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3 **Members of the Scottish Parliament on Twitter: good constituency men (and**
4 **women)?**
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9 **Abstract**

10 **Purpose** – To explore the use of Twitter by Members of the Scottish Parliament
11 (MSPs) for the provision of constituency-related information, or in support of their
12 constituency service work.
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15 **Design/methodology/approach** – Content analysis of 10,411 tweets sent by the
16 105 MSPs on Twitter during four weeks in early 2014.
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19 **Findings** – While there was some evidence of MSPs on Twitter acting as a promoter
20 of local community interests and as a conduit for information on local policy issues
21 and events, their tweets were dominated by the wider, national, political agenda and
22 by the Scottish independence debate. Compared with their online behaviour as
23 parliamentary candidates three years earlier, MSPs placed an even greater
24 emphasis on the one-way broadcast of information to their followers. They were
25 reluctant to respond to contentious local policy questions, or to enter into any visible,
26 meaningful, political debate with their constituents.
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29 **Research limitations/implications** – Although the research was conducted seven
30 months before the Scottish independence referendum on 18 September 2014, the
31 independence debate still dominated proceedings on Twitter. It might, therefore, be
32 appropriate to revisit MSPs' use of Twitter at some point during a truer 'peacetime'
33 period.
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37 **Originality/value** – This is the first systematic content analysis of tweets sent by *all*
38 MSPs on Twitter. It allows us to compare their actual Twitter use with that envisaged
39 by the Scottish Parliament, as a way of MSPs communicating about their work and
40 engaging with their constituents.
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47 **Keywords** Constituency service, Information provision, Internet, Members of the
48 Scottish Parliament, Social media, Twitter, Political communication
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3 **Paper type** Research paper
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6 **Introduction**
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8 When the Scottish Parliament [1] was being established in the late 1990s, an Expert
9 Panel on Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) recommended that
10 the parliament should focus upon the contribution that new technologies might make
11 in enabling greater openness and transparency and in assisting the democratic
12 process. The panel believed that the Scottish Parliament should “aspire to be an
13 example of best practice in parliamentary information systems, both in terms of
14 external communications and internal efficiency” (Consultative Steering Group on the
15 Scottish Parliament, 1998, section 3.6, para. 21). During the first two sessions of the
16 Scottish Parliament (i.e. 1999-2003 and 2003-2007), studies of Members of the
17 Scottish Parliament (MSPs) found that they were “intensive and competent users” of
18 ICTs (Smith and Webster, 2004), and that ICTs had “become a cultural norm of
19 contemporary parliamentary life”, where MSPs and their assistants used them
20 constantly in order to fulfil their legislative, oversight and representative roles (Smith
21 and Webster, 2008). Smith and Webster’s studies took place before the emergence
22 of Facebook and Twitter; but the potential value of these social media as information
23 provision and communication tools has since become recognised within the Scottish
24 Parliament, where it is acknowledged that they “can increase the accessibility of
25 MSPs and offer new ways in which to engage constituents, stakeholders and the
26 wider public” (Scottish Parliament Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments
27 Committee, 2012).
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50 This paper presents the results of a study, conducted in 2014, which explored the
51 use of Twitter by MSPs, in order to establish if there was any evidence of the
52 accessible and truly engaging online parliamentarians envisaged by the Scottish
53 Parliament. The study sought, in particular, to determine the extent to which Twitter
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3 was being used by MSPs for the provision of constituency-related information, or in
4 support of their day-to-day constituency work. It also aimed to establish if the
5 frequency and nature of Twitter use by these elected members differed from that
6 encountered when these individuals were prospective parliamentary candidates
7 during the 2011 Scottish Parliament election campaign.
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15 The paper will firstly review the literature that underpins the study, focusing in
16 particular on: the constituency service role of the elected member in Britain; on the
17 information behaviour of British parliamentarians, particularly in relation to their
18 constituency service role; and on the impact that new technologies have had on the
19 communication and exchange of information between the parliamentarian and his/her
20 constituents. The paper will then discuss the study's methodological approach,
21 before presenting the main results of the research. The final section will present our
22 conclusions and identify significant areas for future research.
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33 **Literature Review**

