

Post-Pandemic Financial Literacy in Social Media: How Microblog Posts Reflect Citizens' Opinions about Taxes

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The global pandemic has been used to justify many public policy decisions, including those concerning the economy and public spending. Making payments with taxpayers' money for public health and social welfare is understandable, as long as it is done to address a global emergency. However, once the disease data gives way to a stable state, it is necessary to understand how the public evaluates the management of tax revenue and analyze the impressions communicated about taxes, the tax system, and spending. To this end, a highly qualitative methodology based on critical discourse analysis was used to study messages posted on Twitter (now X) in August and September 2022. The results will confirm whether economic knowledge is still as limited in digital media and social networks as in traditional media.

Keywords: taxes, financial literacy, Twitter, X, microblogs, social media, Spain

The global COVID-19 pandemic exposed a significant gap in our society's financial knowledge and economic literacy. In the case of Spain, the shortcomings of financial literacies have been discussed even long before the pandemic, focusing on education curricula that do not recognize citizens' economic independence and media that portray economic and financial information as an elitist issue (Mancebón et al., 2019; Montalto et al., 2019; Sánchez Asiain, 1952). There is, in other words, a long tradition of educational interventions to make citizens understand the role of taxes and taxpaying since World War II (see e.g. Schönhärl et al. 2023); however, we suggest that after the pandemic, tax education should be taken seriously again.

To explore whether and in which ways the general public is largely unaware of many fundamental economic concepts, this essay focuses on looking at texts related to economy and finance in the social networks of the former microblog Twitter, now known as X. It is assumed that shortcomings in financial literacies can result in a reduced capacity to make decisions in the daily lives of individuals, such as contracting a mortgage without understanding the consequences or showing poor understanding about how the tax system operates.

This essay asks whether taxpaying, a topic that has become increasingly important since the pandemic, is an alien concept for many citizens, who express opinions or information on their social networks that are not always accurate. By making use of a simple content analysis, we will discuss how social media users employ their – sometimes fragmentary – knowledge in this area in microblogs where the conditions for conducting analyses of complex societal issues is challenging. To support educators promote a deeper financial literacy, a series of improvements are proposed, in order to produce better informed and, as a result, more independent citizens.

During the pandemic, all local, regional, and national governments were required to take steps to mitigate the consequences of economic scarcity, which, in many cases, resulted from increasing taxes. For example, one challenge was to fund what were known as *Expedientes Reguladores Temporales de Empleo* (Temporary Regulation of Employment; ERTES). These were State subsidies paid to workers who could not continue working

due to the pandemic and were not retained by their companies. This was in addition to other government payments to help families survive during the pandemic, especially in the following months, because the destruction of employment and productive capacity was significant in a country like Spain, which had not yet recovered from the global recession of 2007 (cf. Bona-Sánchez et al., 2023).

However, the only way to pay for this extraordinary spending is to collect taxes from citizens, which is never popular, particularly among those who do not design the government's budget policy. This is one of the most important platforms, and it shows the most dissatisfaction with the Spanish Government's tax-raising policy. In this essay, we will thus discuss what characteristics the tax-raising policy discourse includes and how close they are to reality by reviewing tweets on these topics. In other words, whether the content that citizens post on this social network shows that they understand where the money they pay in taxes goes, or whether they follow their political instincts and ignore the fact that taxes should contribute to the maintenance of the welfare state and the public services that citizens rely on.

Objective of this Essay

This essay aims to discover how the return to normalcy following the COVID-19 pandemic made people address the public spending and tax policy on social media, more particularly, on the microblogging service that was called Twitter until 2023 and changed its name, after Elon Musk acquired it, to X. Twitter allowed people to publish public posts called tweets restricted to 280 characters.

