the platform YouTube about the sex and age range of the registered users who reproduce and comment on videos the most [Table 9]. Taking this information as a basis and applying it to the videos subject of this study, most of them are popular, as a first option, among men –60 of the 69 videos which have this information available–, meanwhile among women only 9 of the 69 are popular.

Table 9. User profile by popularity of the most visited videos on YouTube

Groups by age		Sex	45 a 54	35 a 44	25 a 34	18 a 24	13 a 17	Total
Zapatero	Male		5	7	1	0	0	13
	Female		0	0	0	0	1	1
	Total		5	7	1	0	1	14
Berlusconi	Male		15	0	0	0	0	15
	Female		0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total		15	0	0	0	0	15
Sarkozy	Male		10	0	0	0	0	10
	Female		0	0	0	0	2	2
	Total		10	0	0	2	2	12
Gordon Brown	Male		15	1	0	0	0	16
	Female		0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total		15	1	0	0	0	16
Obama	Male		6	0	0	0	0	6
	Female		2	0	0	0	4	6
	Total		8	0	0	0	4	12
Total			53	8	1	0	7	69

Source: Own elaboration from YouTube videos reproduced in April 2010.

In detail, the age of males who reproduce videos ranges from 25 to 54 years of age, whereas, in the case of women there is more disparity: only two videos among those analysed are popular among women between 45 and 54, and among young

people between 13 and 17, in contrast to their male counterparts where none of these videos were popular in this age range.

Regarding the politicians, males consumed most of the videos of the politicians studied, except in the case of Obama, which are consumed equally by women and men. With respect to age groups, males between 45 and 54 are the main users who reproduce and comment on the videos of Berlusconi, Sarkozy and Gordon Brown. In the case of Obama, the same age range of males also dominates, although he is the only politician whose videos are consumed by women between 45 and 54. It is interesting that the group of users between 18 and 24 do not dominate in any video as main consumer, while women between 13 and 17 do so in four of the Obama videos and in one of Zapatero.

In brief, indeed men consume these videos more than women, young people are not the main consumers, but instead males with an age range of between 45 and 54 years. These are the most users in the case of Berlusconi, Sarkozy and Gordon Brown. With regards to the Zapatero and Obama videos, the viewers are younger, mainly in the case of the American president, with also a strong impact among women between 13 and 17.

4. - Discussion

The data confirm the first of the hypotheses formulated and the most reproduced political videos on *YouTube* correspond mainly to the political infotainment genre in the international sphere: humorous videos predominate on the Net, mainly those related to the British ex-Prime Minister, Gordon Brown and the United States president Barack Obama.

In this research, there is also evidence that the political infotainment is a national issue:

On the one hand, political personalization is reflected in the selection made by users when consuming infotainment on the Net and the most popular videos have the leader of the party as protagonist, and not the political party or other international leaders discussed. Of the 96 videos analysed, 84 had the political leader as protagonist, mainly in the Berlusconi, Sarkozy and Obama videos. None of the early leaders appears in a video of another leader.

On the other hand, in most videos, the content applies only to national politics. The election campaigns are the subject of several videos of different politicians, but only referred to the national context. The videos that focus on themes of international politics are those five on the incident between the King of Spain, Juan Carlos I, José

Luis Rodríguez Zapatero and the president of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, during the Ibero-American Summit in 2007 and the four which focus on the new world order predicted by Gordon Brown. The remaining 93 videos focus on purely domestic issues –reviews on different aspects of the leader or party, internal problems of national policy, and so on.

A question, which also deserves consideration, is the subject of the most reproduced videos on *YouTube*. Corresponding to one of the characteristics of infotainment, the majority of the most watched videos deal with not very significant subjects in Spanish and international politics. Besides the importance that electoral campaigns achieve, other subjects such as “Zapatero’s daughters”, the British ex-prime minister picking his nose, the personal relationship of the French president and Carla Bruni, as well as the videos devoted to the fame of president Berlusconi as a party-goer should deserve, the opposite of what occurs, isolated attention from the public and not constitute the main subject of the majority of the most watched videos by Internet users.

In the most watched YouTube videos related to infotainment a negative bias towards the political leader is shown. Barack Obama is the politician who appears in most videos with a positive bias, Sarkozy, on the other hand, has the highest number of videos with a negative bias, and Berlusconi is the representative with the most videos, which have a neutral approach. Thus, in the videos analysed, the American president presents the best image among the politicians studied.

Finally, as regards the participation in, and contrary to the provisions of the hypotheses of this research, users assume an active role in political infotainment, but only in certain cases: Most of these videos are published on the platform by users who utilize a television programme as base material, and are not the original creators of the videos. While, users are still commenting on the most played videos, whether these have been posted on YouTube several years ago. While users cannot create a whole number of videos, but merely modifications can consider the involvement of users on YouTube is high, in this study: both the number of comments recorded in the videos that allowed it and the number of reproductions.

As boundaries of research, this study analyses the political infotainment on YouTube from the point of view of the producer of the videos and content, and addresses the audience preferences in choosing videos. It is a first diagnosis of the type of videos that users prefer and consume, but would make future work to investigate the relationship between the most watched videos and effects and emotions of the users. On the other hand, it would be necessary to replicate the study,

expanded, in other years, as communication phenomena changed dramatically in recent years.