34 *The constituency role of the parliamentarian in Britain*

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36 Historically, the constituency role of the UK Member of Parliament (MP) has its
37 origins in 13th century England, where knights, burgesses and other prominent
38 citizens would be sent to Parliament in order to redress the grievances of those
39 (largely the propertied classes) in their local communities. During the 18th and 19th
40 centuries the constituency role became dormant, due to the emergence of mass
41 political parties that demanded loyalty from their elected representatives in
42 Parliament in supporting national mandates, rather than just local, constituency-
43 related issues. In the 20th century, however, the MP's constituency service role re-
44 emerged, particularly after the Second World War when the phrase 'a good
45 constituency man' became common parlance in the political sphere. Several reasons
46 have been proffered for the revival of the constituency service role, including:
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3 population growth and the introduction of universal suffrage, resulting in a
4 significantly larger electorate that places increased demands on its MPs; the
5 expansion of the public sector and a concomitant growth in constituents' need for
6 assistance, as they attempted to navigate the bureaucratic complexities of the new
7 welfare state; increased public awareness of political issues, leading to more people
8 attempting to challenge and influence the political process (what is termed 'cognitive
9 mobilisation'); and the differing characteristics of MPs, who are no longer drawn
10 exclusively from the professional classes, but increasingly have public sector
11 backgrounds and an intrinsic interest in the fair and effective delivery of local services
12 (see, for example, Norris, 1997; Gay, 2005; Norton, 2012).
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25 In his seminal study of Westminster parliamentarians, Searing (1985) identified the
26 'constituency member' as one of four principal – and reasonably distinct – roles that
27 the backbench MP might adopt at various points throughout his/her political career;
28 the others being ministerial aspirant, parliament man, and policy advocate. At the
29 time of his research, in the 1970s, he estimated that 25% of Westminster
30 backbenchers were constituency members, who devoted themselves to issues
31 arising in their local communities. Searing observed two subtypes of the constituency
32 member, each with a differing outlook and behaviour: the 'welfare officer', who
33 focuses on making representations on behalf of individual constituents, perhaps
34 holding more regular constituency surgeries [2], making themselves available to
35 constituents at weekends, or undertaking visits to constituents' homes; and the 'local
36 promoter' who instead makes representations on behalf of their constituency's
37 *collective* concerns, perhaps being more likely to open local buildings, visit local
38 factories, schools and hospitals, or become involved in major local planning
39 decisions. In the 1970s, Searing estimated that 75.3% of constituency members were
40 welfare officers, 15.3% were local promoters, with the remainder (9.4%) giving equal
41 weight to both aspects of constituency service. Interestingly, Searing established that
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3 Scotland had a higher proportion of constituency members (41%) than did the other
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5 UK regions.
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9 With regard to the post-devolution situation in Scotland, Bradbury and Russell (2005)
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11 found that Scottish MPs continue to spend significant time on constituency work (on
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13 average, 24.5 hours per week), as do MSPs (27.4 hours per week). However, public
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15 understanding of the respective responsibilities of the UK and Scottish Parliaments
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17 has been relatively poor, and members of each legislature receive constituents'
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19 enquiries that would be more properly directed to the other.
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23 *The information needs and behaviour of the parliamentarian in Britain*
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25 The body of work on the information needs and behaviour of elected members in
26
27 Britain is rather small. What little literature has been published, however, is in broad
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29 agreement that the parliamentarian's information needs are incessant, very complex,
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31 varied, and unpredictable, being dependent on parliamentary, local, national, and
32
33 international events and agendas (Barker and Rush, 1970; Shepherd, 1991; Marcella
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35 *et al.*, 1999; Orton *et al.*, 1999; Serema, 1999). All of these authors highlight the
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37 extent and variety of correspondence that members receive from constituents, and
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39 the rising expectation amongst constituents that they receive a rapid and informed
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41 response. As Shepherd (1991, p.25) warned:
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46 *Nothing can prepare the newly elected Member for the full blast of their*
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48 *constituents' expectation of what they believe their Member will know, will*
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50 *want to know and on what matters an opinion will be expected which is both*
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52 *authoritative and accurate... Such matters are personal and important, if not*
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54 *vital, to the individual and considerable disappointment can set in if a parallel*
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56 *degree of interest is not demonstrated by the Member.*
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3 *The impact of new technologies on member-constituent information communication*
4 *and exchange*
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7 Since Bill Clinton's 1992 US presidential election campaign, where position papers,
8 full texts of speeches and candidate biographies were posted online, the Internet has
9 increasingly been adopted as a communication and electoral campaign tool by
10 political actors worldwide. Consequently, a significant body of literature on the use of
11 ICTs by political parties and by individual politicians has emerged since the mid-
12 1990s. As Gibson and Ward (2009) observe, much of this literature has focused on
13 two spheres of activity: the use of ICTs for internal party operations, and their use
14 during election campaigns, with the latter having received the lion's share of scholarly
15 attention. In contrast, research has rarely concentrated on 'peacetime developments'
16 (i.e. in the years between elections), or on the 'long campaign' [3].
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29 In the UK, much of the 'peacetime' research has focused on content analyses of
30 elected members' personal websites (e.g., Halstead, 2002; Jackson, 2003; Ward and
31 Lusoli, 2005; Vicente-Merino, 2007; Goodchild *et al.*, 2007). In these studies, whilst
32 the parliamentarians themselves have tended to believe that their website is a useful
33 tool for communicating with their constituents, the nature of this communication has
34 been largely one-way, with few opportunities for constituents to enter into two-way,
35 online dialogue with their representatives.
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45 A small number of studies have explored British parliamentarians' use of email (e.g.,
46 Jackson, 2005; Williamson, 2009a). Here, email has been regarded by elected
47 members as a double-edged sword: while it is seen as a useful tool for engaging
48 with, and providing a better service to, their constituents, it can also create unrealistic
49 expectations about members' response times. Members also highlight the difficulties
50 they face in filtering out the many messages they receive from non-constituents.
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57 Jackson (2006) has also explored the use of e-newsletters by MPs, establishing that,
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3 while they are primarily designed to support the constituency service role by
4 providing local information, they are rarely used to develop dialogue or closer
5 relationships with constituents.
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11 A lack of engagement, and an over-reliance on the top-down, one way
12 communication of information from members to their online followers, are also
13 recurring themes in the literature on British parliamentarians' use of potentially more
14 interactive Web 2.0 technologies, such as blogs (e.g., Auty, 2005; Francoli and Ward,
15 2008), Facebook (Williamson, 2009b) and Twitter (Williamson and Phillips, 2009).
16 Most of these papers also recognise that a member's online following can bear little
17 or no resemblance to their geographical constituency; that the parliamentarian can
18 instead develop an online "constituency of interest" or "e-constituency" (Jackson,
19 2008). The one exception is a recent paper by Margaretta and Gaber (2014), who
20 appear to equate an MP's online following with his/her constituents. Margaretta and
21 Gaber paint a rather rose-tinted picture of Scottish MPs' Twitter use, which, they
22 argue, demonstrates the "engagement" and "authenticity" of the politicians. Focusing
23 on the three heaviest Twitter users - Tom Harris, Eric Joyce and Jo Swinson - they
24 conclude that their Twitter posts show the politicians to be, variously, "approachable
25 and naturally human", "engaging, playful and funny", and "down to earth and more
26 real" [4].
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46 Internationally, a growing number of studies have specifically explored elected
47 representatives' use of Twitter. In some cases, these have simply quantified the
48 politicians' Twitter activity, in terms of adoption rates, number of posts and followers,
49 etc.; for example, in Australia (Missingham, 2010), Brazil (Marques, de Aquino and
50 Miola, 2014), Sweden and Norway (Larsson and Kalsnes, 2014). A small number
51 have adopted a more qualitative approach, using interviews to explore politicians'
52 motivations for using Twitter. For example, Ross and Bürger (2014) interviewed 17
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3 New Zealand MPs, the majority of whom indicated that Facebook was a better
4 medium than Twitter for engaging with constituents. While Frame and Brachotte
5 (2015) conducted interviews with five French politicians, who viewed Twitter as a
6 useful tool to disseminate information quickly and widely to a range of publics,
7 including potential voters, constituents, other politicians, journalists, and other
8 stakeholders.
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17 In Asia, Hsu and Park (2012) have mapped the social networks of South Korean
18 Assembly Members, concluding that they use Twitter to communicate more with
19 fellow politicians than with their own constituents (although they, too, appear to
20 assume that politicians' online followers will also be constituents). In Australia and
21 North America, some studies have used content analysis to explore the more precise
22 nature of politicians' Twitter use, although the specificity of the coding schemes used
23 has varied widely. Grant, Moon and Grant (2010) used four very broad categories –
24 broadcast, broadcast mention, reply and retweet – to explore the content of
25 Australian politicians' tweets. Golbeck, Grimes and Rogers (2010) created eight
26 coding categories in analysing over 6,000 tweets sent by US Congresspeople,
27 although constituency-specific posts were not identified and quantified. However, in
28 another study of US Congresspeople, Glassman, Straus and Shogan (2013)
29 established that 26% of Members' tweets related to issues and activities in their
30 home district or state.
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50 **Methodology**

