

Social Research Call

Title:

The role of influencers in the political socialisation of young people in Spain



Acronym: INPOLITYOUNG

Project leader: Mercè Oliva

Host organisation: Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Barcelona)

Main purpose of the project: The INPOLITYOUNG project aims to gain insight into the role of Spanish content creators (or influencers) in the political socialisation (political knowledge and views) of young people in Spain with regard to four key issues: gender equality, the welfare state, climate change and democratic institutions.

Design/methodology/approach: The project employs a mixed-method approach, integrating two distinct techniques: a) unsupervised machine learning tools, specifically the Analysis of Topic Model Networks and sentiment analysis, are used to study the content of the top 100 Spanish YouTubers and TikTokers; and b) statistical analysis of data obtained from an online survey of 1,000 individuals aged between 16 and 24.

Potential results: The findings of this study will contribute to our understanding of the themes, views and interpretative frames present in the content of popular Spanish YouTubers and TikTokers regarding gender equality, the welfare state, climate change and democratic institutions. Furthermore, the study will examine the digital media consumption patterns and political knowledge and views of young Spaniards, with a view to establishing whether there is a correlation between them.

Social relevance of the research: In the context of significant ideological shifts among young Spaniards and the decline of traditional media as an effective platform for engaging with this demographic, our project will study the role of influencers in shaping young people’s political ideas and knowledge. The findings of this study will provide tools to develop effective strategies for engaging with young audiences and addressing their political socialisation needs, with the ultimate goal of strengthening social cohesion and democracy.

Originality/value of the project: The project addresses a novel research topic and employs an innovative mixed-method that enables us to gain a comprehensive understanding of the role of Spanish influencers in the political socialisation of young people, from both the sender and receiver sides.