The main expectation, grounded in previous public discussions and studies on people's knowledge about financial issues, is that the general public lacks sufficient financial literacy to make categorical statements on social media platforms such as Twitter about the destination of the money they pay in taxes. The main goal of this professional contribution is thus to inquire into the purposes of microblogging sites as platforms to address complex societal issues. The essay intends to raise the question how suitable microblogging platforms are for carrying on an ideological confrontation between conservative and progressive supporters, addressing complex issues such as taxes and public spending.

Brief Theoretical Framework

The media's portrayal of reality significantly impacts how citizens perceive the world. At the same time, the media serve a social function by shaping public opinion and increasing knowledge. This is especially important when dealing with issues that affect citizens' daily lives, such as finance or, in the case of this study, taxation.

According to Gallego-Losada and colleagues (2021), many studies have previously focused solely on traditional financial literacy, producing empirical evidence of the impact of financial education on effective financial decision-making. Many studies have found a positive relationship between financial education and individual, economic, and societal well-being (Lee et al., 2019; Huang et al., 2013; Montalto et al., 2019; Ambarkhane et al., 2015).

Given that citizens, particularly those frequent users of social networks and are part of the so-called millennial generation, rely on information published on these networks as a reference, to the detriment of traditional media, there is a clear need for society to be formed in both ways. In other words, citizens must be able to categorize information sources and distinguish their reliability to receive complete, truthful information that allows them to make sound financial decisions.

Principato (2021), based on analyses of the company Morning Consult, states that 71 percent of “centennials” and “millennials” appreciate financial information that comes from someone like them, as opposed to 48 percent of the “baby boomer” generation (those born in the 1950s and 1960s). At least a quarter of Gen Z adults and millennials say Twitter (27 percent), Reddit (29 percent), Instagram (32 percent) and Facebook (33 percent) have had a major or minor impact on their financial decisions. This is roughly in line with the share who say a broker has swayed their choices (Principato, 2021; see also Kazakhstan, 2012; Madinaveitia, 2010).

As a consequence of this situation, there are several basic goals for media literacy, as Pérez Tornero (2009) has suggested. He explains why comprehensive media training is essential for citizens to make freely and appropriately informed decisions. According to him, the primary aim is that citizens can operate comfortably in a media environment that is increasingly changeable and innovative. Therefore, they have to possess

access to faculties and abilities that allow them to use different tools for their own legitimate interests. On the other hand, it is also important that citizens have sufficient, and sufficiently broad, knowledge of the factors that influence the development of the media industry – economy, property, control, power, pluralism, and so on. In this way, media literacy can strengthen critical understanding and analysis of media discourse, and, in essence, to increase users' personal and social freedom. The ultimate goal is developing, with or through the responsible use of media, the sense of active and participative citizenship in local, European, and world affairs. In this essay, which focuses on how Spaniards perceive the tax culture through Twitter, it is assumed that citizens must be well-informed and media-trained to distinguish between genuine content and ideological maneuvers designed to confuse them. Hence, a symbiotic relationship exists for the two types of literacy.

Taxes as a Political Issue

It is obvious that determining who should receive tax-related information is a source of contention in the media. Although it is a matter that comes directly from the pockets of citizens and companies, in general, decisions on economic or tax policy, i.e., those that affect a state's or region's economic legislation, budgets, or taxes, are considered to be part of the area of economic information and could be included, without fear of error, in the macroeconomic framework. However, journalistic reality can be stubborn at times. In this type of information, areas specializing in political content look for pretexts to express the medium's editorial line or to praise or flatly reject executive power decisions, whatever they may be.

Although it is not desirable, and is not even what an ethical medium should require, this type of information discussing an increase or decrease in public spending and tax collection is frequently prepared by non-specialists, unrelated to the economics section of the paper in question, and treated as a mere tool. For example, criticize the executive branch if it decides to increase taxes, or praise it if it shares the government's ideological stance. In these cases, economic information takes a backseat, and how the information is presented reveals the medium's or journalist's interest in implying a specific value judgment. Hence, although it can be considered macroeconomic information, it is not always found in the finance pages, but rather in those of the nation's economy or politics, and is therefore not included in the scope of this study's analysis.