51 In order to enable a meaningful comparison, this research was conducted along
52 similar lines to those of the authors' previous analysis (Baxter and Marcella, 2013a)
53 of Scottish parliamentary candidates' Twitter use. The existence of MSPs' Twitter
54 accounts was established largely by examining the *Current MSPs* pages of the
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3 Scottish Parliament website (<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk>), which generally
4 provide links to members' personal websites and social media sites. To ensure
5 comprehensiveness, searches were also conducted on Google and on Twitter's
6 search engine. With these approaches, it was established that 105 (81.4%) of the
7 129 sitting MSPs [5] had an active Twitter account.
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15 Using the Twitonomy software [6] all MSPs' tweets sent in the four weeks from 6
16 January to 2 February 2014 were captured, retrospectively, in April 2014. These four
17 weeks would normally be described as occurring in a 'peacetime' period: indeed, the
18 study took place almost midway between the previous Scottish Parliamentary
19 election in May 2011 and the next contest in May 2016. Equally, though, the study
20 took place at an exceptional moment, during what might be termed the 'long
21 campaign' leading up to the Scottish independence referendum on 18 September
22 2014 [7].
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33 The 105 MSPs with a Twitter account sent a combined total of 10,411 tweets during
34 this four-week period. Each tweet was read systematically by the researchers and
35 coded (based on the main thrust of its content) using a scheme devised and used
36 previously by the current authors during parliamentary election campaigns. The
37 coded content was then enumerated manually on coding sheets, and the resultant
38 data input to, and analysed in, *SPSS for Windows*. This coding framework represents
39 both the *nature* of the communication taking place (i.e. the one-way 'broadcast' of
40 information by politicians to their online followers, or the two-way exchange of
41 information with these followers), as well as the *broad subject matter* of the posts
42 (e.g., national or local policy issues, media coverage of political events, criticisms of
43 political opponents, etc.). The full coding scheme can be found in the Appendix to
44 this paper, and is discussed in more detail in the Research Results section below.
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58 The coding was carried out in two stages, between April and December 2014. The
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3 first stage, in which the tweets were coded against most of the categories listed in the
4 Appendix, was carried out by two researchers, with a sample being tested for inter-
5 coder consistency by the lead author. The second stage of coding, in which the
6 retweets and those tweets containing hyperlinks were examined for constituency-
7 specific content, was conducted solely by the lead author. Whilst we acknowledge
8 that the method adopted is relatively labour-intensive and time-consuming, we would
9 argue that this 'human' element is essential if we are to obtain a true picture of MSPs'
10 Twitter use, for it can identify aspects of online communication, such as the use of
11 sarcasm, irony or humour, that might escape automated, sentiment analysis
12 approaches. Given the study's focus on constituency-related content, we would also
13 argue that the analysis process requires human coders with at least a basic
14 awareness of Scottish geography.
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29 While our coding framework has developed independently over a number of years,
30 this particular study was, to a certain extent, also influenced theoretically by work
31 conducted by Jackson and Lilleker (2011), when they examined UK MPs' Twitter
32 use. Jackson and Lilleker drew on two interrelated theories. Firstly, that of
33 'impression management', which was based on a social psychology taxonomy by
34 Jones and Pittman (1982), who presented five classes of self-presentational
35 strategies or behaviours – 'ingratiation', 'intimidation', 'self-promotion',
36 'exemplification' and 'supplication'. In their paper, Jackson and Lilleker categorised
37 and measured the ways in which MPs deliberately sought to manage the public
38 perception of themselves via Twitter, observing that they engaged primarily in 'self-
39 promotion', in order to portray themselves as dedicated, hard-working individuals, yet
40 also as 'ordinary' human beings with everyday interests. Secondly, Jackson and
41 Lilleker drew on Searing's (1985) 'constituency service' theory, and the two
42 'subtypes' of constituency members ('welfare officer' and 'local promoter') discussed
43 above. In their study, Jackson and Lilleker concluded that MPs used Twitter
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3 predominantly as an impression management tool, and that constituency service was
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5 very much a secondary function of their Twitter use.
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9 In this current paper, the authors also consider an alternative model of constituency
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11 service to that utilised by Jackson and Lilleker. Here, we also take into account the
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13 model posited by Norton (1994). Norton identified seven key constituency roles of a
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15 UK parliamentarian: 'safety valve'; 'local dignitary'; 'advocate'; 'benefactor'; 'powerful
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17 friend'; 'promoter of constituency interests'; and, crucially for this study, 'information
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19 provider'. Here, Norton suggested, the MP may provide his constituents with advice
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21 on who to approach with a specific problem, or may provide them with information
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23 on, for example, the MP's role, activities or political views, or on government or party
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25 policy on a particular issue. Jackson and Lilleker (2011, p. 91) dismissed Norton's
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27 model for use in their own research, arguing mistakenly that Norton had claimed that
28
29 the role of information provider had "largely disappeared over recent decades".
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32 Norton (1994, p. 713) had, in fact, written: "Anecdotal evidence from MPs suggests
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34 that, if anything, requests for information are more numerous now than in previous
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36 years". Indeed, more recently, Norton (2013, p. 220) has observed that the MP
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38 increasingly acts as an information provider to constituents *collectively*, through
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40 newsletters, newspaper articles, websites, blogs and tweets. We would therefore
41
42 argue that constituency information provision remains a key role of the elected
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44 member, and thus forms the focus of this paper.
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46 47 48 **Research results**

49 *Extent of MSPs' Twitter use*

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51 As noted earlier, 105 of the 129 Scottish MSPs were found to have a Twitter account.
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53 More precisely, 58 (79.4%) of the 73 constituency MSPs were on Twitter, as were 47
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55 (83.9%) of the 56 regional MSPs. Table 1 provides a breakdown by political party
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57 affiliation, and as can be seen all parties were generally well-represented on Twitter.
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3 Of the 105 MSPs, just 42 (40%) had used Twitter when they had been parliamentary
4 candidates three years earlier; thus the majority had adopted the service since
5 becoming an elected member.
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10 **Take in Table 1**

