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The Internet and the electoral communication



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Quaderns del CAC is a journal dedicated to analyze the big topics about audiovisual communication policies, and in general, the contemporary audiovisual culture. Edited by the Consell Audiovisual de Catalunya, the journal intends to be a meeting point to discuss about the audiovisual from a Catalan perspective with international vocation.

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Introduction

A new chapter

Ever faithful to its desire to encourage critical analysis and debate concerning culture and audiovisual media in today's world, **Quaderns del CAC** has started to renovate its format and content, culminating in the first edition of 2010. Gradual changes have been made throughout 2009 with a new design and format, as well as a renewed editorial board and international advisory board made up of experts, researchers and professionals of great prestige in their respective areas.

The journal's founding goals continue to apply and these changes are aimed at enhancing the quality of the research published and its dissemination. On the one hand, such aims result in an approach to the field of communication and audiovisual culture from different disciplinary perspectives (social, political, legal, economic, humanistic and technological) and, on the other hand, a call for particular attention to be paid, within the context of European and international investigation, to research closer to the Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya's own areas of competence (in geographical and thematic terms). The journal will continue to be published online in Catalan, Spanish and English and will also publish an offline version in Catalan.

In this new chapter, the journal will include a guest article to start each issue; the "Monographic theme" section remains and the "Observatory" section will be extended with articles from high quality research by academic and professional centres and groups. The "Observatory" articles will be subject to a blind review procedure.

Quaderns del CAC therefore invites audiovisual researchers to submit and publish their research findings in this section of the journal.

Issue 33

Electoral processes are undergoing significant transformations due to the impact of new information and communication technologies and especially the Internet. Access to and control of the screen, which is shifting from being a transmitter of images and messages to an increasingly more active and interactive interface in the Web 2.0 era, are the object of renewed interest both in terms of political and communicative action and also in terms of research.

In its 33rd edition, **Quaderns del CAC** has dedicated its "Monographic theme" to "The Internet and electoral communication". The aim is to present a state of affairs concerning the new forms and practices of communication via the Internet in election campaigns. It is interesting to examine and evaluate the new uses and trends detected in the behaviour of the three main actors of online electoral communication: parties and candidates; the media; and citizens and social movements.

A first block of three articles deals with the general state of affairs. **Eva Anduiza** reviews the literature specialising in the Internet and how it affects electoral processes and campaign planning ("The Internet, election campaigns and citizens: state of affairs"). **Teresa Turiera-Puigbò** examines how the emergence of the Internet and its growing use have led to drastic changes in how politics is communicated and "consumed" ("How is Internet use changing the way in which politics is carried out and communicated?"). **Maria del Carmen Echazarreta** and **Sílvia Lloveras** claim that the emergence of Web 2.0 has transformed the uses and strategies of political communication to the extent of now being able to speak of "Politics 2.0" ("Politics 2.0 with the Nintendo generation").

The next two collaborations analyse in detail the new contributions made by Obama's recent campaign. **M. Dolores Montero** studies and compares how citizens were mobilised via the Internet by Ségolène Royal in France and how this mobilisation was further enhanced by Obama a year later ("Political e-mobilisation and participation in the election campaigns of Ségolène Royal (2007) and Barack Obama (2008)"). **Pere-Oriol Costa** provides an in-depth investigation of Obama's online electoral strategy and claims that it might change campaigning forever ("Barack Obama's use of the Internet is transforming political communication").

The next two articles focus their attention on the role of political communication blogs in recent campaigns in Spain. In the general elections of 2008, **Guillermo López García** and **Tiscar Lara** study and compare the network of citizen and journalist blogs ("Weblogs and electoral processes: the Spanish political blogosphere with regard to the 2008 general elections"), while **Félix Redondo** is interested in how political leaders in Galicia used and managed their own blogs in the campaign ("The 2009 Galician elections through political leaders' blogs").

The last three monograph contributions correspond to research carried out in three countries with notable differences in terms of Internet penetration: Norway (high), Greece (medium) and the Philippines (low). **Øyvind Kalnes** deals with the process and degree of adaptation of Norway's political parties to the emergence of Web 2.0, especially in the local elections of 2007 and the 2009 national elections ("E-ruptions in Party Politics? The case of Web 2.0 and Norwegian Parties"). **Kostas Zafiropoulos** and **Vasiliki Vrana** studies how blogs helped to generate political debate concerning two important political events in 2007 and 2008 in relation to the election of the president of the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) and the subsequent forced resignation of the parliamentary spokesperson ("The impact of political events on blog conversational patterns: two cases from Greece"). And **Kavita Karan**, **Jacques D.M. Gimeno** and **Edson Tandoc, JR** investigate how, within a context of little Internet penetration (the Philippines), two civic movements, the Gabriela Women's Party and Bayan Muna (People First), won two parliamentary seats each in 2007 ("Grassroots Organizations Go Online: The Case of Party-List Winners and New Media Technologies in the 2007 Philippines Elections").

Finally, in the "Observatory" section, we have published four articles on Catalan communication research. **Dolors Comas d'Argemir** presents the findings of the report produced by the Consell Audiovisual de Catalunya on the presence and visibility of women in the news programmes of six Catalan television channels in the last quarter of 2008 ("Women on TV news programmes"). **Fabiola Alcalà**, **Salvador Alsius** and **Francesc Salgado** advance some initial findings from a survey among journalists concerning the use of images of dead people in the media ("The use of images of dead people on television and other media. The opinion of the journalists of Catalonia"). **Margarita Rivière** summarises the conclusions from her doctoral thesis on the media construction of fame ("Fame, the media and public opinion"). And **Sílvia Espinosa** also provides some of the findings from her doctoral thesis on the history of women's contribution to Catalan radio ("The first radio presenters in Catalonia, from the invention's beginning to the early days of Franco's regime").

Josep Gifreu
Director

The Internet, election campaigns and citizens: state of affairs

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Abstract

This article reviews how, according to current research, the Internet is affecting electoral processes and, in particular, the development and consequences of campaigns. The main conclusions of this review of the literature state that there is a significant distance between the potential offered by this new medium, both to parties and citizens, and how it is actually used by everyone concerned. Political parties use the Internet as a communication tool that complements but in no way replaces offline activities. Citizens still put their faith in traditional media as their main sources of information on elections. Citizens that look for information online in Spain are a minority that concentrates socio-economic resources, technological skills and political motivations. The effects of Internet use on knowledge, the implementation of policies and participation, attitudes and behaviour are not negative although they are moderate.

Key words

Internet, Electoral campaigns, citizenship, participation, politics.

Resum

Aquest article repassa com Internet està afectant els processos electorals i, en particular, el desenvolupament i les conseqüències de les campanyes segons la investigació existent. Les principals conclusions d'aquesta revisió de la literatura apunten que existeix una distància important entre les potencialitats que aquest nou mitjà ofereix tant a partits com a ciutadans i la realitat dels usos que tots dos en fan. Els partits utilitzen Internet com a eina de comunicació que complementa, però en cap cas substitueix, les activitats offline. Els ciutadans encara confien en els mitjans tradicionals com a principals fonts d'informació sobre les eleccions. Els ciutadans que busquen informació en línia a Espanya són una minoria que concentra recursos socioeconòmics, habilitats tecnològiques i motivacions polítiques. Els efectes de l'ús d'Internet sobre el coneixement, la implicació política i la participació, les actituds i els comportaments no són negatius, tot i que sí modestos.

Paraules clau

Internet, campanyes electorals, ciutadania, participació, política.

The expectations regarding the changes that the Internet might make in politics in general have varied from the most inflated utopias (easily accessible plural information, unprecedented communicative and organisational capacity, low-cost participation especially among some sectors that do not tend to get involved in politics, such as young people, re-balancing and decentralisation of the distribution of power) to more pessimistic scenarios (information overload, hyper-fragmentation, territorialisation and polarisation of society, reduction in social capital and the risk of techno-elitism and populism).

As is well known, the Internet is different from the traditional media because it allows the rapid circulation of a large volume of information controlled by users, the possibility to aim this information at specific receivers or narrowcasting, decentralised control and interaction (Abramson, Arterton and Orren 1988). Without doubt, electoral processes are expected to be one of the areas affected by its emergence and growing use in

society. One of the first studies on this question, along optimistic lines (Corrado and Firestone 1997), predicted four possible consequences of the new medium on the electoral process: stronger links between citizens and candidates, improved political information for voters, greater accessibility and visibility of candidates with fewer resources in the political process and more voter alternatives and civic participation.

Empirical analyses in this area, which have multiplied over the last few years but still have few data, have therefore had to tackle very different questions: how have parties adapted to the new medium? Have they changed their campaign strategies? Can people at the grassroots participate more in this and control their leaders and candidates better through the Internet? What are the electoral consequences of online campaigns and, in particular, of the so-called Web 2.0? To what extent does Internet use favour access to political information for citizens? Can Internet use increase electoral participation

and political involvement in general, in particular among those sectors who usually participate less?

The findings from the first empirical studies on this area were more prosaic than the original expectations. Parties, candidates and voters use the Internet to varying degrees and for different purposes but this use does not seem to radically alter the essential characteristics of the electoral process, neither in terms of parties and their campaign strategy or citizens and their attitudes and behaviour (Bimber 2001) (Bimber and Davis 2003) (Gibson, Ward and Lusoli 2003). The scenario was far from realising the potential offered by the Internet.

This summary may be a touch disappointing for those expecting a good headline about how the Internet has revolutionised political communication. In comparison, for example, with the area of social (Donk 2004), institutional and representational movements, the changes that the Internet might be able to introduce into our democracies are more tentative. Notwithstanding this, the debate is far from over. The Internet and its political uses are evolving and changing at great speed and there is hardly enough time to analyse many of the issues proposed with sufficient perspective. More recent studies highlight changes that, although not revolutionary, are significant (Gibson and Römmele 2008) (Norris 2003) (Mossberger, Tolbert and McNeal 2007). Below we will present some of the main conclusions of the international literature on the Internet's impact on election campaigns. We will frame this discussion within the more general academic debate concerning election campaigns and will distinguish two quite different questions: how are campaigns carried out and what are the effects on voters?

1. Postmodern campaigns and the online era

The literature has distinguished between at least three stages in the historical development of election campaigns (Norris 2000): pre-modern campaign (up to 1950, based on parties' local organisations and on face-to-face contact), modern campaigns (between 1950 and 1990, based on the mass media and particularly television) and "Americanised" campaigns, professionalised and postmodern (as from 1990). The latter are characterised by a greater degree of personalisation and professionalism and by the increased application of marketing techniques aimed at specific groups of voters or targeting.

The first Internet applications in election campaigns appear in this third stage, within a context where television continues to play a central role both in party strategy and for citizens. The Internet is seen by some as a chance to establish direct contact with parties and candidates with voters without the mediation of journalists. It is also considered to be the ideal medium to apply micro-targeting strategies, aiming messages at specific sections of society. And, of course, it can encourage greater grassroots involvement in the campaign and, in general, in the internal life of the party (Chadwick 2006).

The Internet complements but does not alter parties' campaign strategies

In none of these three aspects does reality seem to match up with the more optimistic expectations. Television, press and radio continue to be the main media through which citizens follow election campaigns and get their information. Moreover, most citizens who use the Internet to get political information do so by accessing sites of the traditional media. According to the post-election survey by CIS, more than 80% of the citizens who followed the 2008 election campaign online did so through the sites of newspapers and other traditional media (study 2757 of the CIS). Although the content is not exactly the same (the online versions of the press, radio and TV channels are more interactive and include access to other content such as blogs, multimedia applications, etc.), this evidence indicates that the availability of information does not reduce but possibly increases the need for the guidance provided by the traditional media. These still have a significant presence both offline and online and consequently parties focus their attention more on these media than at citizens.

On the other hand, spamming or the indiscriminate sending of emails is not usually employed by parties due to the fear of it being counterproductive. The sending of messages produced to be sent to specific groups doesn't seem customary either, at least in European campaigns (Karlsen 2007).

The first applications of the Internet made by political parties consisted basically of static websites with content such as photos and biographies of the candidates, electoral programmes, press releases and agendas (for a summary see Gibson, Ward and Lusoli [2003]). These were largely "electronic leaflets" focusing especially on giving information. There are no significant areas for interaction, perceived as more of a risk in terms of controlling strategy by the parties than as an opportunity for grassroots participation. In any case, the Internet is used by parties to accelerate their communicative capacity, passing on their offline message without losing control of it and not to develop all the participative potential. Internal debate and discussion may highlight internal differences and conflicts that parties are not prepared to tackle (Vaccari 2008).

According to some, the outcome is simply "*politics as usual*" (Margolis and Resnick 2000). However, it's important to point out that there are significant differences between countries and parties in the use made of the Internet. Contextual and organisational factors, different for each party and each campaign, affect the intensity and manner in which parties incorporate new technologies into their election strategies and campaigns. Aspects such as the degree of political decentralisation, the electoral system, ideology, the organisations' resources, the competitiveness of the contest, the candidates' characteristics and other contextual incentives, such as the degree of penetration of the Internet are essential and must be taken into account (Cunha *et al.* 2003) (Gibson and McAllister 2006). In general, candidates use those websites more intensively where the electoral political system places them, and not parties, in

the centre of the competition, as happens in the US or, to a lesser degree, in Finland and France (Karlsen 2007) (Carlson and Strandberg 2005) (Vedel 2006).

The appearance of Web 2.0 and the development of online party activism

A change started to be perceived towards the middle of the first decade of the new century: parties started to take their online campaign more seriously than just creative websites, in part possibly due to the significant rise in Internet penetration levels.

Some campaign advisors draw comparisons between business and politics, according to which the Internet's potential to transform lies more in its dimension as an organisational tool aimed at followers and activists than in its communicative dimension aimed at floating voters (Vaccari 2008a). Howard Dean's 2004 campaign is considered to be the first where Internet use constitutes a fundamental change from the point of view of attracting and creating a network of committees to support the campaign (Hindman 2005). Almost all research agrees that parties use the Internet not to convince floating voters but fundamentally to mobilise activists already predisposed to vote for them, reinforcing their opinions, raising funds and taking voters to the poll stations on the day of the election (Karlsen 2007) (Bimber and Davis 2003) (Vedel and Cann 2008).

Within this context appears the so-called Web 2.0, which refers to a series of online applications whose content is defined by users (blogs, social networks, file-sharing websites). According to Gibson and Römmele (2008), Web 2.0 entails four fundamental changes for political communication: a) going from a 'one to many' model of message distribution to one of 'many to many'; b) the growing need, given the rising volume of information online, for aggregator or information 'broker' services; c) the production of political content that can be distributed via very different media, and d) the extension of bottom-up communication channels.

Receivers of messages in election campaigns have, in turn, become potential transmitters via multiple channels: online social networks but also face to face contact. Barack Obama's campaign intensively used online applications aimed at encouraging their followers to take part in the campaign (*my.barackobama.com*) and to raise funds during the very long primary process. This example cannot be extrapolated to European countries with much lower Internet penetration rates, more hermetic parties with more developed and stable organisations, political cultures with less customary participation in campaigns and with intense regulation both of their funding and data protection. But we can see significant changes in Europe as well, which Vedel and Cann have summarised with the expression "*des sites webs à l'activation par les réseaux*" in analysing the French presidential elections of 2007 (Vedel and Cann 2008). On the one hand, parties try to use website interrelations so that users inevitably come into

contact with the candidate's messages or arguments. On the candidate's official website there are links to other supportive sites of interest, those of local sections or committees and independent but sympathetic sites and blogs (blogospheres). On the other hand, the organisation is provided with online activism, proposing to followers, whether members or not, different activities depending on their interests and availability (taking part in online surveys, discussion forums, blogs or chats, everyday control of certain sites, giving advice, animations, etc.). It's a question of selectively activating those who, in turn, can mobilise other voters. It seems that parties have realised the Internet's capacity to spread messages (*virality*) and the possibility of getting a lot of people to collaborate, taking on very small levels of responsibility (*granularity*) (Chadwick 2008).

In general, however, the campaign strategy model continues to be top-down. Control of citizens collaborating in the campaign continues to be firm and centralised. In the words of one of Obama's advisors "you need to make sure that those people are making their numbers" (Vaccari 2009). In any case, we might talk of the integration of some hierarchical and participative aspects in which strategy and not technology continues to be the fundamental key and where online communication in no way replaces traditional activities such as press relations, fundraising or meetings. What does seem to be relatively clear is that "those who aim to influence public debate and attitudes will need to enter social networks developing around the new collective spaces that users, particularly young people, inhabit" (Gibson and Römmele 2008, 488), so that the mobilisation of activities is expected to be even more important in the future.

In general, the literature that tackles online campaigns has been limited to a few countries (essentially the United States and United Kingdom) and has restricted itself to looking at party and candidate websites, ignoring other possibly relevant actors in campaigns (Lusoli 2005). Only incipiently do we find systematic studies of the consumption of electoral content and we can therefore only start to analyse the consequences of online campaigns.