The Power of Social Media

The emergence of digital environments and platforms such as Facebook and Twitter has altered media consumption patterns, relationships, and the content produced and consumed. Madinaveitia (2010) states that “everything revolves around live content, which users manipulate and consume through the medium, support, device, and format of their choice.” The widespread use of smartphones and the consolidation of social networks as a mass communication model have resulted in an exponential increase in users on platforms such as Twitter.

It is worth noting that the use of the Internet as a source of information has displaced the media, including television, which was the favorite for decades. At the end of 2011, more than 2 billion people of different ages and social classes were browsing the internet in search of school information, books, documents, and entertainment topics, among others (UCI. 2012, p. 2).

According to the 2012 edition of the annual study *Navegantes en la Red* (Network Surfers) published by the Association for Media Research (AIMC), social networks are a growing phenomenon in Spain: more than 68 percent of internet users confirm that these platforms are not a passing fad, as they connect to them daily, compared to 44 percent in 2009 and 29 percent in 2008. Twitter is now one of the favorite social networks of Internet users by keeping them informed of what is happening anywhere in the world in real time. The success of Twitter has been such that governments and the private sector have included it in the list of media to disseminate public information and actions (Giselle & Rosas, 2012; Castelló Martínez, 2013). Social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, each with its own set of characteristics, have been chosen by the media, companies, and institutions for the ease with which messages can be disseminated, but this does not mean that they are all appropriate for all content or that they make appropriate communication channels.

(Former) Twitter: The briefest medium

This microblogging network has been around since 2006, and while it was originally intended to be a network dedicated to podcasting, it was eventually decided that it would be exactly that: a place to collect the

opinions of millions of users worldwide. It has grown from 70 to 140 characters over the course of 15 years, allowing for the inclusion of images and videos and the creation of small group chat spaces. These advantages, combined with the ongoing adaptation of the various applications for mobile operating systems and ease of use, have enabled it to become one of the most widely used communication tools by individuals and companies worldwide.

A company that has a Twitter account, and that takes care to cultivate the relationship with its followers and consumers, could easily spread its news exclusively through this channel. Depending on the degree of interest, followers could then repost this information, helping to share it with more people (Egea, 2017).

However, not everything is positive about a network that was put together without any type of surveillance beyond the criteria of each individual and that allows the dissemination of any type of information around the world without checking its accuracy or veracity. Raising freedom of expression to its pinnacle is both the network's greatest accomplishment and its greatest perversion, because it ultimately means giving a loudspeaker to any theory and providing a means of communication without verifying the type of messages fed into the network. In fact, it is not even necessary to verify the identity of the user who uses the profile, which is why the use of bots and so-called user "farms" has proliferated to spread information for harmful purposes, such as feeding public opinion with hoaxes against political movements or in support of secessionist or denialist movements in the context of the recent pandemic.

Twitter is an echo chamber, a natural habitat for narcissists; it is highly disposable, yet also revolutionary, democratizing and disruptive of the existing social order. Taken-for-granted assumptions about the role and potential of evolving communications technologies are nothing new (Murthy, 2011). In short, Twitter, like any tool, aims to serve as a means of communication, leveraging the benefits of global interconnection; however, as Murthy mentions, it is occasionally used as an echo chamber, as evidenced by numerous studies on its use.

Knowing Why We Pay Taxes

Making decisions requires having enough information to make these choices freely. The same thing happens when you express your opinion or criticize a particular system or process. Taxes combine several factors that are important when making decisions. First, we will discuss what the public understands by justice when it comes to its own wealth. Second, we must consider what solidarity expressed through a tax system means for their fellow citizens, including the effective distribution of wealth and establishing a welfare state. All of this could be included in what some tax theorists refer to as “Tax Morale.” Although fairness and financial literacy have been considered determinants of tax morale, the aspect that has been less considered is whether financial and tax literacy (FTL) has a moderating effect on fairness and tax morale (Alexander & Balavac-Orlic, 2022).