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15 Table 2, meanwhile, provides a quantitative overview of the MSPs' activity on Twitter
16 during the four-week period studied, as well as an indication of their number of
17 followers at 30 April 2014. As can be seen, there was considerable variation in the
18 extent of Twitter activity: 11 MSPs from across the parties made no posts whatsoever
19 during the four weeks; whilst one independent MSP, John Finnie, sent 795 in the
20 period studied. This resulted in an overall average of 99 Twitter posts per MSP over
21 the four weeks, with a median of 60 posts. With regard to the number of followers,
22 these also varied widely, ranging from the 106 people following the Labour MSP,
23 Patricia Ferguson, to the 58,186 following Alex Salmond, the then SNP leader and
24 Scotland's First Minister. This meant that the MSPs had an average Twitter following
25 of 3,833, with a median of 2,350. The extent to which these followers were also the
26 MSPs' constituents remains unclear. As Leetaru *et al.* (2013) established, only
27 around 2% of tweets sent globally include geographic metadata; therefore, unless a
28 tweet's contents contained explicit reference to its sender's location, it was difficult to
29 confirm whether or not an MSP's Twitter follower lived in the constituency or region
30 represented by that MSP. We would also make no great claims that, in demographic
31 terms, the combined Twitter followings of the 105 MSPs discussed here would be
32 truly representative of the Scottish population as a whole. Indeed, no reliable data on
33 Twitter use in Scotland can be found. It is worthwhile noting, however, that Sloan *et*
34 *al.* (2013) found that, in the UK as a whole, the gender demographic of Twitter users
35 mirrors that of the 2011 UK census within 0.1%, and that their geographic distribution
36 is also in proportion to the UK's population density. It might, therefore, be argued that
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3 MSPs' Twitter followers form a relatively representative cross-section of the wider
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5 Scottish public.
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8 ***Take in Table 2***
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12 On looking more closely at the 42 MSPs who had also been Twitter users during their
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14 2011 candidacies, they had generally become more frequent users of Twitter since
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16 gaining parliamentary office. During the 2011 election campaign, they each sent an
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18 average of 79 tweets over a four-week period (median = 40), but this had increased
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20 to an average of 123 (median = 64) during the four weeks studied here. Meanwhile,
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22 the number of Twitter followers these 42 individuals had attracted had increased by
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24 around tenfold in the intervening three years. In May 2011, they each had an average
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26 of 629 followers on Twitter (median = 364), but by April 2014 this had increased to an
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28 average of 6,614 followers (median = 3,453).
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32 ***Broad nature of MSPs' Twitter use***
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35 With regard to the broad nature of the information flow and exchange between the
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37 105 MSPs and their Twitter followers, 1,536 (14.8%) of the 10,411 tweets consisted
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39 of what the current authors term ***Primary Broadcast*** posts, where the MSPs
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41 provided their followers with their personal thoughts, opinions and commentaries on
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43 a range of political or non-political issues. Just under two-thirds (6,865; 65.9%) of the
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45 MSPs' tweets were what we term ***Secondary Broadcast*** posts, where the politicians
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47 simply provided direct links to other online sites, or where they retweeted others'
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49 comments and links. Two-way ***Engagement and Dialogue*** between MSPs and their
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51 Twitter followers – where the politicians answered questions, or responded to
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53 criticisms or messages of support – accounted for 1,323 (12.7%) of the total tweets.
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55 While 680 (6.5%) of the MSPs' tweets were what we term ***Unreciprocated***
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57 ***Engagement*** posts, where the politicians had attempted to initiate a dialogue with
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3 other Twitter users, usually in vain. These efforts were most frequently aimed at well-
4 known journalists, political commentators, satirical comedians, sports men and
5 women, and other 'celebrities'; although occasionally also at 'ordinary' members of
6 the public who had perhaps commented on political or current affairs issues.
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13 When compared with the information exchange encountered during the 2011
14 Scottish Parliamentary election campaign (Baxter and Marcella, 2013a), some
15 significant changes had taken place. In 2011, 142 (18.8%) of the 756 candidates
16 standing for election had Twitter accounts, sending 13,900 tweets over the four
17 weeks preceding polling day. Of these tweets, 31.6% were Primary Broadcast posts;
18 30.8% were Secondary Broadcast in nature; 17.2% were in response to questions,
19 criticisms or supportive messages; and 20.2% were of the Unreciprocated
20 Engagement type. This general pattern of behavioural change is mirrored when we
21 look only at the 42 MSPs who had also used Twitter when parliamentary candidates
22 during the 2011 election. As Figure 1 illustrates, these individuals had become far
23 less inclined to post their own thoughts and opinions on issues, political or otherwise.
24 While exactly one-third of their tweets were Primary Broadcast posts in 2011, this
25 had dropped to just 13% of their posts, as MSPs, in 2014. Instead, these individuals
26 had now placed greater reliance on Secondary Broadcast posts: in 2014 these
27 comprised 66.4% of their tweets, compared with 35.3% of their overall Twitter posts
28 in 2011. Why there had been such a sea-change in the nature of their Twitter use is
29 unclear. Perhaps, because they were now accountable, elected representatives, they
30 felt that they had to adopt a more cautious approach in offering their personal views
31 on political and policy issues. Or perhaps because of their parliamentary (and, for
32 some, Ministerial or Cabinet Secretary) commitments, they no longer had the time to
33 compose their own tweets; instead relying on simply clicking the Retweet button on
34 others' posts that were deemed of potential interest or relevance to their own
35 followers. Without discussing their rationales with the politicians themselves, this
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3 must remain a matter of conjecture. These individuals' levels of two-way engagement
4 and dialogue had also declined since becoming MSPs, dropping from 18.2% of their
5 posts in 2011, to 14.1% in 2014. And perhaps influenced by their lack of success in
6 initiating online conversations with celebrity Twitter users, the proportion of
7 Unreciprocated Engagement posts had halved, from 13.1% in 2011, to 6.5% in 2014.
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13 *Take in Figure 1*

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19 Overall, then, when compared with their Twitter use during the 2011 Scottish
20 Parliamentary election campaign, the picture in 2014 was even more one of the one-
21 way flow of information from politicians to their followers, with MSPs demonstrating
22 an even greater reluctance to enter into any kind of visible, online dialogue. As such,
23 there was little evidence of the accessible and truly engaging online parliamentarians
24 envisaged by the Scottish Parliament's Standards, Procedures and Public
25 Appointments Committee (2012). The extent to which the MSPs' information
26 provision and engagement related specifically to events and issues affecting their
27 constituencies will be explored in more detail throughout the remainder of this paper.
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39 *Content analysis of MSPs' tweets*