2. The consequences of online campaigns and the political uses of the Internet

In general, the existing studies on new media and elections have focused more on aspects of content than on the effects of online campaigns. Academic discussion regarding the importance or effects of election campaigns has a long tradition. Since the work by Lazarsfeld and his team in the 1940s (Lazarsfeld 1948), the prevalent position within political science has been that campaigns do not have a great effect on converting citizen preferences but usually reinforce previously existing predispositions, something which, on the other hand, can be decisive for the electoral outcome when it's highly com-

petitive. In spite of the erosion of party loyalties and the increase in floating voters, this argument has not varied substantially in the last comparative contributions to the issue (Farrell and Schmit-Beck 2002). We are therefore talking, in any case, of "minimal effects", although some indirect effects may be produced (such as those of *framing*).

An analysis of the consequences of online campaigns and the political uses of the Internet suffer from the same methodological difficulties as an analysis of the effects of campaigns. It's not easy to estimate to what extent the vote given depends on what happens in a campaign (and not on predispositions), neither is it easy to know to what extent the Internet (and nothing else) affects our way of thinking and acting. Firstly, we will talk about the possible *direct effects* on attitude and behaviour: the following of political information, political knowledge, political engagement, participation and election results. Secondly we will talk about *conditioned effects*, i.e. who is most affected by online campaigns and the political uses of the Internet, distinguishing three debates based on the literature: mobilisation vs. reinforcement, information vs. involvement and equalling vs. standardisation.

Information, engagement, participation: weak but positive effects

What are the consequence of the emergence and use of the Internet by citizens regarding their electoral behaviour? How many follow the campaign online? Are those who follow political information via the Internet more informed? Do they achieve greater levels of political effectiveness (the perception that they may influence what is decided)? Do they vote more? Do they orient their vote in a significantly different way to those who do not get their information from the Internet? Does an online campaign have any consequences for the election result? In short, what capacity do parties have to reconnect with voters via the Internet?

Firstly, we should ask how many people use the Internet for political purposes during election campaigns. According to CIS data,¹ in Spain only 10% of the electorate looked for information on the elections during the general campaign of 2008, of which only 20% visited party or candidate websites and a similar percentage blogs or debate forums. While only approximately 3% of voters followed the 2008 campaign via the Internet on a daily basis, a much higher percentage did so via the radio (20%), press (24%) and television (50%).

In France, 44% of Internet users declared in 2007 that they had looked for political information online, 26% had visited a candidate's website, 19% had seen political videos and 18% had consulted political blogs (Vedel and Cann, 2008). In Norway, a little less than half the population looked for information on the election in 2005 on the Internet, although only 13% visited a party website (Karlsen, 2007). According to the Pew report² on the 2008 presidential election, 46% of North Americans used the Internet, email or text messages to get information on the campaign, compare their points of view or

mobilise other people. 35% mentioned having looked at political videos online and 10% having taken part in social networks such as Facebook or MySpace to get information or become involved. In a comparative study of European elections in 2004, Lusoli (2005) places the use of the Internet as a source of information between 4% in Greece and 14% in Finland, with Spain close to the rest of the countries in southern Europe (around 6%).

We therefore have a certain variation in the extent to which the Internet is used to follow election campaigns but in any case we know that it is a secondary medium with respect to traditional media and that Spain is not precisely in the top rankings with regard to online campaign tracking.³

In which direction might this albeit still limited use influence citizens' information and knowledge of politics be moving? Some authors note that this improved accessibility to information, contact and mobilising stimuli can work in their favour. Others note that the excessive speed and simplicity of content available online, together with the greater importance of image over text and the possible information overload of content of doubtful quality, meant that the capacity to transmit information is much below its use (Graber 1996). Empirical analyses point out that exposure to websites with electoral and political content modestly increase knowledge (Delli Carpini and Keeter 2002) (Anduiza, Gallec and Jorba 2009) (Grönlund 2007). The effects on knowledge can be greater in elections with less intense campaigns and among voters who are less proactive in searching for information (Bimber and Davis 2003).

Looking for political information on the Internet requires a more proactive attitude than with other traditional media, such as television; it allows direct contact with representatives and politicians and offers online ways to participate in politics. For the more optimistic, this can encourage the political involvement of citizens; increase interest in public affairs, the capacity to situate themselves, the perception that they can have an effect (political efficacy) and consequently encourage participation. From other perspectives, this potential, if not realised, can lead to frustration and therefore disaffection. Various studies have found small significant effects of exposure to a campaign online concerning these aspects (Xenos and Moy 2007) (Kenski and Stroud 2006) (Cantijoch, Jorba and San Martín 2008) (Tolbert and McNeal 2003) (Mossberger, Tolbert and McNeal 2007).

Notwithstanding this, these studies are based on data from surveys with a cross-sectional design that have a limited capacity to estimate causal relations, such as the possible affect of the consumption of news online on attitudes and behaviour. Other studies apply more sophisticated designs. For example, Jennings and Zeitner (2003) analyse panel data that allow the conclusion that the political use of the Internet does not have, in itself, causal effects on variables such as knowledge, political efficacy, community work or conventional political involvement, taking into account prior levels of engagement. With an experimental design, other research (Kaid

2003) (Kaid and Postelnicu 2005) reach the conclusion that the channel by which political announcements are transmitted (television vs. Internet) has a certain importance, although not necessarily in the expected sense (exposure to television reduces political cynicism, while online media do not seem to have an effect).

Research into the effect of Internet use on voting behaviour is scarce. Some studies do not find any significant effect based on survey data (Anduiza, Cantijoch, Cristancho and Camilo, 2010) (Bimber and Davis, 2003), while other authors, using aggregate data, detect a certain impact on the part of candidate websites (not necessarily direct, given the low number of visits) on election results, taking other relevant factors into account (Gibson and McAllister, 2006) (Sudulich, 2009). Studies are still few and come up against the methodological difficulties already mentioned: it is very complicated to isolate the specific causal effect of Internet use and separate it from other possible causes related to the election campaign of the parties and candidates (resources, innovation), as well as it being difficult to estimate possible indirect effects (such as the effect of stimuli originating online but that are afterward passed on face to face).

Reinforcement, engagement, standardisation

These consequences that might come from the emergence of the Internet on attitudes and behaviour do not affect all citizens nor all parties in the same way. The discussion concerning who is more sensitive to the opportunities offered by the Internet can be summarised in the debate about the reinforcement-mobilisation dichotomy.

The perspective of reinforcement argues that it is those people who are normally involved in politics that use the Internet with political aims, to get information, mobilise or participate (Bimber 2001) (Norris 2003) (Margolis and Resnick 2000), and that, therefore, the political use of the Internet reinforces pre-existing political and social inequalities. Lusoli (2005) finds that the search for information via the Internet in Europe is closely related to different indicators of political engagement in campaigns and that socio-demographic factors have greater impact when attitudes towards the election are taken into account. Di Genaro and Dutton (2006) also find reinforcement effects in the British case.

This reinforcement is accentuated because Internet access is strongly conditioned by socio-economic resources and because online skills and familiarity with the Internet can, in turn, constitute a necessary resource for participation (Krueger 2002). In effect, age, education and income are variables that determine the probability of being an Internet user but not so much the probability of using it for political purposes (Anduiza, Cantijoch and Gallec 2008).

Within the perspective of reinforcement, we can situate the debate concerning to what extent media environments affect differences with regard to levels of political knowledge between groups of citizens (so-called *knowledge gaps*). The Internet is

an environment that's very rich in information, with great diversity of content and possibilities of choice that requires initiative on the part of voters to access political content. This kind of media can increase the differences political knowledge between people with the necessary resources and motivations to take advantage of online information and those who are not interested in politics and prefer to dedicate their time online to entertainment (Prior, 2005, 2007) (Delli Carpini and Keeter 2002). Audiences of traditional media such as television are much more susceptible to being exposed inadvertently to political information that might affect not only their knowledge but also their behaviour and their vote, whereas in an environment such as the Internet it is easier for individuals to select the kind of content they wish to be exposed to, eliminating what they are not interested in.

Also from the perspective of reinforcement we must situate the debate of information vs. engagement. Which citizens are more affected by the Internet: undecided users who are looking for information or predisposed people susceptible to becoming engaged? The answer seems to lean towards engagement: according to Bimber and Davis (2003), the Internet does not significantly affect floating voters but reinforces the predisposition of sympathisers. Party positions on this issue, reviewed in the previous section, are consistent with this idea.

Alternatively, the perspective of mobilisation argues that the Internet represents new opportunities to re-balance the distribution of political power. At an individual level, this means that the online world is an opportunity to take part politically, attractive for people reticent in doing so through traditional channels. This would be the case particularly of young people. And here, once again, it is useful to distinguish between access to the Internet, on the one hand, and the political uses made of it, on the other, as although age is clearly crucial in determining the probabilities of being an Internet user, this does not mean that young people are the most participative group among those with Internet access.

With regard to parties and candidates, the theory of re-balancing would mean that the Internet could help towards better election results for marginal candidates and parties with fewer resources and possibilities. The empirical evidence in fact points towards a possible balancing or equalising effect of the Internet, in recognising the comparative advantage it might have for small candidates. But the online sphere increasingly reflects the same inequalities as offline: those parties and candidates with more resources can also spend more online (Margolis and Resnick 2000) and maintain an advantage in terms of the sophistication and visibility of their websites (Gibson, Nixon and Ward 2003).

3. Conclusions

Any attempt at a conclusion regarding the possible consequences of a medium such as the Internet is necessarily risky.

Notwithstanding this, we can summarise a series of aspects concerning which it is possible to identify a certain consensus and reasonable certainty:

1. There is a significant distance between, on the one hand, the potential offered by this new medium both to parties and citizens and, on the other, the reality of the uses made of the Internet by both.
2. In no case is technology the determining factor in the changes occurring; it can accelerate or consolidate prior trends but other factors (organisational, political, institutional, attitudinal) are the crucial aspects that need to be taken into account.
3. Parties (and in those contexts where they are relevant, also candidates) have used the Internet as a communication tool that complements but in no way substitutes offline activities. More recently, in some cases they have also used it as a means of engaging 'cyber-volunteers' to pass on their message and in campaign activities. Although the Internet would make it possible, there has not been any change towards bottom-up campaigns nor have parties opened themselves up to grassroots participation. In the future, parties will have to evaluate the consequences that might be generated by the viral and granular nature of online participation among their activists.
4. Citizens still put their faith in traditional media as their main source of information. Those who look for information on campaigns online are still in the minority, a very small one in the case of Spain.
5. This is also a minority that concentrates socio-economic resources, technological skills and political motivations. As some authors have pointed out, the true digital divide is between citizens who are politically active and those who aren't.
6. The effects of Internet use on knowledge, political engagement and participation, attitudes and behaviour are not negative, as some not very optimistic approaches warned, although they are modest, in accordance with the size of the effects that specialist literature attributes to election campaigns.

Notes

- 1 <http://www.cis.es/cis/opencms/-Archivos/Marginales/2740_2759/2757/e275700.html> (consulted 14 June 2009).
- 2 <<http://www.pewInternet.org/Reports/2008/The-Internet-and-the-2008-Election.aspx>> (consulted 14 June 2009).
- 3 Neither do we have information on the use of some tools such as selectors of candidates and parties. Grönlund (2007) finds that up to 8% of voters consulted them in the Finnish elections of 2003, something that significantly affects their level of knowledge.

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How is Internet use changing the way in which politics is carried out and communicated?

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Abstract

The appearance of the Internet and its ever-increasing use worldwide as a tool for communication and relations between people has dramatically changed the way in which politics is communicated and "consumed". This article assesses the evolution of Internet use since its onset in terms of the political and social mobilisation it encourages and the opportunities it provides to change trends in involving civil society in active politics, especially in rising electoral participation at all levels.

Key words

Internet, Politics 2.0, e-citizens, netizens, social networks, virtual communities, political leadership, political parties, electoral participation, generation X, blogosphere, fundraising, e-volunteers

Resum

L'aparició d'Internet i l'ús cada vegada més extens de la xarxa com a eina i via de comunicació i de relació entre els ciutadans han canviat dràsticament els formats de comunicació i de "consum" de la política. Aquest article analitza l'evolució de l'ús de la xarxa des dels seus inicis, en termes de mobilització política i social, i les oportunitats que representa per canviar de tendència en la implicació de la societat civil en la política activa, i especialment en un augment de la participació electoral en tots els àmbits.

Paraules clau

Internet, política 2.0, e-ciutadans, netizens, xarxes socials, comunitats virtuals, lideratge polític, partits, participació electoral, generació X, blocosfera, fund-raising, e-voluntaris

Introduction

Political activity has evolved over the last 150 years basically in terms of three factors: forms of participation (from limited voting to universal suffrage), the quantity and variety of consultations and the progressive sophistication of the media, which has imposed a new pace and language, not only in election campaigns but in all forms of communicating political and social action and in the involvement of citizens to a greater or lesser degree in these actions.

The emergence of television in the sixties was a turning point in political campaigns, placing image at their core, and in the last few years the increasingly more widespread use of the Internet and all the applications deriving from it is starting to cause a shift not only in the form of election campaigns but also in the source of the message and how campaigns are handled and organised.

Internet has revealed new business models for companies, new ways of managing information, new formulas to relate governments and public administration with citizens and particularly new communication formats between transmitter and receiver. But it is yet to be seen whether all the possibilities offered by the Internet to obtain, debate, exchange and compare information, etc. will translate into a change in trend in involving civil society in active politics and especially in a rise in electoral participation in all spheres.

Trends in Internet use for political communication in the United States

What elements of a political campaign are losing validity or regaining importance thanks to Internet use? How is political and social activity being reinvented, as well as the communication of these actions?

The majority of examples shown in this work refer to political campaigns in the United States, the country where the Internet has become most quickly implemented among its citizens, where political marketing techniques are most developed and where the most extensive analysis has been possible of the repercussions of the Internet on the political mobilisation and participation of citizens.

Over all, the ease and speed of transmission of knowledge permitted by the Internet has spread Internet use and applications such as social networks for the political mobilisation of most countries with a minimum of infrastructures, even those where there is no full freedom of expression, as has recently been seen in countries such as China, Burma and Iran, these last mobilisations being to demand transparency in the election process. In all the cases, the key has been citizens' easy access to a large amount of information, the possibility to compare this information with many different sources and the chance to become, themselves, a means of communication and therefore to multiply as senders of the message, no longer

as passive receivers of a message constructed and controlled by established institutions.

History of Internet use in North American politics

- **1992** First campaign via email (Jerry Brown, Democrat primaries in California).
- **1993** First institutional website for a senator (Ted Kennedy).
- **1994** First debate between political candidates on an Internet chat (Minnesota).
- **1996** PoliticsOnline¹ is set up, the first political portal that collates information and allows simple comparisons between the proposals and campaigns of all candidates and parties. The Internet is truly beginning to be used in political campaigns: all candidates or parties now have their own website, although aesthetically these are not adapted to be read on screen.
- **1997** First political banner (Ted Mondale, Democrat primaries for Minnesota).
- **1998** First truly interactive website: a political outsider, boxer and candidate for governor of Minnesota, Jesse Ventura, with few economic resources, sends emails to thousands of potential voters, puts the address of his website on the election bus and on the traditional campaign posters, holds a chat to debate his proposals, etc. Jesse Ventura would never have won these elections if he hadn't carried out an Internet campaign. He was starting almost from scratch and managed to build up a list of close to 3,000 emails, garnered the support of 250 volunteers for his campaign and attracted votes from 150,000 people aged between 18 and 29, the age range that most used the Internet at that time.
- Also in 1998, Ed Garvey (candidate for Wisconsin) published the list of financial contributions he received on his website, as an example of transparency,² and the Democrat candidate for the Senate for California sold merchandising for his campaign via the Internet for the first time, apply to an election campaign the tools used in e-commerce, which were starting to be successful at that time.
- **1999** First town hall meeting (debate in which a politician answers questions from citizens and it is shown live on television) with the president Bill Clinton via the Internet.
- **1999-2000** Political campaigns make a qualitative leap in format and content. The adult population (possible voters) with access to the Internet in the United States has gone from 26 million in 1996 to 94 million in 2000. Website design is now much more adapted to the "digital eye": highly centred on the candidate, photographs, very short headlines, repetition of the candidate's name and a very specific message on all the website's pages, eye-catching colours, etc.

The Republican candidate John McCain marked a turning point. He started with a campaign outside the establishment and, in fact, took from Jesse Ventura the idea to create a web-

site that would encourage participation. He hired a 28-year-old consultant and started up an experiment that has led to a revolution in the planning and organisation of political campaigns.³ John McCain broke the record at that time for raising funds through the Internet. He raised half a million dollars through the Internet on a single day and 2 million dollars in one week. Moreover, the so-called webbing was organised, supporting McCain, with the role of amplifying the campaign through the Internet. In all, John McCain ended up withdrawing his campaign in the primaries for the Republican Party in favour of George W. Bush. Probably, the shock effect of using the Internet at that time had come too early. Curiously, eight years later in the presidential elections of 2008, McCain lost the electoral race against the Democrat candidate, Barack Obama, who was able to take advantage of the momentum provided by the great expansion of Internet use among the population, especially among younger voters, to make them the basis of his campaign.

Also in the 2000 elections, Bill Bradley, a former professional basketball player and Democrat candidate in the presidential race for New Jersey, turned his website into the driving force of his campaign. He raised a million dollars in small donations through the Internet and introduced elements of political mobilisation, such as downloadable kits to help organise all kinds of events to support his campaign. That same year, Al Gore ran the first viral video campaign.