Paying taxes, because it is required by law and is therefore not understood by many citizens as a contribution to the improvement of society as a whole, as an action that leads to, or should lead to, improvements in the public’s situation, and therefore to the creation of a more balanced society. This entails increased access to resources and the elimination of barriers between certain social classes and others, because, as Bergman (2002) explains, “paying taxes is also partially contingent on social values and perceived institutional performance of the public sector.”

This is perhaps one of the most important issues, as it addresses citizens’ perceptions of tax policy. There is a lack of knowledge, which is exacerbated by negative articles indicating that public funds are not being used for their intended purposes. This, in turn, serves as an excuse for those who, with a vision less grounded in moral issues and values such as equity or solidarity, choose to express their opposition to taxation by using arguments of misuse of funds collected by rulers. As seen in the Twitter posts, this occurs even when their arguments are false or not based on accurate data.

Methodology

A qualitative analysis was performed on a randomly selected sample, with content analysis as the ideal model, similar to that produced by Small (2011), supplemented by a linguistic analysis using some brushstrokes

from critical discourse analysis. We will only provide a few brief notes here because of space constraints and the fact that these methodologies are well-known and tested.

To systematize the analysis and carry out a rigorous and scientifically standardized coding, we have prepared a synthetic file, presented in the analysis section, which includes the most notable aspects for our approximating study.

Given the volume of tweets and the widespread use of Spanish, and because we want our analysis to be geographically focused on Spain, we will use a label (hashtag) called #taxes (#impuestos) to locate 25 first impression tweets at random. That is, they are not responses to others and were also posted on the Spanish peninsula. “With 50 million tweets per day, hashtags are central to organizing information on Twitter. Hashtags organize discussion around specific topics or events.” (Small, 2011).

The sample is not a representative sample of the tweets available to analyze. First, because it is a purely qualitative analysis that addresses formal questions, and second, because we do not seek to paint an exact picture of the situation, but rather an approximation of it. In other words, this first approach allows us to determine the type of knowledge citizens who interact on this type of social network, specifically Twitter, show.

To ensure that the selection was as random as possible, we used the Tweet Binder tool, which allows us to select a series of tweets based on criteria such as the accompanying tags. In our case, we have chosen the hashtag #taxes.

Analysis

Although there is no attempt to conduct a quantitative analysis because it would be impractical, we must keep in mind that on Twitter, approximately 9,000 posts are produced per second around the world, so attempting to find complete representation would be overly optimistic. On the contrary, we attempted to make a selection, ensuring that the representativeness matches as closely as possible what we require to explain our initial hypotheses.

Content analysis is a popular methodology in communication, particularly in the study of social networks such as Twitter. Since the advent of the internet, the technique that some classical researchers, such as Bardin, popularized decades ago has become widely used.

Content analysis is based on reading (textual or visual) as an instrument of information gathering, and unlike common reading, it must be carried out following the scientific method. That is, it must be systematic, objective, replicable, and valid. In this sense, its problems and methodology are similar, except for some specific characteristics, to that of any other data collection technique for social research, observation, experiment, surveys, interviews, etc. However, what is characteristic of content analysis and what distinguishes it from other sociological research techniques is that it is a technique that combines intrinsically, and this is why it is so complex, the observation and production of data and the interpretation or analysis of the data (Abela, 2002).

A file was created to conduct the content analysis under the aforementioned conditions, which included several categories that addressed issues such as ideology, linguistic correctness, and the poster's intention. To answer our initial questions, we are particularly interested in whether the people who publish these tweets thoroughly understand what taxes entail and what they are used for after payment, among other things. We also want to know whether their discourse is more focused on real tax policy issues or purely ideological issues. This is particularly important in Spain because, at the time of this inspection of the public perception of taxes (September/October 2022), the government is implementing a series of changes to the tax rates of some of the population groups that it considers to be most affected by the new, or not-so-new, economic crisis that is affecting the country.