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41 During the coding process, when considering what might be regarded as a
42 constituency-related tweet, one type of post was excluded from our analysis. This
43 was where the MSPs' tweets related to independence referendum or by-election
44 campaigning taking place in their constituency. As was noted earlier, our research
45 took place during the 'long campaign' leading up to the Scottish independence
46 referendum on 18 September 2014, and several campaign events, such as public
47 meetings and door-to-door canvassing, were held across Scotland throughout the
48 four-week period studied. In addition, one Scottish Parliamentary by-election (in the
49 Cowdenbeath constituency) and two local council by-elections (for seats in the Moray
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3 and North Lanarkshire councils) occurred during these four weeks. With this in mind,
4 tweets relating to referendum or by-election campaigning were instead coded under
5 the categories 'Scottish independence referendum debate/issues' and 'Personal,
6 official activities/events', respectively (see Appendix). In any case, these posts
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and North Lanarkshire councils) occurred during these four weeks. With this in mind, tweets relating to referendum or by-election campaigning were instead coded under the categories 'Scottish independence referendum debate/issues' and 'Personal, official activities/events', respectively (see Appendix). In any case, these posts invariably followed the pattern of those encountered by the current authors during past, national election campaigns, where the content of the politicians' tweets was rather superficial, focusing on the weather conditions rather than on any salient local policy issues being discussed by potential voters:

Knocking doors in Lochgelly till the sun went down #cowdenbeath @scottishlabour
(Jayne Baxter, Labour, Mid Scotland and Fife)

Amazing turnout @YesAberdeen get together on a wet and windy Sunday. (Kevin Stewart, SNP, Aberdeen Central)

Indeed, amongst the Primary Broadcast tweets, the types of posts that were most frequently encountered were those relating to the MSPs' official activities, *beyond* their day-to-day constituency work (366 tweets; 23.8% of Primary Broadcast posts, 3.5% of overall posts), such as their parliamentary committee membership, or their duties as Cabinet Secretaries or Ministers of the Scottish Government.

In contrast, the 105 MSPs sent a combined total of just 122 Primary Broadcast tweets (7.9% of Primary Broadcast posts, 1.2% of overall posts) relating specifically to their day-to-day constituency work. These could be divided into two broad types. There were those that announced and promoted the MSPs' forthcoming constituency surgeries; and there were those which provided information about specific, local constituency issues with which the MSPs had become involved:

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3 I have written to Glasgow Life this week to ask them to reconsider plans to cut all
4 our local library hours. (John Mason, SNP, Glasgow Shettleston)
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9 Busy day today meeting SPT [Strathclyde Partnership for Transport] re bus routes
10 in constituency very informative then surgeries tonight (Sandra White, SNP,
11 Glasgow Kelvin)
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17 Great to see real progress on sewage issues @ Morningside,Wishaw. Grateful to
18 @betthomes,@SmilneHomes& @scottish_Water for working together! (John
19 Pentland, Labour, Motherwell & Wishaw)
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25 Overall, the MSPs were just as likely, if not more likely, to post comments on non-
26 political events, such as sport or popular culture (7.9% of Primary Broadcast posts;
27 1.2% of overall posts), or on their personal lives (9.2% of Primary Broadcast posts;
28 1.4% of overall posts). For example, the SNP MSP, Angela Constance, posted a
29 number of photographs of a family holiday in New York (the four-week period studied
30 here immediately followed the Scottish Parliament's Christmas recess), while others
31 were keen to provide critiques of various films or TV series, or to share details of their
32 domestic circumstances:
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44 Two minutes in to #sherlock and already I'm irritated. I dislike the written on screen
45 commentary (Roseanna Cunningham, SNP, Perthshire South & Kinross-shire)
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50 Grandchildren sleeping over then at film Frozen with granddaughter. Enjoyed the
51 variations on the traditional story but music pretty awful! (Malcolm Chisholm,
52 Labour, Edinburgh Northern & Leith)
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3 Had a bowl of soup and Haggis next. Still cold from the St Mirren game. In the
4 house with heating on and 4 layers still on. #gettinauld (George Adam, SNP,
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6 Paisley)
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11 In terms of the Primary Broadcast posts, then, the MSPs' Twitter use was similar to
12 that of UK MPs, identified by Jackson and Lilleker (2011). Constituency service was
13 less prominent than the MSPs' efforts at self-promotion. Indeed, the MSPs appeared
14 more anxious to use Twitter to portray themselves publicly as ordinary, likeable and
15 humorous individuals with 'normal' family lives, than to provide information about, or
16 evidence of, their local representative work.
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25 The MSPs' Secondary Broadcast posts, however, did contain more posts with
26 constituency-specific content. Over the four weeks, the 105 MSPs sent a total of 741
27 tweets (10.8% of Secondary Broadcast posts, 7.1% of total posts) that related
28 specifically to issues and events occurring in their local communities. More precisely,
29 they posted: 205 links to other websites or social media sites; 304 retweets of others'
30 online links; and 232 retweets of others' comments on constituency issues. These
31 posts could be grouped into a number of broad themes. Firstly, there were those that
32 consisted of **travel and weather news bulletins and warnings**, for example of local
33 road closures, high winds, and flooding risks, with the original posts usually
34 emanating from the police, local councils, or other public agencies:
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47 High winds, heavy rain & temperature dropping – watch how you go – take care
48 when out & about #StaySafe (Originally sent by North Ayrshire Police; retweeted
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50 by Margaret Burgess, SNP, Cunninghame South)
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56 A number of posts related to **crime warnings and appeals**, generally originating
57 from the police or from local newspapers. These tended to consist of appeals for
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3 witnesses to specific crimes that had taken place in the constituency, or the
4 dissemination of crime prevention advice:
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9 The public are urged to be cautious after a card skimming device was found on an
10 ATM at @Tesco on Blackfriars Road: <http://t.co/Dofau1Rrvt> (Originally sent by
11 Moray Police; retweeted by John Finnie, Independent, Highlands & Islands)
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17 The MSPs also retweeted a number of posts relating to local **public services**,
18 usually when new services were being launched, or where existing services were
19 under threat. We were told, for instance, of the opening of a social housing complex
20 for older people in North Ayrshire; and of the launch of a new, free, ebook service
21 from East Dunbartonshire Libraries. With regard to threatened services, several
22 posts, from MSPs from across Scotland, referred to the closure of local police and
23 fire control rooms, following controversial decisions by the Scottish Government to
24 centralise the Scottish police and fire services:
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35 SFRS set to protect future of Edinburgh fire service control centre.