The elements gradually introduced by political campaigns prioritise these interactive aspects, catching the attention of voters, boosting loyalty and personalisation, attracting voters to a specific cause rather than giving a large amount of information. All the information can be found at the lower surfing levels but the "front cover" or home page, which either "hooks" visitors or makes them leave immediately, is the key page.

At present, access to email lists and user profiles has also become a strategic element. In the 2002 primaries, the secretary of state for California, Bill Jones, who was up against candidates with more economic resources, bought from a company more than a million email addresses of potential voters and sent each one an "unsolicited" email to ask for their vote. This action saved a lot of money and, at the same time, started up a debate about the privacy of email addresses for use in election campaigns, which in the last few years has been subject to stricter regulation under the data protection laws.

Elements of political campaigns that are changing with Internet use

Fundraising

In the US, where almost all the funding of candidates, political parties and organisations comes from direct fundraising, the Internet has multiplied the amount and quality of donations. The option to donate money to a cause via the Internet means that the political impact caused by a specific event on poten-

tial voters can be immediately "translated" into money. For example, a good partial election result (in the primaries), a specific media action (having successfully appeared in an interview or election debate), etc. The record achieved by John McCain on the night of the primaries in New Hampshire (2000) is seen as historic, where he had a strong political drive and, in one week, raised 2.6 million dollars from 40,000 different donations through his website. At the end of the campaign, John McCain had raised 6 million dollars through the Internet alone. The same website asked those making donations to fill in a questionnaire, based on which the following data were extracted: 40% of those donating money through the website had never made a donation to a political campaign before; the profile of donors was workers aged between 30 and 45, of a middle or high buying power, most of whom were related to the Internet industry or new technologies; they donated an average of 100 dollars, while the economic contributions (small) received up to then by traditional parties, via bank cheques, were less than 50 dollars, and the profile of those donating was mostly pensioners.

Barack Obama marked the turning point in the funding of election campaigns: he refused to use the public funds that he was legally entitled to and opted for a fundraising strategy aimed not only at large fortunes but at small donors, ending up with more than 800 million dollars, and at the same time making donors feel they were participating (involving them) in the candidate's cause, no matter how small their donation.

Transparency

In the 2000 US elections, and especially in the prior process of the primaries, one of the key issues was the reform of political party funding in the US, and this happened partly because one of the candidates, the Republican George W. Bush, published on his website the donations he had received instead of waiting for the four-monthly report by the Federal Election Commission.⁴ George W. Bush not only published the contributions he received but also the names and surnames of the donors. This forced the rest of the candidates to offer the same information through their websites and has now become essential if the website in question wishes to overcome the "transparency parameters" imposed.⁵

David Weinberger, US philosopher and co-author of the *Cluetrain Manifesto*,⁶ recently said that "transparency is the new objectivity". This reflection refers to the fact that, in the Internet era, the so widely prized "objectivity" traditionally demanded of the mass media can now be found in lots of sources. The key is for these sources to be transparent. Consequently, this source of information, be it an institutional press office or a political party or the personal blog of a candidate or political commentator, must be transparent if it wishes to be respected in the blogosphere.

Attracting volunteers and e-volunteers

If the Internet beats the rest of the media it is particularly due

to its interactivity. And for political actors, this element has become the main means of attracting volunteers: involving visitors to the website in the candidate's cause, using the participation model used for some time now by NGOs. In the initial history we saw how candidates starting from scratch, like Jesse Ventura in Minnesota, managed to recruit the support of 250 volunteers through his website, or how, in 2000, John McCain created a chain of volunteers that sent emails to groups of friends or acquaintances asking for their vote, thereby multiplying his campaign. The local activist group *MoveOn.org*,⁷ set up in 1998 to pressurise against Bill Clinton being tried for the Lewinski case, raised 13 million dollars and got 500,000 signatures asking for a simple email from those visiting its website. On the part of the party or candidate, the management of this process is almost automatic and without organisation costs. On the part of the person agreeing to participate, it is much more "acceptable" to send emails or to work from home surfing the Internet looking for information than to stand at an underground exit giving out leaflets with the candidate's photo.

The mobilisation of volunteers and particularly e-volunteers has been a key element in Barack's campaign, both to be appointed candidate in the primaries of the Democrat Party as well as for the long election road to the Whitehouse. Obama managed to take advantage of the emergence of social networks to plan his grassroots campaign based on a veritable "army" of volunteers who were trained, connected and whose work was managed through the Internet. The website *My.BarackObama.com*⁸ was the meeting point and also the driving force that encouraged the participation of millions of volunteers from all the states, who in turn passed on Obama's message to their communities (universities, civic centres, local organisations, companies, groups of friends, etc.). The strategists for Obama's campaign not only used the available technology wisely (emails, text messages, messages on thousands of blogs, presence on all online social networks, etc.) but also, and this is the most important point, understood and accepted that these volunteers needed to be important, giving them as much margin and creative freedom as possible. Because, as pointed out by the political consultants J. Segarra and A. Terés,⁹ "a 2.0 campaign isn't one that tries to persuade potential voters but one that involves them".

Political propaganda on the Internet and the cost of election campaigns

Television audiences are becoming increasingly atomised by the proliferation of channels, while the younger generations now spend more time in front of the computer connected to the Internet than in front of the TV. Those responsible for political campaigns have gradually switched their propaganda towards the Internet. With the emergence of channels such as YouTube (with a widespread viral effect) and the proliferation of video content on the Internet, political propaganda has thrown itself into the Internet.

One advantage is that Internet advertising can be intelligent: ads for certain segments (women, elderly, young people, ethnic minorities, etc.) can be aimed at groups/portals or websites that are specifically interested in such issues. The Internet has also become fertile ground because video is becoming viral and has a massive audience. However, it is much more important in a political campaign to make a video that people talk about a lot on the Internet than to place it on strategic sites so that a lot of people can see it. If the message has impact, it will end up circulating around the Internet without exception. And a prize example of this is the television channel created on Barack Obama's own website,¹⁰ seen by an accumulated audience of 14.5 million hours up to election day. According to the calculations of Segarra and Terés, this figure equals an approximate cost of 50 million dollars in hired advertising.

The monopoly of parties as aggregators of social demands and a sounding box for public opinion

The proliferation of "windows" through which citizens can express their petitions, complaints, claims and mood on a specific issue, as well as these citizens' capacity to get mobilised, mean that parties are no longer the only reference to channel the demands of society.

Blogs of reference, social networks, virtual communities are taking over this role. In these areas, the objectivity of information is validated by the blogosphere itself. For example, if the author of a blog gives relevant, verified information in favour or against a certain political option or initiative, he or she will become influential. If the information by this author is not true or accurate enough, the same readers will make sure they discredit it and will no longer see it as an authority or influential. This same function is being taken over by groups of citizens interested in or concerned by a common cause, such as the state of the environment in a certain area or the wording of a new law on education. Communities in favour or against each of the possible options will provide information that is much more comprehensive and verified (and therefore more believable) to voters than the websites of parties, candidates or political institutions.

Will the Internet also alter the candidate profile from the one committed to the television era?

Without doubt, the physical image and communicative capacity projected by a candidate representing the people is the first element of identification, acceptance or rejection on the part of those who must vote for him or her. But in the 2.0 era (which takes into account the active involvement of all actors in all its phases), this factor will not be as relevant as in the television era. Informed citizens, and especially younger segments, used to being consulted on everything, to co-creating from the bot-

tom up, will want political representatives who, above all, practise transparency, are truly open to citizens' proposals and are efficient in managing public policies.

The North American consultant Dick Morris¹¹ says that, mechanically, the generation X and the millennium generation (the generations that have grown up with PlayStation and with a permanent Internet connection) no longer look to plug in a television and watch what's happening but to interact with it, be able to choose, have control. Instead of governments that observe their citizens, the process is being turned on its head.

In the 2.0 world, leadership is important but this can no longer be transmitted only with the physical image or with words but above all with actions and facts, which will be scrutinised in real time by those who have placed their trust in them.

The 2.0 reality will reward those candidates or teams with good reflexes to interact and catalyse public opinion and transform it into political action and will impose practices such as open lists or dynamic election programmes that can be co-generated by the very followers of each political option and that can also be flexible and adapt in real time to new scenarios. And this option of co-generation of policy is the only thing that can turn around the high abstention rates recorded in most countries.

Internet as a means of improving or extending democracy

Kevin A. Hill and John E. Hughes say in *Cyberpolitics*¹² that "with the evolution of the media, we have increasingly more access to political information and politicians but the capacity to interact or influence politics has not grown in the same way". This capacity increases as citizens make use of the instrument of the Internet in their everyday lives, in how they relate socially and progressively also to take part in politics. The people who are taking most advantage of the Internet for political and social mobilisation are the *digital natives* - those generations that have grown and arrived at voting age living together with the Internet - but the ease of transferring knowledge of the tools of social relations on the Internet mean that a part of the previous generations are also turning to the Internet to carry out their participation in political debate.

Two hundred years ago, Thomas Jefferson formulated the concept of direct democracy in the local sphere. Distance and the limits of communication of the time made it necessary to appoint representatives to legislate and decide (vote) on behalf of citizens. The Internet is bringing us closer to direct democracy again but can it eliminate the intermediaries of politics, in the same way that it has eliminated intermediaries in selling plane tickets or stocks? Why resort to politicians as intermediaries when we know they are subject to personal and party interests? Why not have direct control of a lobbying action that specifically interests us? Can the Internet change the rules of the game? Why wait every four years to support or punish our representatives?

Without doubt, the possibility of exercising democracy more directly may attract more citizen participation. The more information citizens have, the more they wish to control the decisions taken on their behalf.

If dot.coms have shown that they can be more efficient than traditional firms (eliminating intermediaries, costs, time savings, reduction in input/output process), the Internet can also make politics more efficient (social debate, the generation and organisation of demands on the part of civil society, pressurising, managing this debate on the part of politicians, parties, administrations, etc.).

The speed of debates is much greater and dynamic. The Internet has led to a change in power relations between the transmitter (politician) and receiver (potential voter). A political party is always linked to its election programme, to its ideological line, to the agreements taken out with other parties, etc. With the Internet, we go from the unidirectional force of a transmitter to a larger capacity for diversification, for voluntary choice on the part of the receiver.

On the Internet, concerns, interests, hobbies, etc. end up becoming, quite simply, the point of connection or formation of virtual communities as aggregators of interests and very often as aggregators of emotional interests, responding to a media impact or a specific fact and no longer to a certain ideology or principles.

In 2002, Manuel Castells already talked of the *La galàxia Internet*¹³ (the Internet galaxy) of a new system of social relations focusing on the individual, constructed around what might be called "tertiary relations" or "personalised communities" that survive while the interests of that community are shared. Castells defined them as "networks of sociability of variable geometry and composition, changing according to the evolution of the interests of social agents and the evolution of the network itself, something that is favoured by the crisis of patriarchy, the disintegration of the nuclear family and the crisis in political legitimacy, so much so that the growing distance between citizens and state undermines the mechanisms of representation and encourages individuals to leave the public sphere. The Internet is becoming the material support for this online individualism".

Moreover, virtual communities no longer obey a physical or geographical reality. With the Internet, borders of country/nation/region/local causes have been overcome. Virtual communities are helping to organise and structure (might we even say *institutionalise*?) groups that, until now, could not get together as they lacked this tool that brings them closer and facilitates communication and exchange, everything that, until now, was incapable of creating a real community. In a virtual political community, interest is focused and those taking part are valued according to the contributions (intellectual, monetary, etc.) made by the members and not by their training, experience, age, place of origin because this, in a virtual community, might even be unknown.

If the Internet gives voice (at a very low price) to all those

segments of society that traditionally were outside political action, this will undoubtedly revitalise citizen action-participation.

Will Internet serve to increase electoral participation?

In the US, two great electoral reforms have been passed during the last three decades: in 1971, the Twenty-Sixth Amendment was used to reduce the minimum voting age to 18; and in 1993, the Motor Voter Law simplified the process of registering as a voter (mandatory process). Neither of these two reforms has had a great impact on electoral participation.

According to the official data gathered by the United States Elections Project,¹⁴ the electoral documentation centre of George Mason University, participation in presidential elections in 2008 was 64.1%, the highest in the last 100 years, and in some key states, such as Florida, it even reached 72% participation.

In 2008, the highest participation figure was recorded since, in 1960, 63.1% of voters in the elections contested by John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon.

The younger electorate, traditionally the segment with the highest abstention rate in all elections (from local to presidential), picked up in participation terms in 2004 (9% more than in the 2000 elections) and 2006 (24% compared with the parliamentary elections of 2002). In 2008, initiatives such as Rock the Vote,¹⁵ with the leadership of popular personalities from show business, were key to mobilising these younger voters (between 18 and 29 years of age). According to the report *Young Voters By the Numbers*,¹⁶ produced in 2007 by this organisation, whose mission is to engage and build the political power of young people, in 2015 the so-called millennium generation (those who have grown up using the Internet in their everyday lives) will account for one third of the electorate of the United States.

This generation already looks for specific answers, agile and flexible in their concerns; present-day political options seem the same to them and, in any case, they do not contemplate "lifelong" membership of a certain political option. With the Internet, they can find personalised feedback for the issues that most concern them and a very wide range of options to get information and train themselves politically (much larger than that offered so far by the traditional media).

The political scientists Robert Putnam¹⁷ says in his latest book, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, that "the Internet is leading a segment of the population towards civic participation and collective commitment, young people, who traditionally didn't take any notice of politics".

This trend that we can observe in the US can be extrapolated to most countries and not only to western democratic societies. Facts such as the protests of thousands of young people after the results of the last elections in Iran, organised via the

Internet, demonstrate that governments and political parties will have to know how to channel this growing force of civic-political participation that no longer remains closed in and silent when faced with a situation they do not like but actively exchanges opinions and becomes mobilised within and outside the network.

Internet use for political and social action-interaction will undoubtedly lead to greater electoral participation (we are already seeing this in the statistics), although the big leap forward will be when governments authorise widespread e-voting and remote voting. The generation that has grown up with text messages and PlayStation as the main tools for communication and management of their everyday lives will demand, sooner rather than later, a fast, simple voting system. Technology already makes this possible. Biometric control systems, digital signatures and other measures that can guarantee security, confidentiality and reliability of the voting system are already being applied in many consultations and votes. The day these are applied on a large scale we will be talking of a big leap in the data of electoral participation, and once again it will be the younger generation that will have a new incentive to take part in a vote.

Conclusions

New technologies have brought new actors or interactors and concepts, also in political action-interaction. For the more optimistic, the Internet will have, over the next few decades, the power to correct the damage it is said television has done to politics: to recover ideas, content, debate and reduce the importance of 30-second sound bites. The Internet will involve many more citizens in the ongoing debate of social and political issues, in all areas, and not only during the weeks of election campaigning. We will probably be immersed in an ongoing election campaign on the part of candidates and political parties but not in today's sense of the term (events, declarations, gestures aimed at creating a certain image) but as an unavoidable obligation to respond and interact with the more active social groups and networks, who will be the ones who, based on the result of this interaction with the candidate or political party, end up becoming mobilised in favour of one option or another when going to vote and also mobilising broader circles of citizens.

The Internet may be the great "equaliser": reducing the power of money in politics. With television as the dominant mass media, a campaign made with a lot of money could still make all the difference: with the Internet, this no longer happens.

And, most importantly, the Internet allows for a much more direct relationship between voters and their options for political involvement: sources of information, candidates, parties, alternatives, pressure groups, etc. Informed voters become "interested" voters, who look for a precise solution for their interests and join those groups, communities and social networks that

are closest to achieving a solution for these specific interests.

According to the study *The Internet and the 2008 Election*,¹⁸ published in June 2008 by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, 46% of North Americans have used the Internet and mobile phone (basically text messages) to get information on the political debate and share their opinions with other citizens during the whole electoral cycle (primary elections and the presidential election). These same citizens have become a powerful weapon to amplify political messages they have received, among their personal, social and professional circles. 35% of North Americans have seen videos on the Internet related to the political campaign and 10% have used social networks to get involved in political activity.

The thing is, as explained by Lourdes Martín in *Marketing político*,¹⁹ "the problem of today's democracies is that the electorate is not a homogeneous mass, not even slightly, and on many occasions political leaders target voters as if they were. In general terms, citizens do not lack an interest in politics; they are simply interested in different specific issues".

The "fifth state", the Internet, will change the world of politics as we know it today. Money will be less important, campaigns will have to be more user-friendly, interactive and also focused on providing specific solutions, in a society where catch-all parties or closed electoral lists will no longer make sense. Electoral or political participation by citizens will increase as they have more opportunities to interact.

The digital development and literacy of the whole population should be seen by political leaders as a fundamental means of recovering and increasing the debate of ideas and offering more opportunities for participation in the public sphere.

As warned by Manuel Castells in *La galàxia Internet*, "cyber-space is becoming a land under dispute, because it is a privileged instrument to act, inform, recruit, organise, dominate and counter-dominate". It is therefore a warning signal for political consultants and representatives of the people: "If you don't take care of the Internet (now with informed and increasingly more proactive citizens), the Internet will take care of you!".