To achieve our goals, we used Tweet Binder, an intuitive tool that, like others found on the internet, allows real time information about posts made on the Twitter social network about a specific topic to be harvested.

It includes a box where you can search for a specific text. In our case, the search term was “#taxes” with the “hash (#)” sign included. Although it is a much more comprehensive tool than its use in our study shows, it has served our purpose by allowing us to find complex statistics on the use of terms and their numerical reflections, economic data, and so on.

However, unlike many artificial intelligence-based tools, and even though it is a paid application, it does not allow us to segment our sample in order to select only the sample units that interest us, which include not only those written in Spanish but also those that refer to national tax policy. As a result, after using the tool, we had to manually review the tweets to remove those not geographically appropriate for our purposes. We downloaded all of the tweets that piqued our interest, those related to this hashtag, and then reviewed them to find those that belonged (as far as our discernment allows) to individuals rather than institutions or media as such, and those that originated in Spain.

Following the completion of the analysis report, we attempted to draw a line based on the results obtained, to see if the initial expectations are met and, therefore, whether we can confirm or refute our initial hypotheses.

When coding the information, a 0 represents a negative answer and a 1 represents an affirmative answer: without errors: 0 versus with errors: 1 and without ideological weight: 0 versus with ideological weight: 1

Table 1. *Coding of the obtained results*

ID	Correctness	Bias	Text
1	1	0	450,000 #politicians with an average salary of 70,000€/year, gives 31,500,000,000 € coming out of our #taxes, laughing at the whole of #Spain. and then there's no money for #pensions hospitals... https://t.co/7i68KXv2C1 .
2	1	0	Lowering taxes means damaging the State, and basic services, health, education, pensions... Which are then privatized and instead of a right, they become a product, only available to those who can pay. #taxes #fiscalpolicy #rich https://t.co/gAmVOF9t48 .
3	0		#abuse #caste #communism #representatives #doublestandards #economy #State #ETA #Government #hypocrisy #taxes #irony #parasites #poverty #Podemos #politicians #populism #PSOE #theft #looting #socialism #totalitarianism #truth https://t.co/mW1N0iVapQ .
4	0	1	Patriots with their wristbands, not with their wallet #Taxes #Socialjustice #GraphicHumor https://t.co/MHr8obSlzr ".

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ID	Correctness	Bias	Text
5	1	1	@herreropedro Where do I have to sign to stop @PSOE and their confiscatory policies taking all of families' savings? Why is an #inheritance taxed when various #Taxes are paid throughout life and the #MiddleClass is senselessly attacked? #Inheritance tax and donations.
6	0	0	#Taxation: The #Consell will update the low #tranches of the #Incometax and will raise the limits of #deductions. There will be no changes in #Heritage and #Transmission #taxes. https://t.co/Aco9UePzg6 .
7	0	1	#Inheritance and Donation Tax your parents work hard, save with effort, "Pay #Taxes." When they die, they leave their legacy to their children. A confiscatory government arrives and dilutes the #Inheritance with more taxes. They don't know the culture of #Effort, they only know how to ruin @PSOE https://t.co/PfnvCDqo29 .
8	0	1	I want to pay #taxes because I want public health, public education, social services, roads, pensions, social coverage, the Welfare State. #I want to pay taxes because I am more patriotic than those with the flag in the profile and the money in tax havens.
9	0	0	The wealth tax is only paid by 0.2 percent of the richest in Andalusia, which prevents attending to the more than 400,000 dependency aids still pending https://t.co/GfJ7BERCLg . #Taxes #AutonomousCommunities #TaxHaven https://t.co/hLvrDvNzR7 .
10	0	0	Downward tax competition; the decisions of Andalusia or Madrid weigh down the financing of other communities https://t.co/GfJ7BERCLg . #Taxes #AutonomousCommunities #TaxHaven
11	1	1	For all the world champions of reducing #taxes, read this brochure from the Andalusian Tax Observatory, starting with the runner-up @JuanMa_Moreno Let's see if you learn something and respect the Constitution that you talk about so much #MiserableRight. https://t.co/E0soPRzdw .

