

## **Attitudes towards political discontent – Government responses to contentious politics in Twitter**

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Challenging the statu-quo through contentious action is a central component of democracy and the form of political action in which conflict is most evident. Yet contesting political options rests on the premise of public acceptance. This is why social movements aim at changing public opinion perceptions in order to find support for their claims. Research on support for social movements and contentious politics has focused on survey based research that taps into sympathy towards contentious actors and acceptance of their forms of action, as well as in media accounts of protest. In this paper we provide an exploratory approach of attitudes toward contentious politics in Twitter in order to get a broader picture of attitudes towards contentious politics. We move forward the research by studying the expression and diffusion of attitudes towards actors, their grievances and repertoires and look into differences between responses of political elites and the public in Twitter. Evidence from ten cases on Catalan/Spanish nationalism, against house eviction and on the Indignados in Spain between 2011 and 2013 speaks to the potential of government responses to contentious politics for influencing public reactions. The wide diversity of repertoires and grievances in our sample provide external validity to our findings on the influence that political elites and public opinion leaders have on the attitudes of issue-specific publics on Twitter.

**Keywords:** Protest, Attitudes, Social media, Twitter, Contentious politics, government responsiveness