Notes

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Politics 2.0 with the Nintendo generation

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Abstract

The emergence of Web 2.0 has transformed the uses and strategies of political communication. The campaign developed by Obama's team is a good example of the electoral efficiency of these new tools whose results we are now analysing and evaluating.

While our present leaders could be classified as the "fax generation", the North American experience opens the doors to a new way of relating with the electoral masses. With these new instruments of interactive communication, voters have the space to be able to make their voices heard and to be able to affect the electoral programme, something which undoubtedly benefits an election campaign's degree of democratic quality.

Key words

Nintendo generation, Web 2.0, social networks, feedback, politics 2.0, Internet, cyberpolitics, e-campaign.

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Resum

La irrupció del Web 2.0 ha transformat els usos i les estratègies de la comunicació política. La campanya desenvolupada per l'equip d'Obama és un bon exemple de l'eficàcia electoral d'aquestes noves eines, el resultat de les quals tot just estem analitzant i avaluant.

Si els nostres dirigents actuals els podríem emmarcar com la "generació del fax", l'experiència nord-americana obre les portes a una nova manera de relacionar-se amb la massa electoral. Amb aquests nous instruments de comunicació interactiva, els votants disposen de l'espai per poder fer arribar la seva veu i per poder incidir en el programa electoral; un fet que sens dubte redunda en benefici dels nivells de qualitat democràtica d'una campanya electoral.

Paraules clau

Generació Nintendo, Web 2.0, xarxes socials, feedback, Política 2.0, Internet, ciberpolítica, e-campanya.

Introducció

To date, political communication had channelled a fundamentally unidirectional message as the communication procedures and instruments did not allow for immediate interaction, the reason why the message often remained untouchable until election day. The candidate talked and potential electors listened.

In this respect, various studies of electoral behaviour highlight that this passivity or, in other words, the impossibility of the electorate to make its voice heard in order to affect the political programme, is one of the most powerful reasons for the high level of abstention.

The empirical studies carried out by Norris (1999),¹ Bimber (2001), Owen and Davis (1998) and Hill and Hughes (1998) allow us to generalise the accuracy of the following statement: access to ICTs does not impact the political participation of citizens. In other terms, the individual political behaviour of people with access to the Internet is not significantly different from that of people offline.

Given this view of political communication, the Internet and particularly the new features associated with the concept of

Web 2.0 have become a great instrument for promoting the feedback that is so necessary in designing campaign strategy. As we already know, when users decide to put the mouse's icon on top of a banner or over a pop-up, they are already showing an interest in finding something out about the window they are about to open.

Internet 2.0

The added value of this new stage in the Internet, the so-called Web 2.0, is precisely the possibility to comment, express an opinion, take part in a real-time chat or in social networks, as well as to send an email or answer a survey. In short, to take part directly in designing the campaign. For this reason, those in charge of the campaign have highly valuable information, as they can know, on a daily basis, the degree of acceptance and interest aroused among the electorate by different points in the electoral programme. In such a situation, the campaign strategy can be modelled based on the degree of interactivity of the electorate. We must not forget that citizens are increasingly better informed and want fast, individualised responses.

Consequently, instead of governments that observe their citizens, Web 2.0 enables citizens to observe the political class at close quarters.

The Nintendo generation

According to the North American consultant, Dick Morris,² the Nintendo generation³ no longer waits to turn on the TV and see what's happening. What they want is to interact with the news, to choose and control it.

Unlike current leaders, whom we can mostly place within the "fax generation", the Nintendo generation is characterised by knowing how to communicate digitally, as it integrates digital tools within its areas of relations. The book *The Kids are Alright. How the Gamer Generation is Changing the Workplace*,⁴ talks about how the generation that has been born with the phenomenon of videogames has learned to share, not to fear failure, how to work in a team and wanting to be the best but not the richest. The document states that they are the future managers, a more than sufficient reason for firms to modify both their business model and their structures.

This generation is smarter than that of its parents and more sociable, less competitive and more sincere; from the cradle it has mastered new technologies and happiness is the ultimate goal. It was born and grew up in democracy. It is made up of men and women aged between 20 and 30 and totals almost seven and a half million in Spain, according to data from the Spanish Statistics Institute (INE).

One peculiarity of the Nintendo generation, according to Montserrat Ventosa,⁵ CEO of the Great Place to Work Institute, dedicated to creating excellent and efficient places to work in, is that representatives of the Nintendo generation can be described as committed: "They don't see hard work as a sacrifice but as a requirement and a chance to excel, so their commitment and engagement are different to those of previous generations. This doesn't mean they're not committed but that, for them, the contract does not entail a sacrifice. However, they do have a low tolerance for frustration."

Jeroen Boschma, creative and strategic consultant, as well as a specialist in the world of young people, who has gathered together his knowledge in the book *Generació Einstein*, states that, if there's something that defines this generation, it's their optimism. "It's the first generation to see the world from a positive point of view. They're serious; they have traditional ideals and a positive image of the future. Their perception is closely related to sincerity and authenticity is, for them, a very important concept."

Susceptible to changing political party, argues Boschma, they are "more concerned about specific issues than ideologies" and expect politicians "to get things going, to be authentic and do the things they promise".

Values such as honesty, sincerity, family and friendship motivate these young people, who enjoy social intelligence, points

out Montserrat Ventosa. She also adds that they are socially committed, responsible towards the environment and concerned about climate change.

Jeroen Boschma says that "they are concerned and get angry about injustice, unnecessary red tape, unjustified authority, the lack of authenticity and contradictions in the world. They're happy with their friends, family and with helping someone".

Many North American experts on politics, among them Dick Morris,⁶ state that the Nintendo generation, which is now aged between 20 and 35 and is therefore made up of those people who will have political influence over the next 25 years, will return to the sphere of political involvement thanks to the Internet. Not only because it is a generation the majority of which already accesses the Internet for a lot of their everyday tasks, such as getting information or shopping, but because it's a generation that looks for specific answers. Today's political options seem all alike and make them sceptical.

With the Internet they can find individualised feedback to the issues that concern them most. Political scientist Robert Putman⁷ also agrees when he says that "the Internet is bringing civic participation and collective commitment to a segment of the population - young people - that traditionally ignores politics".

Web 2.0 and Politics 2.0

Web 2.0 is defined on Wikipedia as term that is commonly associated with web applications collective intelligence to provide interactive services online, with the main characteristic that users control their data. The name was adopted by Dale Dougherty, from O'Reilly Media, and has been developed by Tim O'Reilly himself in an article on his blog in October 2005.⁸

Web 2.0 allows for the creation of collective intelligence based on the exchange of experiences and knowledge, making use of user-friendly Internet-based communication tools that facilitate the creation and publication of texts, multimedia images and networks of contacts. The tools that allow this to happen may be programs or platforms on the web itself, such as blogs and wikis, areas for images such as Flickr and Picasa; video such as YouTube and Vimeo; instant short messages such as Twitter; socialisation platforms such as Facebook and MySpace and platforms where presentations can be posted in PowerPoint or PDF. For their part, other users can see or download all these files, even to the latest generation mobile phones, without having to use a personal computer. Certainly, blogs lead the way in this new stage of the Internet, as they create a clear opportunity to share and improve knowledge. But we must remember that the people who create the network on Web 2.0 are hoping to benefit by sharing other people's knowledge and learning from them.

Within this context, Politics 2.0 must be analysed from two perspectives: that of the political class and that of citizens. In

the first case, Politics 2.0 is the use of 2.0 tools to open up the process further to the electorate and to promote the political programme of the person put forward as a candidate. Moreover, computer platforms offer the chance to talk with citizens, to listen to them and share their opinions.

In the second case, it is the capacity of citizens to organise themselves into networks through 2.0 tools to create interest groups and, in this way, influence both politicians and political parties.

In short, we can say that all voters are reached more directly and more accurately with Politics 2.0.

Before looking further at the concept of Politics 2.0, if we go back in time we can see that politics has been a communicative activity that, albeit slowly, has taken over the new tools on offer at any particular time. K. A. Hill and J. E. Hughes state in *Cyberpolitics*⁹ that, with the evolution of the media, we have increasingly more access to more political information and politicians but the capacity to interact or influence politics has not grown in parallel. And they point out that this capacity will increase as citizens make use of Internet as a tool in their everyday lives, in how they relate socially and progressively also to take part in the political arena.

In politics, the benefit of the change depends on emergence and strength of incentives coming from the electoral market that affect, on the one hand, the inputs of the political system (election campaigns) and, on the other hand, the production of public policies and the role played by public administrations. A large part of the differences observed between the United States and Europe can be found in the field of the political use of ICTs. In any case, the change in the social and political environment is increasingly more significant and inexcusable. That's why, taking Barack Obama's recent election campaign as a benchmark, we may predict that those who are capable of adapting to these new digital environments will get better results than those who continue to be anchored in the same old procedures.

Peytibi, Rodríguez and Gutiérrez-Rubí,¹⁰ in their analysis of the election campaigns of political parties in the Spanish general elections of 2008, point out that, while new communication technologies have already been fully incorporated into campaign strategy in more than one electoral cycle in the United States, in Spain the situation is very different. In general, the electorate continues to be more dependent on the conventional media, such as newspapers, radio and television. Although the national parties are making an effort to design communicative strategies to be disseminated via new technologies, the opinion of voters is mostly constructed with information transmitted by the classic media.

Notwithstanding this, it is now unimaginable to have a campaign without a strategy implemented on the Internet. In this respect, it can be said that the last election campaign in 2008 was characterised by the innovative use of digital technology that, in summary, took the following form:

1. Increased interactivity (especially in the use of blogs).
2. Co-production of resources via the Internet (volunteer platforms, etc.).
3. Use of format exchange (TV channels).
4. Development of social networks (Facebook).
5. Use of personal e-campaigns (e.g. campaigns to support the candidature of (Spanish president) Rodríguez Zapatero, PAZ).

Specific features of Web 2.0

As we have already mentioned, on Web 2.0 political messages reach all party supporters through various environments online. And a new figure appears, the "cyber-progressive volunteer", who is encouraged to "*pass it on*", inundating the Internet with not necessarily solicited mail, i.e. spam or junk mail, and sending mass text messages paid for by the cyber-volunteer. Supporters are also encouraged to send the party a complete census of forms and chats with public opinions. In other words, they should infiltrate blogs and websites of the candidates for other parties to be able to take part with comments and questions. This is called *trolling* in the language of the Internet.¹¹

In the study mentioned, Peytibi, Rodríguez and Gutiérrez-Rubí¹² observe that the elections of 9 March 2008 were the first general elections in Spain where the Internet played an important role, with the use of the following virtual environments:

Blogs. 27% of the heads of the electoral lists in previous elections had blogs during the electoral campaign.

Nanoblogs. Nanoblogs started to be used, such as Twitter. The candidates could talk directly to their supporters via this medium.

Crowdsourcing. This consists of outsourcing a specific service to volunteers to carry out tasks that used to be expensive when done by a company (e.g. telephone calls, creating websites, writing letters to the director of a medium, etc.). Volunteers are segmented by their postcode and can therefore be asked to work on issues related to their community, i.e. at a local scale.

Format swap. Dissemination is the most important thing when giving out a message. With new technologies and the new tools provided by this technology to share information, videos, images, sound, etc. can be shared and messages from the party or candidates can be posted on any personal blog, website or forum. This is the so-called embedding; information can be examined anywhere.

Social networks. Facebook was the star of the Spanish electoral campaign in 2008. In the US, other interesting social networks are currently being explored, such as themed or personal social networks (older people, young people, Afro-Americans, Hispanics, etc.). This can help segment the campaign towards a specific issue or personal situation.

Personal e-campaigns. As a leading example we have the Zapatero Support Platform (PAZ in Spanish), created from five

thousand signatures by intellectuals, actors, sports people, scientists, etc. who go to make up the largest support group of famous people of all the elections held to date in Spain.

The North American experience

A good example of behaviour and its impact on the design of political strategies for election campaigns can be found in the last North American elections and, more specifically, in the campaign that led to the victory of the Democrat candidate and current president Barack Obama, whose triumph can to a large extent be attributed to the use of Web 2.0. Of note in his team is Chris Hughes (co-founder of Facebook), expert in social networks and creator of **BarackObama.com**, a website with maximum interactivity that became the platform from which most of the innovative strategies were launched that went to make up the US president's election campaign.

A key piece of data: his team of experts has been made up of a number ranging from ten to a little more than twenty people, aged between 25 and 40 with a profile of advanced users of new Internet applications, with professional experience in the new digital social media, as well as enthusiasts and pioneers in digital communication. Consequently, this is a team that has a structure and organisational model equivalent to a Web 2.0 start-up itself. The specialist in political communication, Antoni Gutiérrez-Rubi¹³ identifies five digital scenarios where Obama implemented political strategies that explain why he won the election, in spite of there being many factors against him:¹⁴

- Grassroots policy: the politics of activists.
- Active volunteer policy: text message and telephone helplines.
- Digital policy: online advertising.
- Local policy, pocket policy: Twitter.
- The policy of network trust: *My.BarackObama.com*.

A study by the consultancy firm McCann attributes to the Nintendo generation a significant impact on the American election campaign, given that Internet presence now has notable repercussions on everyday life. The study claims that the Nintendo generation helped Obama to win the nomination, generating a wealth of content on blogs and microblogs like Twitter. Frenetic activity on these spaces led to donations and, consequently, multiplied the expressions of support that turned around the initial position of public opinion. At the same time, the conventional media saw realised that their influence on public opinion was losing force.

Manuel Castells talks in *La galàxia Internet*¹⁵ of a new system of social relations centred on the individual, constructed in an environment that might be called "tertiary relations" or "personalised communities", maintained while users continue to have shared interests with the community in question.

The degree of political interaction on the part of citizens will be proportional to the use they make of the Internet in their

everyday lives. As pointed out by Manuel Castells, "cyberspace is becoming land under dispute, because it is a privileged tool for acting, informing, recruiting, organising, dominating and *resisting domination*". This is therefore a note of warning for politicians and representatives of the people: "if you don't take care of the Internet, the Internet will take care of you".

The key role of new ICTs in the elections in the Basque Country and for the Galician government

At the time of writing, this study¹⁶ coincides with the electoral campaign for the Basque and Galician elections. Monitoring the technological resources used by the candidates from the different parties has shown that these elections are a turning point with regard to the inclusion of Politics 2.0 instruments.

The candidate for the Basque presidency for the (nationalist) PNV party, Juan José Ibarretxe, has a videoblog, although his inclusion on the social networks has been controversial due to the presumed forgery of his figure on Facebook. According to *cybereuskadi.com*, the same thing has happened with Ibarretxe's Twitter. In spite of his presence on the Internet, he has possibly been the least present of all the groups.

The socialist candidate, Patxi López, has also joined the social networks and is one of the few candidates, together with the Galician PP (conservative) and the (Galician nationalist) BNG candidates, who has realised the importance of Twitter, one of the most successful Web 2.0 tools that, as we have seen, has been fundamental in Obama's campaign strategy. Moreover, he also has his channel on Facebook with 3,571 followers, has his own channel on YouTube, Flickr and, curiously, his choice of music can be consulted on last.fm.

The PP candidate for the Basque Country, Antonio Basagoiti, provides information via his blog *Basagoiti 2.0*, and is also present on Facebook, Tuenti, YouTube and Flickr.

With regard to the Galician elections, Anxo Quintana, leader of the Nationalist Galician Block (BNG), has also created a videoblog, from which he invites people to send in questions and comments via mobile or webcam.¹⁷ He also has a network on Facebook,¹⁸ Twitter and on the BNG's Flickr.

The former Galician president, Emilio Pérez Touriño, who launched his election campaign on Facebook, also has a blog (<<http://presidentetourino.com>>) and offers detailed information on the website *psdeg-psoe.com*. His photos can also be seen on Flickr and his videos on Touriño TV and on his YouTube channel.

For his part, Feijóo is the protagonist of the website *recargan dogalicia.com*, as well as having his own blog, where he presents his party's electoral proposals. The pages are linked to the PP website for Galicia and have the respective electoral calendar, a page on Facebook, Flickr, Tuenti and a channel on YouTube. The PP has also created the first open forum for PP party members.

Government 2.0

Among other reasons, the current US president, Barack Hussein Obama, will go down in history for having encouraged citizen participation in governance via a website (<http://www.change.gov>) from which people can follow and participate directly in the decisions taken by the present resident of the Whitehouse.

Although this website is having problems due to the avalanche of visits it's receiving, we should not some elements that are highly significant from the point of view of citizen feedback:

- A section called *Open Government* encourages citizens to send in their ideas, following the classification of government areas, such as the economy, human rights, housing, health, education, etc.
- The section called **An American Moment**, which asks citizens to send in their experiences concerning the campaign and election day.
- The news and the blog are open to participation via comments.
- One section invites citizens to find ways of serving their community voluntarily.

There can be no doubt that president Obama not only believed in the power of the Internet when designing his campaign but also in the management of government, for which he has opened up citizen participation and has turned the Internet into an instrument to realise his electoral promise of change: *Yes we can*.

Conclusions

In short, political communication must integrate the Internet or, more specifically, the network of networks in the strategic planning of any communication aimed at its target, both internal and external.