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37 Recommendations just published. <http://t.co/BluXm7IWXg> (Link to Scottish Fire
38 and Rescue Service website, sent by Marco Biagi, SNP, Edinburgh Central)
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43 Local **third sector and voluntary organisations** were also the subject of several
44 posts retweeted by the MSPs. These tended to either highlight these organisations'
45 good work, or consisted of appeals for assistance, be that in the form of financial
46 assistance, other kinds of donations, or in terms of volunteers. So we learned, for
47 example, of a forthcoming foodbank in Inverkeithing, Fife; of sign language courses
48 in Inverclyde; and of a Glasgow dog charity's need for old towels and bedding to
49 keep the dogs in its care "cosy" during the winter months.
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3 A number of retweets related to local **business and economic development**. These
4 ranged from a small crafts shop in South Lanarkshire offering discount on its unsold
5 Christmas stock, to wider plans to develop the Scotch whisky industry in Speyside.
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7 The MSPs also retweeted posts relating to local **employment opportunities**, in the
8 private, public and third sectors. These jobs ranged from a pastry chef in a Fife hotel,
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10 to a welfare rights adviser in a Citizens Advice Bureau in the Northern Isles. And a
11 number of the retweets related to controversial local **planning applications**, where
12 the proposed developments were to be built on greenbelt land and other
13 environmentally sensitive areas, or where developments might result in the
14 demolition of old or historically significant buildings. These included the Caltongate
15 scheme – a mixed development of hotels, office blocks, shops and housing to be
16 built in the heart of Edinburgh’s Old Town:
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30 Green Cllr @nigelbagshaw opposed but #Caltongate APPROVED. Big split in the
31 decision of the committee, with 8 for and 6 against.” (Originally sent by Edinburgh
32 Greens; retweeted by Alison Johnstone, Greens, Lothian)
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38 Finally, with regard to the Secondary Broadcast posts, the MSPs retweeted what
39 might broadly be termed **human interest stories**, usually from local newspapers.
40 These appeared to be designed to instil a ‘feelgood factor’ amongst their readers. For
41 example, we learned of a 15 year old Dundee schoolboy who had just published his
42 first novel; and of a Port Glasgow teenager, who had been born prematurely, but who
43 was now making her way in the British Army. Such stories often appeared to have
44 something of a subtext, which involved the promotion of local public services; in the
45 cases above, these were local public libraries and hospitals, respectively.
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56 Overall, then, the 741 constituency-related Secondary Broadcast posts saw the
57 MSPs acting as both a promoter of local community interests and as a conduit for
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3 information on local policy issues and events. Yet, these paled into insignificance
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5 when considering the other Secondary Broadcast posts ($n = 6,124$) sent by the
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7 MSPs during the course of the four weeks. As this study's focus was on constituency
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9 interests, the specific content of these posts has not been quantified. What can be
10
11 said, however, is that the vast majority related to the forthcoming independence
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13 referendum, with MSPs retweeting posts from both sides of the Yes/No debate; or to
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15 *national* policy issues, such as health, education, or the wider, Scottish economic
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17 situation.

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21 When considering engagement and dialogue on the MSPs' Twitter accounts, two-
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23 way exchanges, relating specifically to local constituency issues and clearly involving
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25 local constituents, were rare, consisting of only a handful of cases. For example,
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27 Margaret McCulloch, a Labour SNP for Central Scotland, had an eight-post
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29 exchange with a constituent concerning the proposed rollout of fibre broadband in his
30
31 neighbourhood; while Malcolm Chisholm, the Labour MSP for Edinburgh Northern &
32
33 Leith, entered into a four-way discussion, involving two constituents and a local
34
35 councillor, over local refuse collections. There was also some evidence, albeit
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37 minimal, of constituents being invited by their MSP to submit a fuller request for
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39 information or assistance by email. For example, Nicola Sturgeon, the SNP MSP for
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41 Glasgow Southside (and now Scotland's First Minister) invited two constituents to
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43 follow this course of action in response to their queries about dog fouling and
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45 business water charges, respectively.

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49 This apparent reluctance amongst MSPs to publicly respond online to questions from
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51 constituents was reinforced when we conducted a small enquiry responsiveness test
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53 as part of the study, using an element of covert research. Whilst unobtrusive, covert
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55 research has occasionally been used by others in their studies of political actors'
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57 online communication (e.g. Stromer-Galley, 2000; Bowers-Brown and Gunter, 2002;
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3 Vaccari, 2012), it has formed a staple element of the current authors' previous work
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5 in this field, where political parties and candidates have been sent questions on key
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7 campaign and policy issues in order to measure the speed and the extent of their
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9 responses (see Baxter and Marcella (2013b) for an overview of this previous
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11 research). With this approach, the researchers, although using their real names,
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13 have created special email and social media accounts, to disguise the fact that they
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15 are academics; and have given no indication of their geographic location, to conceal
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17 the fact that they may not be based in the politicians' potential parliamentary
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19 constituencies. Such an approach, we would argue, is essential in order to ensure
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21 that the political actors' behaviour, in terms of responding to enquiries from the
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23 electorate, remains normal and consistent. The use of covert research does, of
24
25 course, raise some interesting ethical questions, particularly in relation to the need to
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27 obtain informed consent from participants. It should be emphasised here that
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29 approval has been obtained from our host university's research ethics committee
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31 before undertaking such work; and, in so doing, we have cited the ethical guidelines
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33 of international research bodies that question the need for informed consent when
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35 studying elected public officials or those seeking election to public office (e.g. United
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37 States Department of Health and Human Services, 2009).
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41 The enquiry responsiveness element of the present study was small, focusing on a
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43 single issue: controversial plans to broadcast the demolition of five blocks of flats (the
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45 Red Road flats) in Glasgow, as part of the opening ceremony of the 2014
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47 Commonwealth Games. This, it was claimed, would act as a "bold and dramatic
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49 statement of intent from a city focused on regeneration and a positive future for its
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51 people" (Ferguson, 2014). Following considerable public outrage at these plans,
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53 which were regarded as undignified and insensitive to the former residents of the
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55 flats (and to a group of asylum seekers being housed in the one block of flats that
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57 was to remain standing), the organisers decided against the ceremonial demolition,
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3 citing “safety and security” concerns (Brown, 2014). Two days after this U-turn, the
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5 current authors, posing as a Glasgow resident, sent the following question directly to
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7 the seven Glasgow MSPs who were on Twitter: ‘Was safety the real reason for the
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9 Red Road u-turn?’. Not a single acknowledgement or response was received to this
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11 question. This was broadly in line with our previous studies of parliamentary
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13 candidates’ responsiveness on Twitter, which has left something to be desired.
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18 As was noted earlier, the reasons for elected representatives being so reluctant to
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20 publicly address ‘difficult’ questions online are unclear. However, one clue may lie in
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22 a sequence of tweets sent in January 2014 by Kezia Dugdale, a Labour MSP for
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24 Lothian. As a parliamentary candidate in 2011, Dugdale was not a particularly prolific
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26 Twitter user, sending just 75 tweets over four weeks. She did, however, appear keen
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28 to reply to any direct questions or criticisms from her 1,600 Twitter followers at the
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30 time. By the beginning of 2014, she had become a relatively high-profile figure in the
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32 Scottish political scene, with over 6,000 Twitter followers [8], and she continued to
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34 engage in two-way dialogue online. On 6 January 2014, though, Dugdale sent a
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36 tweet suggesting that she was struggling to manage the volume of direct tweets she
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38 was receiving:
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42 ‘Went on a phone call and came off to 40+ twitter notifications. Sorry folks cant
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44 keep up tonight - other stuff to do. Genuine [sic] qs? Email me’
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48 Then, on 25 January 2014, she posted an image of an article from the *Daily Mail*
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50 newspaper, concerning the identities of a number of ‘Cybernats’, a term now
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52 commonly used to describe those Scottish nationalists whose online behaviour is
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54 perceived as aggressive and abusive:
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3 'Interesting feature in Daily Mail on cybernats - i've blocked at least 4 of those
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5 featured for relentless abuse'
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9 The next day, 26 January, Dugdale announced that she was no longer in a position
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11 to respond individually to tweets, adding that she felt sorry for those with genuine
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13 questions to ask:
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17 'Due to a barrage of twitter notifications, 600 + in the last few days, I can no longer
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19 read & respond. Feel sorry for folk with genuine Qs'
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23 From that point onwards, any two-way engagement between Dugdale and her Twitter
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25 followers effectively ended. It would appear, then, that for some of the more high-
26
27 profile MSPs at least, the sheer volume, or the abusiveness, of the posts received
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29 deters them from entering into public, online dialogue.
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32 33 **Conclusions and further research**