ID	Correctness	Bias	Text
12	1	1	<p>Envy eats the PP from the inside. They know that they no longer have the keys to the state public money box and Feijoo and company do not know how to continue stealing even more.</p> <p>They don't know the word honesty.</p> <p>Disgusting and Nauseating!!!</p> <p>#taxes #ARVTaxes</p>
13	0	1	<p>A fairer #FiscalPolicy and increasing #taxes on the rich benefits most of us??</p> <p>Of course, it does (#PublicHealth, #PublicEducation...).</p> <p>This is what two world leaders in #Economics say.</p> <p>Don't be fooled by the media/parties bought by that 1 percent.</p> <p>https://t.co/JLy8kBOscJ</p>
14	1	1	<p>If I were rich I wouldn't stay here to pay you your salaries and keep lazy people and criminals.</p> <p>#taxpayers</p> <p>#taxes</p> <p>#Wealth Tax https://t.co/XUcd7u3koP</p>
15	1	0	<p>Politicians lower #taxes so that their companies (Parties) can win elections with public money, but instead I cannot decide in my company how to distribute mine, because the Treasury is already in charge of it, who suffocates me to support so many parasites. All fine.</p>
16	0	0	<p>Another point of view of the tax abolition debate in #Andalucia: "The Heritage of Mental Health".</p> <p>https://t.co/zeNQ6XTeD2 from @RadioSevilla</p> <p>#taxes #Heritage #MentalHealth</p>
17	1	1	<p>@IdiazAyuso I would like to understand exactly what is the #tax reduction that is being advertised so much.</p> <p>I explain the facts, a bad inheritance and with problems and almost impossible to divide. Inheritance and capital gains paid. More than 4 years to split it up, with an unspeakable woman.</p>
18	0	0	<p>The Government announces a tax offensive with a selective rise in #taxes for 2023 https://t.co/QVcV1o8Ulc.</p>

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ID	Correctness	Bias	Text
19	1	0	The tax cut would be paid for by eliminating so many useless political posts. #Politics #taxes #society #Money.
20	0	1	#SavageTax: The Government goes one step further and will present a “selective increase” in #taxes in a package of new fiscal measures. #TheGovernmentOfThePeople #TheGovernmentOfRuin #InsecureJobs #PSOESteals #Treasury https://t.co/FQfmdUd7C9 from @elindepcom.
21	0	0	What are #taxes for? Why do the Autonomous Communities compete, for public services or for taxes? What do we want? Public services for all, health, education... Does the State take it all? A bit of basic tax knowledge. open #thread #because I pay No.
22	0	0	Isabel Díaz Ayuso, President of the Community of Madrid has recently pointed out: “We have been reducing the tax burden continuously for almost 20 years until we have achieved that each taxpayer has saved more than 17,000 euros in this time” #taxes.
23	1	1	What are we educated for? When those #doctors receive their first contact with reality, will they leave it without the need to cut #taxes and join #politicians in #populism, #vocational background? That’s how it went in the #pandemic anyway, the #magicalthinking is beautiful.
24	1	1	The #Government vetoes all reductions in #Taxes in the @Congreso_Es #GovernmentOfTheLie #UnstoPPable #theAlternativeisPP #Families #Workers #PreparedForChange #WewilldoitIWell. https://t.co/CfbjFRKB9D .

ID	Correctness	Bias	Text
25	1	1	<p>It is not the GOVERNMENT of the PEOPLE.</p> <p>There is an error.</p> <p>It is the GOVERNMENT of the #SCUM.</p> <p>Who do they represent?</p> <p>Who do they listen to?</p> <p>Please let some #squatters get into one of their houses or something, so that they divert their attention to something other than raising or CREATING new #taxes https://t.co/VdDqfeFyvQ.</p>

Source: Own elaboration.