The data that appear in this work show the fundamental role of some digital environments, such as the various blog formats and social networks, in the two most recent elections in Spain: the 2008 general elections and the Galician and Basque regional elections in 2009. But it's the North American election that has highlighted the electoral returns provided by the strategic use of the new virtual platforms with the victory of Barack Obama.

These new digital environments, capable of providing a veritable dialogue between the candidate and citizens, have shown that, from now on, election campaigns will have to be approached in these terms: opening up dialogue, involving the demands of the electorate, providing feedback and prioritising the role of the man in the street.

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Political e-mobilisation and participation in the election campaigns of Ségolène Royal (2007) and Barack Obama (2008)

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Abstract

The recent presidential elections in France (2007) and the United States (2008) have demonstrated the potential of Internet use in election campaigns. This paper seeks to contribute to the reflection on forms of e-mobilisation of citizens by analysing Ségolène Royal and Barack Obama's campaigns and the expectations generated by their political campaigns. The basic contention is that the Internet has enabled candidates to promote mobilisation and new communication channels in society, although ultimately these new possibilities formed part of the conventional system used for politician-citizen relations.

Key words

Electoral campaigns, Internet, mobilization, participation.

Resum

En les últimes eleccions presidencials de França (2007) i dels Estats Units (2008) ha quedat de manifest la potencialitat de l'ús d'Internet en les campanyes electorals. Aquesta aportació intenta contribuir a la reflexió sobre les formes d'e-mobilització ciutadana en les campanyes de Ségolène Royal i Barack Obama i les expectatives de participació política que van generar les seves respectives campanyes. La idea bàsica és que Internet va permetre a aquests candidats obrir a la societat vies de mobilització i comunicació, però que finalment aquestes noves possibilitats es van emmarcar dins de les formes convencionals de relació entre la política i la ciutadania.

Paraules clau

Campanyes electorals, Internet, mobilització, participació.

In the last presidential elections in France (2007) and the United States (2008) there has been exponential growth in the use of the Internet in candidates' strategies. In general, all the expectations concerning the potential of this new medium in election campaigns have been confirmed and everything suggests that we are immersed in a process of continually discovering new uses on the part of political parties and society at large. The characteristics of the Internet, its speed, its viral and interactive nature and its possibilities for spreading information selectively, etc. make it the ideal instrument for planning the campaigns of political parties and candidates.

The possibilities of interaction provided by the new medium correspond with the attitude of some parties and candidates of suggesting and promoting political communication styles that are more direct and ask for the active involvement of citizens. The dissatisfaction with representative democracy and the few opportunities for citizens to become involved in decision-making processes has created an interest in the Internet's potential to positively contribute to a greater political intervention on the part of citizens. This has pushed some parties and candidates to include, in their election campaigns, proposals for participatory democracy.

On 20 January 2009, when Barack Obama took over the presidency of the United States, Ségolène Royal, present at the ceremony, declared to journalists: "Yes, I inspired Obama and his team copied us" (Cypel 2009). The former candidate in the

last presidential elections in France added that Obama had adapted her idea of "participatory democracy" to the American style, very different from the European with regard to the meaning of "communities". According to Royal, the for Obama's campaign was the same as for her own, as it was a question of "revising how politics are carried out, the relationship between the elites and the people" (Cypel 2009). Benoît Thieulin, creator of *Désirs d'avenir* and responsible for the former candidate's Internet campaign, expressed his opinion a few days later concerning Royal's declarations. With a humorous tone, in an interview carried out for *Parlons Net avec Benoît Thieulin*, he commented that the inspiration for Obama's team might also have come from Sarkozy's use of the Internet in his election campaign (*Parlons Net avec Benoît Thieulin*, 24-1-2009).

The origins of this story date back to the expedition, organised by the French American Foundation in April 2007, of a group of political advisors (Democrats and Republicans) who went to Paris to see how the French political parties were using the Internet. In *Adweek.com*, Nicholas Dungan, president of this Foundation, argued that, in France, radio and television adverts were not as significant for candidates as they were in the United States, because paid electoral advertising was banned and, for this reason, they were forced to be more creative in looking for alternative channels (Melillo 2007).

Without reflecting on the different expressions of creativity in election campaigns (in advertising, in discursive strategies or

in mobilising voters), of note is the rapid socialising of the experiences of using this new communication medium. Discoveries made through these new uses of the Internet in election campaigns are quickly assimilated by parties and candidates as a whole, irrespective of their ideology.

Certainly, the differences in election campaigns in Europe and the United States are many and for different reasons, such as the structure of the political system, the competition between parties, the political culture, the role of the media, advertising, funding, professionalism, etc. Their similarities lie particularly in campaign techniques: the centrality of television, the growing use of marketing and of political and communication advisors, the central role of political leaders, the campaign style that's evolving towards a reduction in programme content, etc. In any case, and from the point of view of organising their respective election campaigns, Obama and Royal coincide in one aspect, namely that of being considered in their respective countries as the candidates that have advanced the most in opening up channels for the participation and engagement of their followers via the Internet.

The aim of this work is to contribute to reflection on the forms of citizen e-mobilisation in the election campaigns of Ségolène Royal and Barack Obama and the expected political participation generated by their respective campaigns. The basic idea is that the Internet allowed these candidates to open up means of mobilisation and communication to society but that, ultimately, these new possibilities were placed within the conventional relations between politics and citizens.

The political use of the Internet for mobilisation

Research into the political uses of the Internet is very extensive and reaches practically all aspects of the new medium. Among the lines of interest we may note reflection on the functions of the Internet in political parties, its capacity to influence voters, its effects on political life and the new ways for citizens to participate in electoral processes.

In each of these areas of analysis there has been a basic controversy concerning the Internet's capacity or lack thereof to substantially change how politics are carried out. Studies have been carried out on the use made by political parties of their websites depending on their objectives, resources, ideology and creativity (Römmele 2003; Gibson *et al.* 2003; Schweitzer 2008); the Internet's impact on various areas of parties and how they function (Farmer and Fender 2005; Ward *et al.* 2003; Vaccari 2008); the influence of parties on voting behaviour (Bimber and Davis 2003), and the introduction of new forms of political participation in election campaigns (Margolis and Resnick 2000; Norris 2003). Based on research as a whole, although with some different nuances, we can state that there is agreement in considering the Internet to be a tool that can make a significant contribution to mobilising voters.

The different types of mobilisation and involvement of citizens in election campaigns can be very varied. From active, militant participation to information on campaign issues, on the candidates, exchanging opinions, etc. S. J. Rosenstone and J. M. Hansen (1993; 25-26) understand mobilisation to mean "the process by which candidates, parties, activists and groups persuade other people to participate. We say that one of these actors has *mobilised* someone when they have done something to increase the probability of their participation." According to these authors, there are basically two kinds of mobilisation: direct, when leaders mobilise citizens personally, and indirect, when contact between leaders and citizens is through peer groups, such as family, friends, neighbours or colleagues. Direct mobilisation can therefore become, through social networks, indirect mobilisation.

The Internet has introduced new nuances in political mobilisation and engagement in election campaigns. The traditional party members, focusing on holding meetings, fundraising, creating opinion polls, attracting followers, etc. is being replaced by new forms of militancy and collaboration with election campaigns.

Through the Internet, political parties can increase fundraising, mobilise their volunteers and permanently incorporate the holding of debates in parties (Ward *et al.* 2003). Social websites such as Facebook, MySpace, Second Life, YouTube, etc. have provided new possibilities for attracting members, volunteers and followers. The spreading of messages through social networks that are already set up means they can circulate very quickly and results can be maximised.

Most of the time, contact is established indirectly, parties can attract quite a few *e-members* and *e-followers*, although over time their link with the party will probably be much weaker if compared with traditional militancy. Broadly speaking, the methods for mobilising via the Internet during an election campaign can be: use of the Internet as a source of information, transmitting content, signing up for content, participation in political debate (posts or comments), blogs, forums and participation in social networks, among others.

The last presidential elections in France and in the United States were important landmarks in Internet use because the election strategies of most of the candidates have been largely based on this new medium. The desire to convert a candidate's website into the centre of mobilisation and organisation of the work of his or her members and followers has also resulted in different political styles and new forms of political mobilisation.

Ségolène Royal and participatory democracy

The last presidential elections in France aroused great interest among citizens. The high number of registrations on the electoral register and growing engagement over the election campaign led to a participation rate of almost 86%. The use of the Internet to keep up-to-date with how the campaign was devel-

oping was proportionally lower than with other media. In the second quarter of 2007 in France there were 11,776 million households with Internet access, a figure accounting for 46.6% of the total.

According to a post-election presidential survey by CEVIPOF (2007)¹ carried out among the population aged 18 and over included on the electoral register, the preferred media used to keep informed of politics were: television (61% as the main source and 83% as a secondary source); radio (14% as a main source and 36% as a secondary source), and the national press (9% as a main source and 23% as a secondary source). The Internet came fourth, with 8% of respondents using it as a main source and 21% as a secondary source.

At the start of the electoral process, in November 2006, the primaries held by the French Socialist Party (PSF) and the Congress for the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) (appointing the candidates of Ségolène Royal and Nicolas Sarkozy, respectively) led to great expectation. The success of Ségolène Royal (60.6% of the votes) in the primaries of the PSF compared with Dominique Strauss-Kahn (20.8 %) and Laurent Fabius (18.6 %) was resounding.

One characteristic of this primary election was that there their members were highly mobilised. From March to May 2006, the French Socialist Party started up a campaign to attract new party members via the Internet, for an annual membership fee of 20 euros, which was a great success. This campaign meant that membership went from 120,000 to 200,000. According to a survey carried out within the party itself by the Secrétariat National aux NTIC,² the sociological profile of the new members was "female, young, urban and with a diploma" with an average age of 43.4, and more than 90% had not been a member of any party previously. The strong mobilisation of socialist members in the primaries became evident in the high participation rate in these primary elections, which reached 82%, and, unlike what was initially thought, the new members who had joined via the Internet campaign did not lean more towards Royal but towards Strauss-Kahn (Dolez and Laurent 2007).

Having seen the socialist primaries, Ségolène Royal focused her campaign on the Internet. From February 2006, through her website *Désirs d'avenir*, the socialist members and followers became actively engaged in its discussion spaces. The forms of participation differed depending on the category of the member: subscribing to forums, creating websites, animating debates, coordinating and summarising debates and making new proposals (Beauvallet 2007). In total, three million participants online, 135,000 contributions and 1,500 websites are an indicator of the strong activity around Royal's campaign (Dupin 2007).

Among the qualities of the socialist candidate, of note is her willingness to get involved with some of the concerns of citizens. As explained by M. Sineau (2006: 4), one of the strong points of Ségolène Royal was her capacity to understand some of the current changes: "The seizing up of party life, increas-

ingly more educated, informed and critical citizens, horizontal dissemination of information via the Internet - a fact that *ipso facto* changes the style of political authority - the need to resort to certain procedures of direct democracy (or 'participatory') to make the stagnated representative democracy come alive again."

In February 2007, Royal's election programme, "A more just France will be a stronger France", contained the conclusions of more than 6,000 participatory debates held throughout the country via the Internet. These debates were organised based on specific issues (education, work, retirement, housing, health, security, etc.) run by Ségolène Royal herself or other leaders, gathering together suggestions and making sure these were incorporated into the general programme. This programme was presented as a pact of honour, a presidential pact for everyone, a "collective work" created through citizen participation, something that allowed Royal to add that, if she became president of the Republic, never again would politics be carried out without citizens. Finally, the candidate also announced, within the context of this pact, the establishment of "juries" to introduce "participatory democracy in all public organisations".

The central lines of her campaign, denouncing a "democratic crisis" and a "moral crisis" in addition to the issues of employment, reduction in purchasing power, solidarity and reform of the state, among others, allowed her to propose the need to encourage participatory democracy and a more central role for citizens and for regions. The participation of members and followers in the discussions on Royal's election programme aroused enthusiasm and granted a certain credibility which was interpreted as a new political style, a new way of involving citizens in producing the election programme.

Notwithstanding this, in the election campaign as a whole the issue of participatory democracy gradually lost importance. On the one hand, dissension in the PSF became more relevant, the lack of support of historic leaders of the party for the proposals of participatory democracy, the effort to focus campaign interest on Royal's capacity for leadership, the difficulty in placing her discourse as a woman in relation to the campaign as a whole, her difficulties in attracting the trust of women and their vote, and the direction of the campaign depending on the opinion polls and indices of popularity. On the other hand, how the media treated her politically incorrect declarations (on Iran and nuclear energy; her reference to the speed of Chinese justice; her favourable attitude towards the sovereignty of Quebec, with the consequent reaction of the Canadian government) and her silences (when a Hezbollah member in Beirut compared Israel with Nazism) highlighted her inexperience on the international political stage.

The behaviour of Internet users did not differ greatly from the conventional patterns of citizens. The search for information focused principally on the sites of the press and television channels. According to an IFOP survey, in its *Observatoire 2006-2007 de la Netcampagne Présidentielle*,³ interest in the campaign was high: 29% of the Internet users surveyed

stated they were "very interested" in it and 47% were "quite interested". In this same survey it seems that the main sources of information from the Internet were the informative websites of the press (61%), informative websites of television channels (49%), sites of general information (36%) and informative websites of radio stations (32%). After came the sites or blogs of political figures (21%), those of political organisations or parties (18%) and forums for political discussion (13%). On the other hand, activities related to discussion and comments on the campaign were fewer: out of all the users, 14% sent information by email about the campaign and 12% recommended a political website to people they knew.

The Internet users who voted for Ségolène Royal in the first round were principally young people from higher social categories. They were also the most active on the Internet in terms of looking for information on political news (56% of her voters), visiting the site of a presidential candidate (35%) or visiting a political blog (27%). On the other hand, in other activities, such as watching a political video online (23%) or recommending a political site to people they know (10%), Royal's voters were in a clear minority compared with those of Jean-Marie Le Pen. With regard to the election results of the second round, young people were one of the groups that expressed their preference and support for Royal.

The explanation of her defeat concerns a series of aspects of a sociological and political nature that go beyond the framework of this article. However, it can be said that her proposals for participation, although they were an attempt to respond to the disenchantment of young people with politics, did not manage to convince the groups and citizens as a whole that had historically supported the PSF's proposals.

Barack Obama and mobilisation on social networks

The presidential elections in the United States, after the continued loss in popularity of George W. Bush, also opened up a period of great expectation. Electoral participation was high (63%) if we consider that the last time this percentage had been reached was in 1960, in the campaign of J. F. Kennedy against R. Nixon. In 2008, the number of households in the United States with a computer was 79%, equivalent to 92.3 million homes. The penetration of fixed broadband out of all homes with a personal computer was 72%. Internet access from homes was therefore much higher than that of European countries in general.

According to A. Smith (2009), in the study for the Pew Internet & American Life Project⁴ on the role of the Internet in the presidential election campaign of 2008, the sources most consulted by the total population were television (77%) and the press (28%). The Internet came third (26%) and, finally, the fourth place was for radio (13%). Around 55% of the adult population in the United States connected to the Internet to get information or take part in the election campaign at some point.

In the Democrat Party, the candidates for the presidential nomination had already started their respective campaigns in 2007 on the Internet. Hillary Clinton appeared as the favourite in the opinion polls, although her election campaign did not successfully connect with citizens. The strategy of Obama's team to counteract the popularity of Hillary Clinton focused on a great presence in the media, principally radio and television and direct contact with voters, especially in those states that chose their delegates in electoral assemblies. This work was based on mobilising volunteers to convince as large a number of voters as possible - door to door and via telephone - and to raise funds to support the campaign. These two aspects bore fruit in the assemblies of Iowa and were central throughout the whole campaign.

Among Internet users, 64% looked for information on the websites of television channels, such as *CNN.com*, *ABC News.com* and *Msnbcnews.com*; 54% visited the news services of portals such as Google or Yahoo; 43% consulted the sites of the local media; 40% read some comment on the campaign in an online news group, website or blog; 34% resorted to the sites of the main national newspapers, such as *USA Today*, *The New York Times* or *The Wall Street Journal*; 26% visited blogs for news, politics or the media; 24% accessed sites focusing on specific issues, such as those of local or state governments or international news organisations; 21% connected to news websites provided by radio stations; 19% to the humorous news sites such as *The Onion* or *The Daily Show*, and 12% to alternative news organisations (Smith 2009: 62).

Possibly the presidential elections of 2008 will go down in history as an extraordinary event if we take into account the amount of journalists, political commentators and communication advisors that have classified Obama's campaign as "revolutionary" or "masterly". A series of elements has given rise to such descriptions: the charisma of the candidate, his capacity to seduce and his leadership, his background, his speech-giving ability, the organisation of his election campaign and the use of new technologies, the social and political context and the world financial crisis, to mention just a few of the most obvious.

Obama's campaign had two main lines of operation: Obama's election campaign website (*My.BarackObama.com*) and the mobilisation of his followers. The campaign website gathered more than 1,400,000 email addresses and 100,000 user profiles were created, more than 50,000 blog entries were written and around 20,000 events were published (Gutiérrez 2008; Talbot 2008).