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35 This paper has examined the use of Twitter by MSPs during a four-week period in
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37 early 2014: a period that might normally be regarded as 'peacetime', but which also
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39 occurred during the Scottish independence referendum 'long campaign'. The study
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41 discussed here sought to explore MSPs' Twitter use from a constituency service
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43 perspective, and to establish if the nature and extent of their Twitter use differed from
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45 that identified when they were parliamentary candidates in 2011.
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49 Whilst MSPs had become more frequent users of Twitter since taking office, they
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51 now placed an even greater emphasis on the one-way broadcast of information to
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53 their online followers. Genuine, two-way engagement was less common than when
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55 they were vying for votes three years earlier.
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3 There was some evidence of the MSPs using Twitter to promote their constituency
4 surgeries and to respond to constituents' questions and concerns about local public
5 services, thereby partly fulfilling Searing's (1985) role of 'welfare officer'. There was
6 also evidence of MSPs acting as a conduit for information on local issues and events,
7 in line with Searing's (1985) role of 'local promoter' and Norton's (1994) 'promoter of
8 constituency interests'. However, such constituency-related posts formed only a
9 small minority (less than 9%) of the MSPs' overall Twitter traffic. Instead, their tweets
10 were dominated by the Scottish independence debate and by the wider, national,
11 political agenda. If, as Bradbury and Russell (2005) suggest, parliamentarians in
12 Scotland are more oriented to constituency work than those from other parts of the
13 UK, then this is not immediately evident from MSPs' Twitter feeds. It can also be said
14 that the use of Twitter envisaged by the Scottish Parliament's Standards, Procedures
15 and Public Appointments Committee (2012), as a way of MSPs communicating about
16 their work and engaging with their constituents, has not yet materialised, at least not
17 to any great extent.
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35 While examples of relatively intelligible constituency-related tweets are provided
36 throughout this paper, we do have to acknowledge the constraints of the character
37 limit of Twitter posts. Although Williamson and Phillips (2009, p. 4) advise politicians
38 that "abbreviating your message does not have to mean losing the meaning", there
39 are clear difficulties associated with providing meaningful local policy information and
40 commentary, or responding fully to constituency-related questions, in just 140
41 characters. With this in mind, the researchers are currently studying MSPs' use of
42 Facebook during the same four-week period in early 2014, in order to establish if its
43 greater freedom, in terms of word length, allowed them to discuss local constituency
44 issues more frequently and more fully.
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3 We also have to acknowledge the impact of the Scottish independence referendum
4 on the results presented here. Although the data was collected some seven months
5 before the referendum took place, the independence debate dominated proceedings
6 on Twitter. That the four weeks studied here fell within a proper 'peacetime' period
7 might, therefore, be open to question. With this in mind, the researchers aim to revisit
8 MSPs' use of Twitter for constituency-related purposes at some point after the 2016
9 Scottish Parliament elections, during a 'truer' peacetime period (although recent
10 developments (e.g., Peterkin, 2015) suggest that the independence discourse will be
11 prominent for the foreseeable future).

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23 The current authors also wish to undertake qualitative research with MSPs, and with
24 MPs in Scottish constituencies. This proposed research would: explore more fully
25 elected members' motivations for using Twitter and other social media; examine their
26 strategies for dealing with abusive online behaviour; and investigate if, how, and why,
27 their use of social media changes over time, particularly when moving from an
28 electoral campaign to a 'peacetime' situation. Crucially, in terms of this current paper,
29 the proposed research would also aim to establish if the elected members
30 themselves believe that social media are appropriate tools for providing some form of
31 constituency service.

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43 Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the current authors aim to explore the need for
44 online constituency-related information amongst Scottish constituents. Our analysis
45 of the social media posts of candidates during the 2011 Scottish Parliamentary
46 campaign has already been discussed above (Baxter and Marcella, 2013a). It should
47 also be noted, though, that a complementary voter information behaviour study,
48 conducted during the same campaign (Baxter *et al.*, 2013c), revealed a clear
49 dichotomy between the candidates' online information provision and the information
50 needs of their potential constituents. One of the key issues raised by participants was
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3 of a need for information relating specifically to local constituency issues. Yet such
4 information tended to be lacking, or proved difficult to find, amongst the candidates'
5 online offerings. With these points in mind, we aim to conduct a similar study, but in a
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9 'peacetime' period, with a view to establishing if members of the public express a
10 similar need for constituency-specific online information from their elected
11 representatives; and if they believe Twitter and other social media to be suitable
12 channels for the dissemination of such information.
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19 Notes