Results

Once the samples have been chosen and tabulated, it can be observed that nearly half (12 out of 25) of the tweets chosen have some type of inaccuracy, owing to comments made without regard for the content or without verifying the veracity of the data provided. For example, in Tweet ID 1, it is stated that there are “450,000 politicians”, which is incorrect unless obtained from a website, and each politician is assigned an average salary of 70,000 euros per year. This is not true because most politicians, particularly in small towns, do not receive a salary at all. Therefore, numerous inaccuracies lead to the user’s implied conclusion, as reasoning does not provide accurate information. In other cases, the errors are grammatical in nature, with disjointed ideas or texts that, despite their brevity, lack coherence.

In terms of the political bias of the selected publications, there has long been a tendency to associate social spending, and therefore higher tax collection and tax increases, with progressive or leftwing ideology, whereas maintaining lower taxes is associated with a more conservative mindset, with rightwing voters. This is perfectly apparent in the discourse of the selected tweets, as 14 of the 25 publications have a clear ideological position in one direction. Furthermore, something we had not considered as an object of study has piqued our interest: not only is there an ideological positioning of tweets in which their authors place themselves on one of the two extremes (left vs. right), but there is also a not insignificant tendency to criticize public spending in order to fund politicians’ salaries (ID 1).

In short, two basic trends are perceived as opposing each other: those who point to a more supportive position toward tax payment (ID 2, ID 8) and those who refer to tax increases as simply taking in more money or even being “confiscatory” (ID5). According to the researchers, this does not imply that a prudent and considered judgment is made with the prudence of knowledge, but from an ideological position, which can be corroborated if the texts accompanying the posts listed are observed, as well as their hashtags.

Conclusion

Although it should be noted that any case study of this kind can only represent a small slice of the vast amount of information found in social networks, particularly on the social network of Twitter, after adopting this approach, we can formulate some questions that address our initial hypotheses.

First, the selected posts do not show rigorous ideas about taxes and their changes. As a result, the type of financial culture that can be observed through tweet analysis simply shows reiterative arguments, a kind of mantra that repeats, on the one hand, the government’s eagerness to spend and collect money, and on the other, the denial of spending on health and education of the so-called “rich” of the so-called “right.” This is constantly repeated, which means that there is no way for someone who wants to find accurate information about what a change in their taxes means to do so in this medium. We can exclude tweets that contain information from other media, which are typically written by professional journalists due to space and medium characteristics, with a more considered analysis, etc. This allows them to delve deeper into the subject, resulting in a different connection to reality. These tweets show careful wording, are free of formal and content errors, and do not express an ideological position.

In contrast, when there is a lack of information and a clear ideological bias, these characteristics are usually accompanied by careless language, a lack of originality as a result of idea repetition, or the copying of ideas from similar posts. A lack of knowledge about the subject is associated with difficulty or a lack of written expression.

Another finding from this preliminary analysis is that when people talk about public spending, they almost always mention education and health. Although these are the two most commonly used or well-known examples of public services, there are numerous infrastructures and locations where tax money is invested. Therefore, it appears that the cited example is not only repetitive, but also simplistic, if not poor.

It is notable in this section that only one of the selected tweets (ID 23) refers to the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically a criticism of how tax cuts will affect medical professionals and a comparison to what happened during the pandemic. It is also necessary to highlight a common point among those who criticize the increase in tax collection, as most of them focus on the portion of the budget dedicated to spending on politicians' salaries, even when this is not supported by clear criteria or data (ID 1).

On the other hand, the main goal of demonstrating that Twitter is more useful in showing an ideological confrontation between conservative and progressive supporters, using all kinds of questions, including those related to taxes and public spending, is clearly demonstrated in this sampling, because most of the tweets are loaded with ideology and pay little attention to the accuracy of their content. Although it should be the subject of another analysis because it does not fit in this paper due to subject matter or space, this has much to do with how information with little foundation or even false information is disseminated, based on premises with no quality of accuracy.

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