"The campaign website [of Barack Obama] is designed like a social network similar to Facebook. Information from the campaign must be circulated (meetings, events...) in the heart of the "Obama community". Even more innovative, it allows followers to come into contact with each other and organise themselves into paramilitary teams. Structured into geographical groups (DC for Obama...), often very local (Prince William County for Obama...) or theme-based

(Students for Obama, Lawyers for Obama...), they have the means for action: training tools, a packet of campaign documentation, a door to door programme (the Neighbor to Neighbor programme, that obtains the home sales lists for the area), telephone lists for phoning, etc." (Thirion *et al.* 2009a; 4).

With regard to recruiting his followers, the great contribution of Obama's campaign was the capacity to create a movement capable of taking the form of action on the ground. Obama recruited 1.2 million volunteers to carry out different kinds of activities to convince voters, especially door to door. According to the Report by Terra Nova of B. Thirion *et al.* (2009b; 46): "One of the main strengths of the campaign lies in the conciliation between centralisation and control by professional teams and members being able to take over the campaign. The engagement of volunteers in favour of Barack Obama has been prepared and controlled by professional campaign teams in all the stages of the engagement process: training, organisation and fieldwork." This mobilisation meant that 68 million voters were contacted by the most traditional system, door to door, and gathered more than a million phone numbers to which were sent, on a monthly average, 5 to 20 messages (Thirion *et al.* 2009b).

The strength of the mobilisation of these followers was amplified due to their presence on social networks such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and YouTube, among others. The day of the presidential elections, the 4 November, Obama's friends on Facebook totalled 2,397,253; on MySpace this was 833,161; his number of fans on Twitter reached 125,639, and on YouTube the number of online videos related to Obama was 104,454 and the number of visits for these videos reached 889 million (Rasiej, Sifry, 2008).

According to a study by K. Pagoda *et al.* (2009), carried out based on a survey by the E-Voter Institute (2009),⁵ Internet users who voted for the Democrat Party considered themselves to be, in a proportion of 21%, very active politically (compared with 17% of Republicans in this same case), 37% considered themselves to be not involved in political activities apart from that of voting and 43% were occasionally active. Among the most frequent political actions of Democrats were: looking online for additional information on politics (57%) and visiting candidates' websites (57%), watching online videos on the candidates and receiving emails from friends or relatives on politics (56% in each case), talking to a friend or relative about voting for a candidate or an initiative (52%) (Pagoda *et al.* 2009).

Throughout the election campaign, the Internet was not only the main tool for organising the electoral work of volunteers. It also centralised all activity in general, a phenomenon that has been called *webcentrism*. The agenda of acts, advertising, presence in the media, support of political figures and popular personalities, artistic creativity dedicated to the campaign, comments on issues, proposals, comments on debates,

answers to the rest of the candidates, messages aimed at young people, women, minorities, professionals, etc. were channelled through the Internet.

However, the Internet did not just centralise the organisation of the campaign but also strengthened citizen participation through discussion (horizontally and among citizens and candidates in general) and the making of videos, which emerged strongly right from the start. By way of example we can cite "Vote different", published in January 2008 on YouTube, in which Hillary Clinton takes on George Orwell's role of Big Brother and on which Obama's candidature is based. According to Obama himself, in statements made to CNN, the video was the proof that citizens can create all kinds of content on the Internet and it meant, to a certain degree, that the campaign had become democratised.

However, the Internet did not just allow the "democratisation" of the election campaign but, after the elections, president Obama has continued to make transparency, communication and participation the main objectives of his policy, as explained by Macon Phillips, director of New Media for the Whitehouse on *Whitehouse.gov*.

Conclusion

The possibilities for interaction and viral features of the new technologies make it much easier to mobilise thousands of party members and followers concerning common goals. In European democracies, as well as in the United States, within a context of growing widespread dissatisfaction with representative democracy and disaffection towards politics, the progressive use of the Internet seems to involve the need to set up a discourse concerning political participation. The expectations of this new medium on the part of society and the demonstrable success of its use in all social layers mean that political parties cannot refuse to use it without running the risk of being excluded from the general trend that's in favour of new communication technologies. In general, parties - apart from their ideology - offer forms of participation that, in most cases, do not affect fundamental political decisions but rather how the campaign develops.

Convincing citizens in order to mobilise them and get them to participate in political processes seems a difficult task if the political proposals are framed within conventional politics, i.e. if they are inserted within the same old politics. On the other hand, achieving participation with the aim of producing and experiencing new forms of deliberation and consensus can, in principle, attract those groups of citizens with greater responsibility and more willingness to become involved politically.

The election campaigns of Ségolène Royal and Barack Obama, although in very different contexts, are an example of the capacity of the new possibilities and new ways of carrying out politics in order to attract. Notwithstanding this, the participation that they have offered citizens has not gone very far

beyond what is merely necessary to set up a media discourse that is more or less convincing concerning the need for a greater contribution to the discussion of public affairs. Ségolène Royal's proposal for direct participation in producing the electoral programme was diluted as the campaign progressed due to pressure from the media, which focused more on the personality of the candidate. Barack Obama's promises led to the great mobilisation of young people but this did not become active participation in the proposals regarding the politics of the future. However, the invitation for citizens to collaborate undoubtedly helped the candidate's media explosion.

These electoral experiences suggest that new information and communication technologies are an instrument with great potential as yet to be discovered. Mobilisation concerning the objectives and watchwords of an election campaign has different nuances of engagement: from passive participation through voting to direct participation in taking important campaign decisions. Possibly, in the cases we are looking at, the novelty and resonance in the media have been an important factor that must be taken into account, but participation has not transcended to the sphere of important decision-making.

Proposals for political participation, discourses concerning the need for greater democratisation and participatory democracy or concerning a new relationship between the political class and citizens, run the risk of becoming commonplace and of losing meaning. Changes in political culture and in the conception of democracy will not come exclusively from the new uses of the Internet if participation does not manage to transcend the conventional framework of politics.

Notes

- 1 The survey was carried out by IFOP for CEVIPOF-Ministère de l'Intérieur, "Enquête post électorale présidentielle 2007", May 2007. The sample was 4,006 people, representative of the French population aged 18 and over and on the electoral register.
- 2 The PSF carried out a survey from 6 to 11 May on a sample of 18,000 new members, of which 8,400 people answered.
- 3 The survey was carried out by IFOP on a sample of 1,004 people on the electoral register, representative of the French Internet user population, between the 19 and 20 April 2007, just before the first round.
- 4 The study is based on a post-election survey on the use of the Internet by citizens in the United States, carried out for the Pew Internet & American Life Project. This survey was carried out by Princeton Survey Research Associates International on a sample of 2,254 adults aged 18 and over, between 20 November and 4 December 2008.
- 5 Post-election survey carried out by the E-Voter Institute on a group of 3,536 people who agreed to take part in research via the Internet, between 5 and 10 November.

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Barack Obama's use of the Internet is transforming political communication

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Abstract

The article describes the innovations introduced by Barak Obama's campaign in how to use the Internet as a tool to communicate with electors, in fundraising and in mobilising his supporters. It also describes how the new President is using the web as a government tool.

The text also details the subsequent appearances of Obama websites on the Internet, the creation of his own social net, the candidate's presence on other social nets and his massive use of YouTube.

Finally, an initial overview of the situation leads us to think that Barak Obama's use of the Internet will lead, in the immediate future, to a far-reaching transformation of political communication.

Key words

Communication, politics, electoral, Internet, strategy, mobilisation, fundraising, YouTube, Obama, Government

Resum

L'article centra el seu objecte en les innovacions introduïdes per la campanya de Barack Obama en la utilització d'Internet per comunicar-se amb els electors, aconseguir recursos econòmics i mobilitzar els seus seguidors. També descriu com el nou president està utilitzant la xarxa com a instrument de govern.

El text, a més, es refereix a l'aparició seqüencial de les pàgines web d'Obama a Internet, la creació de la seva pròpia xarxa social, la presència del candidat en altres xarxes socials i la utilització intensiva que van fer de YouTube.

Finalment, l'elaboració d'un primer balanç fa pensar que l'ús que està fent Obama d'Internet comportarà en l'immediat futur una transformació important de la comunicació política.

Paraules clau

Comunicació, política, electoral, Internet, estratègia, mobilització, captació de fons, YouTube, Obama, govern.

The presidential elections of 4 November 2008, with the victory of Barack Obama, broke quite a few paradigms that many political experts considered to be immovable with regard to North American politics: the presidency was won by a black politician, the participation rate was more than 55% of the electorate, television was not the hegemonic medium in the campaign and the winner achieved victory without big lobbies, corporations or other economic centres funding the campaign.

If we ask ourselves what gave Obama his victory, the answer is necessarily complex as there are many highly contradictory factors that determine electoral results. To produce a good analysis of the causes determining victory we must talk of the candidate's personality, the political situation to begin with, funding, the adversaries, the message conveyed to voters by the winning campaign, the kind of discourse employed and the media used to communicate and to mobilise voters in favour of the candidature in question. In the case of Barack Obama's campaign, all these elements have been decisive but there is one, the use made of the Internet to communicate and mobilise the electorate, that stands out due to the new methods used and the central role given to it. When we analysed the North American presidential elections of 2000 and 2004, it was frequent to wonder about the role held by the Internet

in the campaign overall and whether its influence had surpassed that of television. The answer in both cases was no. We had to wait until the 2008 elections for Internet to exceed the huge impact also exacted by television. But not only this: it is also highly likely that the way in which Obama's campaign used the Internet has forever transformed how election campaigns are run and has significantly changed all communication in the political sphere.

A great cause, a great candidate and a grassroots campaign

Obama's Internet campaign achieved interaction with 10 million voters. Of these, 3 million made financial donations, totalling 750 million dollars, and 1,200,000 people became involved, taking part in the mobilisation on the ground. These figures are between 5 and 10 times higher than any other previous campaign.

In an article published on the website of the think tank Terra Nova,¹ its director Olivier Ferrand refers to the keys to this great mobilisation, in which the core instrument and main stage was the Internet, in the following way:

1. Obama managed to awaken a great cause: change.
2. The campaign was charismatic, focused on himself until the even the leader was totally identified with the cause of change.
3. It raised the style of local campaigns to a state level, where the core of the communication with voters is door to door.
4. It gave power to party activists. They were the ones who went from door to door, asking for money and organising events.
5. It was a horizontal campaign. The 2,700 paid campaign staff were not issuers of a communication that only went from top to bottom but their task was to coordinate voluntary members and their initiatives.
6. The work of activists was to organise *a la carte* according to the profile and desire to work of each person signing up.

The Dean campaign, the best precedent

The Internet has been used since before 2000 for political and electoral communication. In his article entitled *Irrupción de Internet en el panorama electoral*² David Domingo remembers that, in 1996, Robert Dole during the presidential campaign when he took on Bill Clinton gave the address of his website for the first time and invited the audience to visit it. After an hour the server hosting the website went offline, overrun by thousands of users who wanted to access it from their computers. But the most significant precedent for Obama's campaign on the Internet occurred in 2004 and starred Howard Dean, who stood in the primaries against John Kerry with great initial success which afterwards was not consolidated. At that time there were no social networks as we know them today: there was no YouTube, MySpace had been born less than a year before and Facebook wouldn't be created until 2005. But with the help of MoveOn.org, a progressive North American association, Dean managed to raise almost 41 million dollars for his campaign via the Internet, a figure that was a surprising record for the time. His virtual followers, for the first time, started to talk to each other and to gather funds via Meet up and Deans space, forerunners of what are now social networks. "What we did", says Howard Dean, "is put those helping us in touch with each other. Our idea was to accompany the change from the base to the surface. Barack Obama used the new platforms and was more disciplined than I was. For the first time, young people of 35 voted more than those aged 65. The Internet does not guarantee someone will be elected; you always have to listen to the community and develop a campaign on the ground. The door to door with 4 visits to the same person is essential."³

Apart from the campaign of the former governor of Vermont, Howard Dean, we can find other precedents and examples that are quite interesting over the last 7 years for using the Internet in elections, such as the well-known campaign by Ségolène Royal "Desirs d'Avenir", the "Money Bomb" organised by the candidate for the Republican primaries Ron Paul, who raised 6 million dollars in just one day, 4 of them from the Internet, and

Mike Huckabee's campaign in the primaries against John McCain who, in spite of his brief appearance, managed to mobilise 12,000 volunteers.⁴

To systematically analyse Obama's campaign on the Internet, we will refer to three quite different aspects. Firstly, we will analyse the use made of the Internet as an instrument of information; the scaling of the different pages that those in charge of the campaign have gradually incorporated and the role given to YouTube. We will then talk about the Internet as an instrument of mobilisation and, in this field, specifically, as a means of fundraising. Finally, we will also refer to the use the new president is making of the Internet as an instrument of governance. All these aspects are significant in Obama's administration, not only because of their innovations but also for the dimensions each of these phenomena have achieved.

Sequential scaling of websites

The purpose of informing was the first given to the Internet by election campaigns. With regard to transmitting information, of note is the degree of clarity with which both the design and content were produced, the latter constantly updated. We should also add the mass use of audiovisuals, both on YouTube and on the Internet per se and other social networks.

A novelty almost without precedent was the sequential use of the different websites which have been changing even name and location during the journey taken by Obama from the primaries to his current presidential position. The sequential appearance of his own pages has been accompanied by other parallel sites promoted by the campaign itself or by related groups that appeared as instruments to impact public opinion, dealing with partial aspects.

The personal website of Obama as candidate is barackobama.com.⁵ We have already mentioned that it had a clear design that made it easy to surf and contained information considered to be the most important for the campaign. The appointment of Joe Biden as the vice-presidential candidate was first announced to fans connected to the website and only afterwards was communicated to the press. All the candidate's gadgets and merchandising were sold from barackobama.com. But the website also had the mission to be a kind of virtual operations centre from where people visiting the site could go to other related pages. The most important of these during the campaign was My.BarackObama.com, which functioned as a veritable tailor-made social network where users could sign up and act as volunteers for the campaign via the ways we will describe in the section on mobilisation.

My.BarackObama.com also contained Obama's personal blog and was linked to different social networks, especially Facebook, MySpace and Twitter, but also more specific networks such as Migente.com, where the space "Latinos for Obama"⁶ and "Join the wave" could be found. Quite a few parallel sites related to the main site arose. The most visited were fighthtes-

mears.com to combat and clarify smears and inaccuracies expressed about the candidate and healthplanfacts.org with details on the future health policy. The campaign also registered MeetBarackObama as a parody site to cover up MeetBarack which had been set up by adversaries in order to discredit him. In the last few months of the campaign, "vote for change" and "join the wave" appeared to encourage voters to take part, both by signing up on the electoral register and going to the polls on election day. "Vote for change" also promoted and gave its name to a concert tour in the last few weeks before the election, which shared objectives with the website and held shows in the "swing states", those states considered to be undecided and that historically vary their vote according to the candidates. This initiative had been carried out for the first time four years before for the Democrat candidate John Kerry. For this reason the initiative by Obama was called "vote for change 08"

Within the context of this sequential strategy between electoral victory and taking over government, Obama's campaign opened a transition website, change.org that, apart from the candidate's blog, also contained comments and information on day to day matters. Users were encouraged to share and propose ideas for government. Obama's meetings with entities and collaborators were shown live and job offers were also received from followers. Change.org was also used to carry out a survey on what the new government should do, among the ten million people that had given their mobile number or email. The person responsible for change.org was Macon Phillips, currently the White House Director of New Media. One of the most widely commented aspects of the transition was the speed with which Phillips and his team changed and gave new life to the White House website. As the inauguration speech had only just started, Phillips and his team got up from the stage and went to their offices. At 12 noon, the new site WhiteHouse.gov came online, replacing the site for George W. Bush. As the online newspaper Clarksville explained the next day "It's an impressive site, building on and expanding the technology and communication systems that tech-savvy Obama used in his presidential campaign". After the first click the section "Change has come to America" appears. The first three pages are "Revitalizing the economy", "Welcome to the new Whitehouse" and "A new era of Public Service".

Clarksville online also points out that the new site will show a video every week of President Obama speaking to the nation. The page also includes a blog by the Director of New Media, the government's statements and decisions and the possibility to send emails to the president and his government, with a limit of 500 words.⁷ Over the next few days, experts commented quite extensively on the fact that the site had eliminated the copyright held by Bush on his official White House site.