In summary, Political infotainment is a genre related to television that it has been transferred to Internet. However, on Internet these videos emerge as a hybrid genre because they combine some of the videos produced and broadcast by television, and custom modifications of the people posting these videos on YouTube. In addition, here is shown one form of user citizen participation: the video selection of television programs by users, editing and publishing is a type not previously provided for participation in Mass self-communication (Castells, 2009; Cardoso and Lamy, 2011).

5. References

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Notes

¹ See, for example, [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YlyOIGiLgio>] (last date of access: 24th September 2010) or [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyFrGbAvfHc>] (last date of access: 25th September de 2010), which were include in the ranking of the most watched videos of Sarkozy and Obama respectively.

² The video was uploaded in February 2008 by an unknown user. Available at [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMs-p5y6cvo>] (last date of access: 23rd September 2010)

³ This video available at [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TezCBzIB3d8>], is an institutional video uploaded by the author on June the 27th) (last date of access: 23rd September 2010)

⁴ See T.I.- *Whatever You Like SPOOF! (OBAMA- Whatever I Like)*, available at: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-yJBsjatW0>] (last date of access: 23rd September 2010) or also *Beyoncé - Single Ladies SPOOF (Barack Obama)*, available at: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PqI12R8YNU>] (last date of access: 23rd September 2010).

⁵ See *Zapatero hablando inglés*, available at: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBuKZLyqJ8g>] (last date of access: 23rd September 2010).

⁶ For example: *Brown vs. Cameron during Queen's Speech debate*, available at: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TsAa9VmwOal>] [last date of access: 23rd September 2010] or also *AIRBUS A330 200 Air France plane crash Accident Flight 447 Rio Paris June 1 2009 Absturz Flugzeug*, available at: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TsAa9VmwOal>] (last date of access: 23rd September 2010).

⁷ See *Meno male che Silvio c'è video ufficiale inno campagna PDL*, available at: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WXf-YbsSh0Y>] (last date of access: 23rd September 2010), and also *President-Elect Barack Obama in Chicago*, available at: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JlI5baCAaQU>] (last date of access: 23rd September 2010).

⁸ For example, *El rey manda llamar a Hugo Chavez - Why don't you shut up?* Available at: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utSKLe05p1s>] [last date of access: 23rd September 2010].

⁹ See *HIJAS DE ZAPATERO*, available at: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LnVZdOtBDaU>] (last date of access: 23rd September 2010).

¹⁰ See *Silvio Berlusconi Colpito e ferito al Volto a Milano*, available at: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4Rkelm1yh8>] [last date of access: 23rd September 2010]; *Berlusconi incula l'autista*, available at: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pzljN-R57g>] [last date of access: 23rd September 2010]; *Berlusconi vs. Santoro*, at: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PgUFclMkPhk>] (last date of access: 23rd September 2010).

¹¹ As a reference: *Gordon Brown New World Order Speech*, available at: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uv5cqH26CC0>] (last date of access: 23rd September 2010); *Prime Minister Gordon Brown Picks His Nose Bogyman Finale*, en: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V29aDnQIPWk>] (last date of access: 23rd September 2010).

¹² See *Sarkozy au G8*, available at: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l4u3449L5VI>] (last date of access: 23rd September 2010).

¹³ As an example: *Yes We Can - Barack Obama Music Video*, available at: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjXyqcx-mYY>] (last date of access: 23rd September 2010).

¹⁴ See the video *Défi: piquer Carla Bruni à Sarkozy* available at: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9v9ssC8lWc>], (last date of access: 24th September 2010) and *Dear Mr. Obama* available at: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TG4fe9GIWS8>] (last date of access: 24th September 2010).

¹⁵ See, for example, *Should I stay or should I go Rx2008* available at: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a1vwKZiDsY4>] [last date of access: 24th September 2010] and

Heathrow Plane Crash - Plane lands short of runway available at: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3PrLW5Drb28>] (last date of access: 24th September 2010).

¹⁶ See *Toni A. Martínez - Piso de 30 metros*, available at: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ry37onyuMZ0>] (last date of access: 4th June 2010) or *STRONZO A BERLUSCONI NAPOLI*, available at: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j7t3bGAb5yE>] (last date of access: 4th June 2010)

¹⁷ For example: in the case of Britain *Guidofawkes* publishes various videos on Gordon Brown – see *Gordon Brown Shaking in Fear* available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ba7glghZ4w> [last date of access: 23rd September 2010]– and in the Italian case, the journalist Beppe Grillo is the author of videos on Berlusconi –see *Beppe Grillo (Berlusconi)*, available at: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kduyl4rcXl8>] (last date of access: 23rd September 2010).

¹⁸ More specifically about some statements that Silvio Berlusconi made together with the previous president of the United States, George Bush. It was published on the 9th November 2005. Available at: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVse7ezWACg>] (last date of access: 25th September 2010).

¹⁹ See: *The Obama Deception HQ Full length version*, available at: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAaQNACwaLw>] (last date of access: 24th September 2010)