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21 1. For readers unfamiliar with the legislative situation in the United Kingdom,
22 dramatic constitutional changes in the late 1990s saw the devolution of some
23 legislative powers from the UK Parliament in Westminster, London, to three new
24 devolved bodies: the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales and
25 the Northern Ireland Assembly. The devolved matters on which the Scottish
26 Parliament can pass laws include: health; education; justice; police and fire
27 services; housing; local government; the environment; sport and the arts; social
28 work; agriculture; and many aspects of transport, including roads and buses.
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39 2. In British politics, elected members frequently hold 'surgeries' in their constituency
40 offices, or in other public buildings, where local people can come along to discuss
41 any issues or problems that concern them.
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48 3. Norris (2005) defines the long campaign in established democracies as "the year
49 or so before polling day". However, in the UK, the Electoral Commission (an
50 independent body which regulates elections and political party finances) has
51 recently introduced a formal 'long campaign' period in order to control candidate
52 spending. This tends to begin around three months before the date on which a
53 current parliament will be dissolved. For example, for the UK General Election held
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3 on 7 May 2015, the long campaign officially began on 18 December 2014, while
4 the dissolution of the previous UK Parliament took place on 30 March 2015
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6 (Electoral Commission, 2013). In this paper, we follow Norris's definition.
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11 4. The parliamentary careers of all three are now over. Swinson and Harris lost their
12 seats in the 2015 election; Joyce did not seek re-election in 2015. Harris and
13 Joyce had caused considerable controversy in recent years, for their online and
14 offline behaviour, respectively (e.g., Johnson, 2012; Holehouse, 2012).
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21 5. The Scottish Parliament consists of 73 constituency MSPs, elected through a first-
22 past-the-post system, and a further 56 regional MSPs, selected using a form of
23 proportional representation.
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29 6. Twitonomy (at <http://www.twitonomy.com>) is a commercial, subscription-based
30 software package which allows the user to capture all tweets sent by individual
31 Twitter users (up to Twitter's maximum of the last 3,200 tweets sent by each user),
32 or to search for, and capture, all tweets containing specific keywords or hashtags.
33 The captured tweets are presented in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Twitonomy
34 also includes an analytics feature which calculates, for example, average posts per
35 day, users most retweeted or replied to, hashtags most used, tweets most
36 retweeted or favourited, etc. This study did not use the analytics feature: the
37 Twitonomy package was used simply as a data capture device, to allow us to
38 conduct our own analyses of the MSPs' tweets.
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3 7. On 18 September 2014 the people of Scotland were asked the dichotomous Yes
4 or No question, "Should Scotland be an independent country?". The majority
5 (55.3%) voted against Scotland becoming independent.
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11 8. Dugdale has since become the Leader of the Scottish Labour Party, and, at
12 January 2016, had 24,100 Twitter followers.
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25 **References**

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Take in Appendix

For Peer Review

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Table 1: MSPs on Twitter at April 2014, by political party affiliation.

Political Party	No. of MSPs	No. on Twitter	% on Twitter
Scottish National Party (SNP)	65	55	85
Labour	38	33	87
Conservatives	15	9	60
Liberal Democrats	5	3	60
Scottish Greens	2	2	100
Independent or no affiliation	4	3	75
Totals	129	105	81

Table 2.: MSPs' Twitter activity, 6 January to 2 February 2014 (n = 10,411), and number of followers at 30 April 2014.

Political party (and number of MSPs on Twitter)	No. of tweets sent, 6 January to 2 February 2014			No. of followers on Twitter at 30 April 2014		
	Min.	Max.	Ave.	Min.	Max.	Ave.
Scottish National Party (55)	0	564	110	264	58,186	5,214
Labour (33)	0	540	78	106	6,858	1,965
Conservatives (9)	0	184	59	169	6,694	1,898
Liberal Democrats (3)	0	61	28	1,381	4,360	3,009
Scottish Greens (2)	76	249	163	3,320	13,672	8,496
Independent and unaffiliated (3)	0	795	282	2,195	4,001	3,051
All parties (105)	0	795	99	106	58,186	3,833
	Median = 60			Median = 2,350		

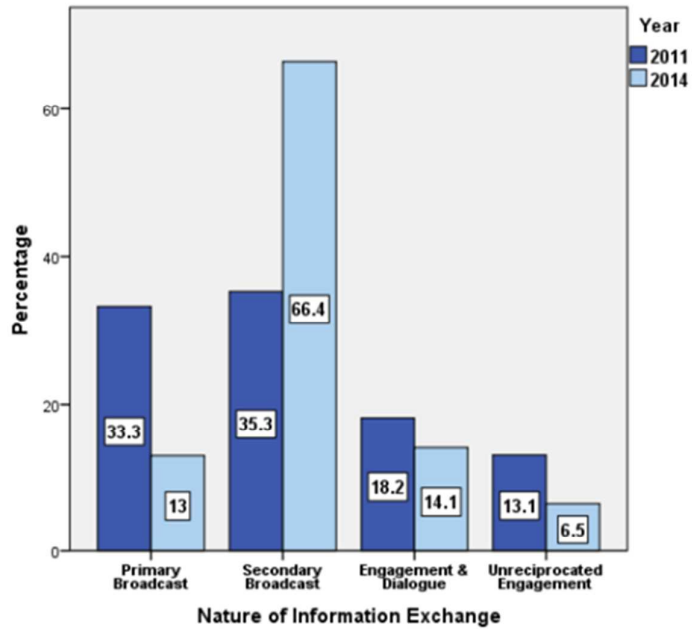


Figure 1: Nature of MSPs' information exchange on Twitter: comparison with 2011 candidacies ($n = 42$).

Appendix

Content analysis of MSPs' tweets, 6 January to 2 February 2014		
Type of Tweet	No.	%
Primary Broadcast: comment and opinion		
On parliamentary business/procedures	121	1.2
On personal, official activities/events	366	3.5
On local constituency business and policy issues	122	1.2
On national policy issues	110	1.1
On Scottish independence referendum debate/issues	179	1.7
On local political opponents	3	0.1
On national political opponents	133	1.3
On own party leaders/figures	101	1.0
On press/media coverage of political issues	33	0.3
On other political/current affairs issues	99	1.0
On non-political events (sport, popular culture, etc.)	128	1.2
On personal/domestic/family activities	141	1.4
Total Primary Broadcast	1,536	14.8
Secondary Broadcast: links and feeds		
To MSP's other sites	348	3.3
From MSP's other sites	215	2.1
To party sites	90	0.9
To 'official' Yes/No campaign sites (i.e. Yes Scotland and Better Together)	19	0.2
To other political/news sites – constituency related	199	1.9
To other political/news sites – other	741	7.1
To non-political/news sites – constituency related	6	0.1

To non-political/news sites – other	62	0.6
Secondary Broadcast: retweets		
Of others' comments – constituency related	232	2.2
Of others' comments – other	2,112	20.3
Of others' links – constituency related	304	2.9
Of others' links – other	2,537	24.4
Total Secondary Broadcast	6,865	65.9
Engagement and Dialogue: responses and replies		
To personal attacks	73	0.7
To attacks on party	60	0.6
To general political/policy comments	323	3.1
To personally supportive comments and pleasantries	440	4.2
To direct questions	427	4.1
Total Engagement and Dialogue	1,323	12.7
Unreciprocated Engagement: responses to 'non-personal' tweets	680	6.5
Total Unreciprocated Engagement	680	6.5
Others (Tests, errors, etc.)	7	0.1
Total number of tweets	10,411	100

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