In addition to the official website for the Presidency, Obama has also kept up his social network at full tilt. My.BarackObama.com has been extended to *Organizing for America*, organising also meaning "putting in order". Apart from the pages that

already formed part of the My.BarackObama.com site, this new site also transmits the President's acts live, announces his future agenda and continues to accept financial donations. It should be noted, however that *Organizing for America* has been created and is developed related to the Democrat Party to avoid accusations of being personality-focused.⁸

Images on YouTube

The emergence of YouTube has been one of the great novelties of the last campaign. Created in February 2005, this website, owned by Google, has been a permanent setting for the campaign and, as such, has had wonderful moments. The first occurred mid-2007 when Amber Lee, a singer and model and not very well-known at the time, uploaded on the site *I have a crush on Obama...* a song in favour of Chicago's candidate which, in July 2007, had received 2.5 million visitors.⁹ Of the 22 debates held between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, the most novel was the one that took place on 24 July 2007, broadcast by CNN with questions posted by different voters on YouTube. John Edwards also took part as well as five other primary candidates. The pre-candidates answered 20 questions in front of the cameras, chosen from the 2,300 questions in video format sent by users to YouTube. Apart from this debate with its innovative format, the video recorded by Vill.I.Am, *Yes You Can* with well-known singer/songwriters and actors repeating phrases that had just been spoken by Obama, also played a leading role in the campaign. In February 2008, it had already had 4 million visits on YouTube, totalling 14 million by election day and 80,000 comments. The other culminating moment was the speech *A More Perfect Union* given by Obama on 18 March 2008 in response to the accusation of having collaborated with the radical preacher Jeremiah Wright, which was classified as the most important act, by far, of the campaign. Uploaded immediately onto YouTube, it was seen by 1.3 million people on the first day, totalling 3.4 million after 10 days.¹⁰

Apart from these facts, which the conventional press covered quite extensively due to their novelty, Obama's campaign also made a mass and innovative use of images on the Internet. The *Obama TV Chanel* was created within YouTube. In August 2008, 1,100 videos had been uploaded onto this space, totalling 2,000 hours of images. These included mainly recordings of live events, mini documentaries and campaign advertisements. The day before the election, 488,093 hours of McCain's videos had been seen, compared with 14,548,809 hours for Obama's.¹¹

Unprecedented mobilisation

On 4 November 2008, Obama managed to get 2 out of 3 young people to vote for him, as well as 2 out of 3 Hispanics, 9 out of 10 African Americans and 56% of the women who

went to the polls, with an overall participation of 60%, ten points higher than the usual rate. This mobilisation in his favour was achieved by Obama with an innovative focus that used the Internet not only as a source of information but also to promote a very powerful social network where messages circulated from the top to the bottom and from the bottom to the top but especially horizontally between the followers themselves. As stated by the Director of the online campaign, Rahaf Harfoush, "they were capable of using online communication for offline mobilisation". Moreover, horizontal communication established between the followers themselves and also between these and other targets constituted the largest viral marketing campaign ever recorded in the political sphere.

Kurt Cagle, Editor of O'Reilly Media,¹² has also written about mobilisation. "One week in Missouri was particular telling. McCain attended three rallies in front of collectively around 12,000 people. During that same week, Obama appeared before more than 150,000 people in four rallies, each of these coordinated via cell phones or text messages, email or syndicated feed".

Barack Obama made the dream of Howard Dean come true: to recruit and organise sympathisers en masse thanks to the Internet to send them, in a coordinated manner and with military strategy, out into the field. As pointed out in an article by the think tank Terra Nova¹³ "It's the first campaign in the 21st century where the Internet has been fused with the field and door to door techniques of local campaigns have been incrustated within a general campaign". To achieve this, Obama's campaign generated a comprehensive database from those who had signed up voluntarily either on Facebook or directly on Obama's website. By using this database, prepared and analysed systematically by the company *Spotlight Analysis*, it could be detected which volunteers were really taking part, how much they were involved and their activity, what they did, where they lived and other information used to personalise the emails and include them on the map and the door to door itineraries, as well as on the indicators for fundraising and text message or telephone call lists used to send alerts, reminders on election day, the findings of polls, data on events being held close to where they were located, etc.

When they used to enter My.BarackObama.com and now on entering *Organizing for America*, people could get to know the following instruments for participation:

- a. **How to write a blog.** Within My.BarackObama, you are encouraged to write your personal experiences and your opinion on issues related to the campaign or the government's actions
- b. **Create your own profile** answering how you want to form part of the network, how you want to help others, what information you want to receive, how you want to be identified and why you support Obama.
- c. **Contact voters.** Volunteers are asked to call or visit voters in their neighbourhood to ask them to support Obama. This can be done by joining a calling or a walking group. Volunteers

receive lists of voters close to where they live. They also receive a map of how to get there and a conversation guide. Finally they are asked to send a report with the results.

d. **Join a group.** The site says that there are 20,000 active groups. These are divided into different categories: living on the edge, single men or women, dancers, air traffic controllers, etc. You are sent the activities of these groups when they are close to you, and you are also informed about their characteristics in case you are interested in getting to know the group's members.

e. **Fundraising.** Money can be sent but you can also raise funds on behalf of Obama. You are asked to set a target, "for example, 1,000 dollars" and you are told that it might seem a lot but "you'll be surprised how easy it is if you go to friends and relatives asking for donations". In your space they draw a kind of thermometer that goes up as your funds increase.

Obama also kept his profile on 15 online communities, including BlackPlanet (a MySpace for Afro-Americans) and Eons (a Facebook for baby boomers). On Facebook alone, 3.2 million participants said they supported Obama. On My.BarackObama.com, his own social network, 2.2 million profiles were created and 25,000 groups were ultimately set up. The events organised during the campaign totalled 200,000, 50,000 of these in the last three weeks. They had face to face contact with 13.3 million voters, any of them floating voters, by means of 20,000 group leaders from the different neighbourhoods in the country's cities. As Obama himself stated once the campaign was over: "Among the fundamental beliefs I hold thanks to my days in community work is that real change comes from the bottom, and there's no other instrument like the Internet to organise people."¹⁴

Fundraising via the Internet

Phil Tajitsu Nash, CEO of the fundraising agency *Campaign Advantage*, is right to state in the online magazine *America.gov* that a good fundraising campaign requires not only the right technology and not only the right candidate but also a message that resonates with online audiences.¹⁵ Barack Obama achieved all three and this led him to break all fundraising records for electoral campaigns. By 4 November 2008, the future president had received 750 million dollars while John McCain, although his programme defended the interests of the big lobbies and corporations, only received 350 million. Internet was the great instrument used by Obama in his fundraising strategy. The aforementioned Rahaf Harfoush, Director of Barack Obama's online campaign, confirmed in *La Vanguardia* that 67% of the funds raised for Obama were via the Internet.¹⁶

North American legislation on electoral campaigns establishes that once a candidate has been appointed, he or she can receive 85 million dollars from the state providing no more

money is requested from private individuals. Obama renounced this state support, leading to strong criticism from his rivals, some interest groups and sections of his own party. The Democrat candidate, the first not to use the public subsidy, defended himself by stating, and rightly so, that this financing system was broken because many of his opponents had been able to get around the restrictions. At the end of the primaries, Obama had raised 266 million dollars from one million and a half donors.

We have mentioned before how his volunteers were mobilised. Let's have a look at the structure of the donations. First, we can state that, of the overall figure raised, 70% came from donations of less than 50 dollars and that 90% of the donations were under 200 dollars. But a later study by the *Campaign Finance Institute* published recently, shows that Obama's small donors, i.e. those making donations of less than 1,000 dollars, were not so numerous.¹⁷

The long duration of the electoral battle against Hillary Clinton and his refusal to use public financing for the general elections gave Obama good motivation to use the Internet to reach those who had already contributed to his campaign to see if they would donate again. It is precisely these repeat donors who, as they exceed 1,000 dollars, altered the previous analyses of Obama's funding. Nevertheless, the number of small donors was abnormally high. 49% gave 200 dollars or less. Obama, however, received 50% more money from large donors (more than \$1,000) than from small donors. But even taking this into account, the percentage of money raised from large donors was less than McCain or other campaigns for which we have data: Obama 47%, Kerry 57%, Bush and McCain 60%. On discovering these data, Michael J. Malbin, Director of the *Campaign Finance Institute* said "the reality does not match the myth, but the reality itself was impressive".¹⁸ The Institute considers plausible the figure of 3 million donors given by the official sources of Obama's campaign.

Governing with the Internet

Regarding how the new President Obama is using the Internet, we should point out one aspect that is just starting to be written about. Until 2008, all election campaigns that had used the Internet gradually wound up their site after election day, more or less quickly. But in seeing the use Obama had made of the Internet during the campaign, many thought that the strength of his social network could be used as an instrument to help governance. And this has been the case. To date, what we have seen is the president's interest in keeping his volunteers via *Organizing for America*, the website shared with the Democratic Party but also directly using the official government sites and other electronic media.

Although some have explained it thus, the first action of Obama's government was not to decree that Guantánamo should be shut down but the open application of the *Freedom*

of Information Act, the law that allows citizens to access public information. This took the form of a proclamation in favour of the principles of open government via which the White House renounced the copyright on official information and placed spaces on its official websites to receive initiatives and offers of collaboration from citizens.

In the area of information, the government's new attitude became apparent, apart from the president's weekly speech on the Internet, in two speeches posted on YouTube, on 15 November 2008 and 22 April 2009. But the latest issue in this area was the first online speech given by Obama on 1 April this year to the whole nation. The questions came from citizens and they also were responsible for selecting the most important ones. According to data from Ciberpaís, Google *Moderator* was used, available for anyone. 92,936 citizens joined the open conference, sending 104,031 questions classified by order of interest based on 3,604,666 citizen votes. The Spanish newspaper *El País* echoed Obama's very words when referring to the significance of the event: "What we are doing is an important step towards creating greater communication within this administration". The newspaper adds "In the Internet era, traditional press conferences are just another element when sending out a message and the president knows that. With yesterday's virtual conference, the White House targeted a different audience to the one that reads newspapers or watches TV news, a younger audience, the audience that constructed the innovative campaign that took him to power".¹⁹

Another unprecedented aspect in using the Internet to govern has been the mobilisation of his volunteers to get measures and bills approved for which Obama has had resistance in the Congress and Senate. The press reported on a mass door to door of Obama supporting Internet users to explain the new direction the president wants to take with the state budgets. Mitch Stewart, director of the website *Organizing for America*, has said that, on 26 March, the following message was sent to Obama followers on the Internet who were Spanish-speakers: "Members of Congress will begin debating President Obama's budget this week, with a vote likely set for next week. What you do now will decide what kind of debate they have: one that's dominated by special interests and partisan voices intent on keeping the status quo, or one that reflects the priorities of citizens like you. Call your elected representatives now to let them know where you stand".²⁰ Giving his opinion about this new communication strategy, Joe Trippi, former Director of the Howard Dean campaign said, on the *Radio Caracol* website last 20 April: "The twenty-five members of Congress who oppose Obama's plan to reform Public Health, for example, might suddenly find they are facing 25 or 30 million Americans. They're going to destroy them".²¹

Initial conclusions

As can be seen, the novelties provided by Obama's campaign with respect to the Internet have been both quantitative and qualitative. A study by Aaron Smith, specialist from the *Pew Institute*, shows how growth in all parameters by means of which we can value the campaign were exponential: 74% of Internet users in the United States visited Obama's websites to get information or take part in the election. This was also done by 54% of the adult population. It's the first time that more than half the population of voting age has accessed the Internet to follow the electoral process. In fact, all records were broken: 18% of Internet users posted some message on the various forums or debates or on the social network, 45% saw some campaign video online and 1 out of every 3 Internet users sent emails with political content to others. 83% of Internet users between 18 and 24 years of age had their profile on the social network. Two thirds took part in some political activity within the different virtual sites created by the campaign.²²

If these data are impressive, the qualitative changes reflecting how political communication is carried out are also highly significant. After Obama, whoever doesn't put Internet in pride of place in relations between politicians and citizens will be acting archaically.

In Spain, many of the most recent novelties, including on the websites of parliamentary parties, can only be explained after Obama's campaign. But the changes are spreading throughout the planet. The North American right has been inspired by Obama's use of the Internet to attack him and put their spanner in the works, as well as Russian President Dimitri Medvedev who, on 23 April, sprang into action and opened up a forum on the most popular blog website in his country. My own point of view is that, after Obama's campaign, political communication will never be the same again. But perhaps in a world as dynamic as the Internet, the most surprising thing is still to come. As notes the author of *Internet Politics*, Andrew Chadwick, the Internet is a completely contradictory medium and a large proportion of problems result from the speed of change, not only in the technology itself but perhaps more significantly in how people will accept using technologies in the political sphere. This tends to create an environment where each Internet technology appears to be dormant - perhaps for several years - before it is seized upon, developed and thrust into the political mainstream."²³

Barack Obama's use of the Internet has been a veritable catalyst, opening up new ways and kinds of work that will surely provide us with more surprises regarding the Internet's latent potential in the near future.

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Weblogs and electoral processes: the Spanish political blogosphere with regard to the 2008 general elections

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Abstract

Weblogs have emerged in public debate as an important element to be considered in election processes. This article presents the work in progress of quantitative and qualitative research of the role played by weblogs in the 2008 general elections in Spain. The analysis compares weblogs written by citizens associated with ideological networks with weblogs published by journalists or professionals within the traditional media. The results of the study show how citizen weblogs are more flexible in their coverage of topics and their frequency of publication is more frequent than those published in newspapers. On the other hand, even though weblogs expand public debate, their dependence on traditional media and their tendency towards certain ideological radicalism raises doubts as to the capacity of this medium to become an alternative to traditional political communication.

Key words

Political communication, Spanish blogosphere, political blogs, Spanish General Elections 2008.

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Resum

Els weblocs s'han instal·lat en l'esfera del debat polític com un element més que s'ha de tenir en compte en els processos electorals. En aquest article es presenta l'avanç d'una recerca quantitativa i qualitativa del paper d'aquest format de publicació a les eleccions generals del 2008 a Espanya. L'anàlisi se centra en la comparació entre els weblocs escrits per ciutadans agrupats a l'entorn de xarxes ideològiques i els weblocs publicats per periodistes o professionals adscrits a mitjans de comunicació tradicionals. En els resultats de l'estudi s'observa que els weblocs ciutadans resulten més flexibles en la cobertura temàtica i mantenen un ritme de publicació més àgil que els weblocs liderats des dels diaris. D'altra banda, si bé contribueixen a l'extensió del debat públic, la dependència dels weblocs respecte als mitjans convencionals i la seva tendència a un cert radicalisme ideològic qüestionen la capacitat d'aquest mitjà per erigir-se com una alternativa a la comunicació política tradicional.

Paraules clau

Comunicació política, blocosfera espanyola, weblocs polítics, eleccions generals 2008.

1. Introduction

The incidence of blogs as the main representatives of the different publication tools associated with Web 2.0 in the area of communication has been an undeniable fact for some years now. At present, with more than 133 million blogs available on the Internet,¹ they have crossed the frontiers of more technology-focused users to become a vehicle for expression in which the public at large participate. And although starting only recently, this is also the case of the main interlocutors of political discourse as had been configured in our society to date: namely politicians and the media.

In this study we aim to investigate the behaviour of the most successful blogs run by journalists and private individuals in Spain with more evident interest (due to their themes and to their ideological beliefs, normally implicit) in influencing public opinion. Within this context, the 2008 general elections undoubtedly constitute an unrivalled opportunity.² Not only because of the political intensity involved in election processes,

nor because of the process of swings in votes that inevitably must occur during the campaign period. In addition to these factors, which have an undeniable importance but are structurally related to any campaign, the 2008 election campaign can be considered as the one where politicians and the media finally dived into the Internet (although it was, almost always, with an instrumental interest). And it is also the campaign where the Spanish political blogosphere achieved, comparatively, a more evident presence in public debate.

2. Blogs in politics

Although, in Internet terms, blogs are a relatively old invention and, in fact, we can find a predecessor from 1992 (Baviera 2008; 187), their popularisation did not come about until the very growth in the web and the parallel development of the aforementioned Web 2.0 tools have allowed them to play an active role, namely during this decade.

In the political sphere, the first appearance of blogs as a factor that must be taken into account was in the democratic primaries for the US presidential elections of 2004. The governor of Vermont, Howard Dean, developed a campaign based on interrelation with the public through the Internet, in particular with the sector that best united ideological commitment and technological competence: "Democratic bloggers", who mostly supported Dean during his involvement in the primaries.³

Two years earlier there had been the case of the Republican senator Trent Lott, whose unfortunate words praising a pro-segregation senator in a public act ended up costing him his place as leader of the party in the senate. This happened thanks to the action of several different political blogs that kept public debate going on this issue until it was put on the media agenda, although the conventional press had ignored it at first. This cause-effect relationship between the lack of action on the part of the press, the perseverance of blogs in specific niches and Lott's consequent resignation baptised blogs by demonstrating their potential to keep debate active and to place issues on political and media agendas (Scott 2004).⁴

The importance of blogs in generating opinion did not go unnoticed by the two candidates, George W. Bush and John Kerry, who had already given them considerable attention during the 2004 campaign. This attention merely increased in successive elections, becoming crystallised in the successful campaign of Barack Obama in 2008, focused on coordinating thousands of followers joining the Democrat campaign to achieve a base with remarkably deep electoral support among the public (i.e. young people), which ended up bringing him victory.

This process, which was not unique to blogs (the use of distribution lists and social networks such as Facebook was also very important, to name just two instruments) has ended up clarifying, at the very least, that the communicative ecosystem in which we operate is a lot less clear than the one we used to have just a decade ago (López García 2006a; 237-241) and that influence in elections is no longer based solely on traditional means (Bimber 1998; 133-160).

A review of the Spanish case shows us that the evolution of the political blogosphere has been an equally fast process, starting precisely in the previous elections in 2004. At that time, the political blogosphere had a certain importance in the days of intense political debate after the attacks of 11 March (Sampedro and López 2005).

The experience of 11 March and the role, real or supposed, played by the digital media in the subsequent events, among them blogs, meant that a space for debate was created very quickly on the Internet channelled through blogs and social networks. The climate of ideological confrontation, with moments of great agitation (especially on the part of the conservative opposition) generated a suitable Petri dish to intensify political debate and especially its radicalism.⁵

For their part, Spanish politicians and the media, after an almost classic initial rejection of the new publication format,

started to become interested in blogs shortly afterwards, as from 2005. In 2007, during the elections for the autonomous regions and municipalities, we can find live political debate channelled through blogs both by political leaders (such as José Blanco, Rafael Estrella, Iñaki Anasagasti, Ana Pastor, etc.) and also by journalists and "anonymous" citizens.

It is within this context that we reach the general elections of 2008, where politicians clearly attempt to take over the technophile discourse and commitment to digital networks. Proof of this is the gesture of complicity given by the PP to Internet users in December 2007, when their leader, Mariano Rajoy, announced that he would eliminate the digital duty if they won the elections.⁶

At present, the Spanish blogosphere has already notably developed (Garrido and Lara 2008), with ideologically-based social networks (Red Liberal, Red Progresista) that are very active and with the systematic inclusion of politicians and media.

3. The 2008 election campaign from the blogosphere

The analysis we propose to carry out is based on reviewing sixteen blogs. The criteria for making what is, in principle, a considerable (from the huge range of blogs available decided to analysing news stories) but we hope also representative selection are as follows:

- Firstly, as is evident, their centrality in the Spanish blogosphere, their impact in terms of visits, the links they get, as well as comments and influence. With regard to blogs associated with the media, the previous factors are linked to the importance of the medium they belong to.
- Secondly, we have attempted to achieve a balanced composition from two points of view. On the one hand, ideological, around the left-right axis, where we find a 50:50 division; and on the other hand, topological, i.e. the origin of the blogs. From this point of view, we have found seven blogs belonging to key ideological social networks (Red Liberal, Red Progresista and Las Ideas) run by more or less anonymous citizens, and a further nine belonging to the field of the Spanish media and are run, in most cases, by journalists.⁷

3.1 Rate of article publication

A simple way to discover the approach taken by the sixteen blogs for the election campaign and their degree of involvement is to observe how frequently articles were published. If, moreover, we compare this frequency with that of the period before the campaign, we can establish base trends and observe if they were common to the majority of blogs.

For this reason, we chose to extend the study back to 1 January 2008, coinciding with the change in year. The recording of articles (and comments and, if applicable, also links) of the blogs were therefore as follows:

- Pre-campaign: from 1 January to 21 February 2008 (52 days).⁸
- Campaign: from 22 February to 10 March 2008 (18 days).

An additional advantage is that the period selected as the official "pre-campaign" lasts practically three times that of the campaign, something to be taken into account when comparing them in the table below (and that is also reflected in the calculation of the daily average).

These data allow us to extract, fundamentally, two conclusions. The blogs associated with the media are victims of the restrictions and insufficiencies that, on the Internet, mean they have to behave in accordance with the customs of printed newspapers. Moreover, since the people who write these blogs are, rather than bloggers, "columnists with blogs", their frequency is similar to the frequency with which they would appear in a press column: a daily article (in one, that of Javier Ortiz, correspondent for the hard copy newspaper) published almost always at the same time, with the "day's edition" of the digital paper. The same thing happens with the personal blog of Arcadi Espada which, not by chance, is called *Diarios* (although its frequency of publication is slightly less than "diario" or daily).

This means that their capacity to react and their dynamism on the web is much less, giving the sensation that they publish "the day's article" on their blog to a certain extent through obligation, irrespective of whether the issue they are dealing with is more or less interesting. We can see that, in fact, only one of the blogs associated with the digital media, that of Jiménez Losantos, has a frequency of more than one article a day and this only very slightly (1.1 articles on average), in the pre-cam-

paign (and we should note that Jiménez Losantos' blog appeared a few days before the campaign, so that the average refers to a short period of just ten days).⁹

It is quite the opposite (and this is now becoming the norm) when we look at the blogs of ideological networks, accompanied in this and other factors by *Escolar.net*. All of them, apart from *K-Government* and (by very little) by the blog of Marc Vidal, exceed the rate of publication of one article a day. And, moreover, many go way past this rate, to the extreme of *Contando Estrelas* with 89 notes published throughout the campaign (at a rate of almost five a day) and, in particular, *Netoración 3.0*, with no fewer than 109 articles published, more than six a day on average.

It's reasonable to argue that many of these articles are very brief or simply links or videos that lead us to external content (as often happens, in fact, with *Escolar.net*); or that their quality is very often debatable. Notwithstanding this, and irrespective of whether it is true or not, what we cannot ignore is that such a model resembles much more what the Internet public is used to - a fast response and varied content.

Simplifying quite a bit, we might say that, in the same way that press columnists (and bloggers) must choose a theme for each article, often the themes "choose" the bloggers, so that a new article tends to be published quickly (although this does not necessarily mean that the articles are short).

The second conclusion we can draw from the data is much simpler: although in most cases we can note the "election campaign" effect, with more or less perceptible rises in the rate of publication, these increases are usually higher when there is a higher rate of publication in the pre-campaign period. This is what happens, for example, with *Netoración 3.0* (going from 4.48 notes a day to 6.05), *Escolar.net* (from 2.32 to 3.88),

Table 1. Articles published during the campaign and pre-campaign and daily average

Blogs	Total number of campaign notes and daily %	Number of pre-campaign notes and daily %
El Mundo por dentro	18 (1.00)	39 (0.88)
Diarios de Arcadi Espada	12 (0.66)	30 (0.58)
Escolar.net	70 (3.88)	121 (2.32)
El dedo en la llaga	17 (0.94)	49 (0.94)
Presente y pasado	16 (0.88)	35 (0.67)
El blog de Federico	12 (0.66)	11 (1.10)
Las dos orillas	22 (1.22)	14 (1.55)
La caravana de Rajoy	15 (0.83)	0
La caravana de Zapatero	09 (0.50)	0
Netoración 3.0	109 (6.05)	233 (4.48)
Blog de Marc Vidal	16 (0.88)	48 (0.92)
K-Government	09 (0.50)	36 (0.69)
A Sueldo de Moscu	36 (2.00)	55 (1.05)
Desde el Exilio	49 (2.72)	72 (1.30)
Contando Estrelas	89 (4.94)	251 (4.82)
Batiburrillo	82 (4.55)	136 (2.61)

Source: authors' own.

Batiburrillo (from 2.61 to 4.55) and, above all, cases such as *A sueldo de Moscú* (from 1.05 to 2) and *Desde el Exilio* (from 1.3 to 2.72), where the rate of publication doubles.

In contrast, and once again blogs associated with the large digital media are "victims of their frequency" and their rate hardly varies, irrespective of whether the crucial day of the election is approaching, it's the night of the election, etc. The communication model that is being presented to the public is therefore very similar to the one that existed before. And more so if we take into account the fact that authors of blogs associated with the digital media almost never interact with their readers via comments. We believe, and it's worth repeating, that this approach noticeably reduces the effectiveness of their message.

3.2 Content

The quantitative analysis serves to define the existence, as a general criterion, of two types of blogs:

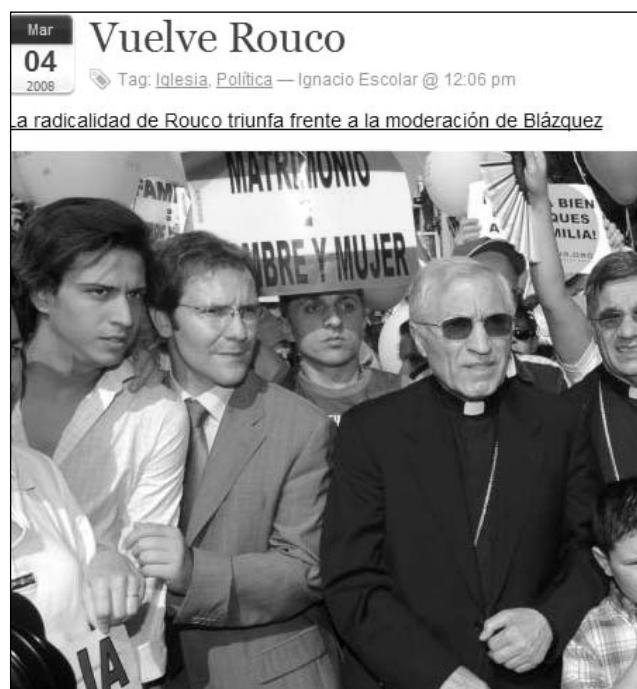
- Those developed "from the bottom" on the part of more or less unknown individuals (at the time they start to write their blog), usually members of ideologically-based social networks.
- Those generated "from the top" of a digital medium, normally in correlation with an activity already being carried out in the print version (a journalistic column or, in the case of the newspaper *El País*, the chronicle for the campaign).

These data place blogs of ideological networks (and most particularly the hybrid case of *Escolar.net*) in a privileged position. The question that must now be clarified is what novelties are offered, in terms of the discourse of these blogs or the presentation of this discourse, that make them an undoubtedly more attractive means of expressing opinion for the public than the traditional press column transferred to blogs (be it a real or metaphorical transfer) offered by most of the "traditional" media (and journalists).

Earlier we highlighted that blogs that are more popular among the public are less subject to "traditional" frequency (more or less daily): these blogs publish several articles a day, compared with the rigid daily publication of blogs associated with the digital media. Moreover, a qualitative review of these articles shows us that other additional factors differentiate them:

- The extension of the articles is variable and ranges from authentic "homilies" covering several screens to articles focusing on the recommendation of an external link or video. In fact, the very presence of links (as a core or complement to the written content) is innovative with regard to blogs, such as that by Pío Moa and Javier Ortiz, where there are hardly any (and even more so with regard to the blogs of *El País* and *El Mundo*, without any link in any note).
- The authors make great use of all kinds of graphic resources, such as image and videos inserted in the article to illustrate what they want to say or to express their opinions. For example, Ignacio Escolar published this news item in his blog of¹⁰ 4 March 2008:

Image 1. Blog published on *Escolar.net*



Source: *Escolar.net*, 4 March 2008.

Moreover, at times we find images modified by the same authors, generally for political purposes as well. As an example, we present this photo-montage of Zapatero, profusely published on *Batiburrillo*:

Image 2. *Batiburrillo* photo-montage



Source: *Batiburrillo*: <<http://batiburrillo.redliberal.com/>>.

• Finally, with regard to interactivity, the authors of this kind of blog make an effort (although not always) to interact directly with the public via the system of comments on the blog. In this respect it's surprising the amount of time these people dedicate to their blogs, given that they presumably do not earn a living from them, unlike the "professional" journalists.

If we look at the type of content offered by the blogs, the differences we have noted between these two types in various aspects once again emerge clearly from at least two points of view:

• **Thematically:** the concept of "current affairs" in the "journalistic" blogs tends to focus on the big campaign issues.¹¹ In any case, and as is obvious, it never leaves the sphere of political current affairs. The exception to this rule is given by the two blogs of *Libertad Digital*, which sometimes combine their articles on political current affairs with critiques of books (Jiménez Losantos) and continual disquisitions on the Spanish Civil War, a favourite theme of Pío Moa.

The blogs belonging to ideological networks offer, however, a more varied panorama. On the one hand, they focus on aspects of political current affairs that not always have to follow faithfully the agenda previously established by the media and can even reverse the process and generate news for the media (Drezner and Farrell, 2004; 17; Aran and Sort, 2005; 115; López García, 2006b; 51-55). On the other hand, they

sometimes transcend the political sphere itself. *Contando Estrellas*, for example, provides many articles that not only have nothing to do with the campaign but are not even related to political current affairs: critiques of films or books, videos from YouTube, photographs whose value is eminently aesthetic, etc. Marc Vidal combines truly political analyses with others on economic affairs, very often removed from the contest of the elections and/or Spanish politics. *Desde el Exilio* dedicates a lot of attention to lashing out at defenders of the theory of climate change.

• **Ideologically:** in general, and although it may only be due to the forms exhibited, blogs with an ideological stance show a degree of ideological extremism that is usually greater than that of their "mentors" or similar in the media field. They give the sensation that they are either emotionally involved in the political criticism they give out (or more involved than journalists) or that, simply, they are aware of their role as agitators or political propagandists.

In other words, the success of these blogs does not necessarily mean, and in fact does not mean, that their political discourse is more "moderate" or "rational" than that of the politicians or journalists. In fact, in most of the successful blogs, the discourse, basically and (particularly) in form, tends to be more extremist. These blogs work much better as an instrument to incite agitation and to crystallise unconditional affinities than as centres of public debate.

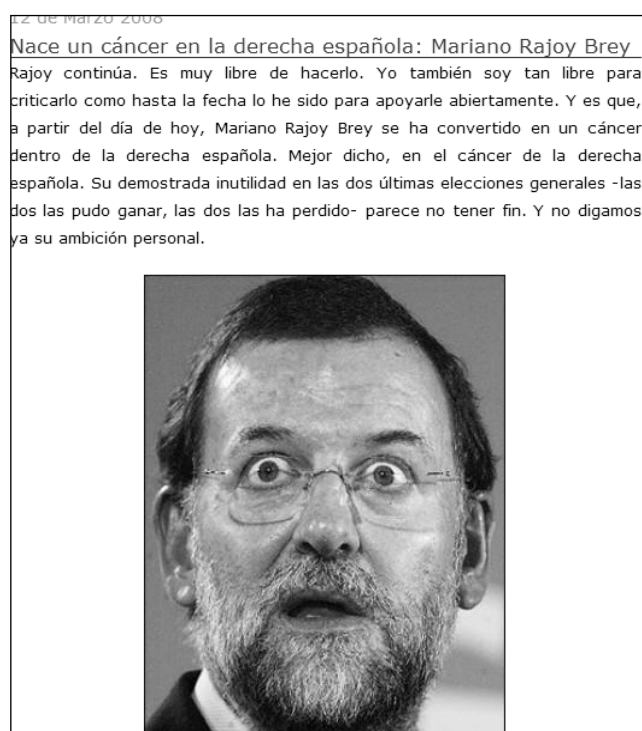
And it's worth noting that, without any doubt, this extremism is significantly greater in blogs from the *Red Liberal* than in those from the *Red Progresista*. This probably has a lot to do with the fact that the political party they support, the PP, is in opposition but also to the ideological approach taken for several years now by the *Libertad Digital* and the COPE, the two main media references for these blogs, to the point that some seem to act as a simple conveyor belt for their media "mentors".

A case in point is *Batiburrillo*, which strongly defended (the PP leader) Mariano Rajoy throughout the campaign (and the pre-campaign) for the election. But shortly afterwards, on 12 March,¹² it was asking, almost literally, for his head, as Federico Jiménez Losantos and Pedro J. Ramírez had done before.

This becomes quite clear if we look briefly at how they focus on the political events they cover. For example, the opinion given by Luis Gómez, author of *Desde el Exilio*, on the murder of the councillor Isaías Carrasco by ETA.¹³

The opinion given by *Batiburrillo* is even more aggressive, if possible.¹⁴ "In other words, a former socialist councillor has been murdered who was perfectly dispensable in the "anything goes" organisation chart that ETA has given as a pre-election gift. I wonder if those wielding the pistols have offered their client, whoever it is, a subscription for several legislatures." The implicit accusation is such that the author himself attempts to clarify afterwards that he does not believe that Zapatero had asked ETA directly to kill Isaías Carrasco. According to *Batiburrillo*, it might have all gone as follows:

Image 3. Blog published on *Batiburrillo*



Source: *Batiburrillo* <<http://batiburrillo.redliberal.com/>> 12/03/2008.

Image 4. Blog published on *Desde el Exilio*

Vota ETA, vota Zapatero (Act.)

Mar 7th, 2008 | By Luis I. Gómez | Tags: Elecciones, España, ETA, Terrorismo

Diálogo, cordialidad, talante, rendición.

Mis condolencias a la familia de **Isaías Carrasco**. Sus asesinos hubiesen podido estar en la cárcel. O haber carecido de medios para comprar las pistolas. Pero era preferible "dialogar".

Tristeza empañada de ira.

Nota para espíritus sensibles:

Que el titular es duro? Sí, muy duro. **Que la culpa de este asesinato es de Zapatero? NO. Ni Zapatero es de ETA.** Pero devolver el gobierno a Zapatero es justamente lo que quiere ETA con este crimen, luego votar a Zapatero es votar a ETA. Votar negociación es votar sumisión. Votar negociación es votar pervisión de las leyes. Votar negociación es votar financiación de ETA a través de sus pseudopartidos antidemocráticos.

Y termino: jamás he pedido el voto para ningún partido en este blog. Yo no. Lo digo más que nada por quienes están haciendo **propaganda y difamando si ton ni son** (interesante el comentario al final del artículo). Lean el blog antes de formarse un juicio. No dejen que les engañen en eso también!

Actualización, Lunes 10 Marzo 2008:

Muchas cosas se han dicho sobre este post, sobre este titular. Desde miserable hacia arriba la escala de calificativos con que he sido adornado es inmensa. Lo siento. Siento haber carecido en su momento de la

Source: *Desde el Exilio* <<http://www.desdeexilio.com>> 07/03/2008.

I will now present a hypothesis. One fine day, Zapatero, seeing that his re-election was becoming more complicated, probably let slip a phrase to one of his subordinates, something like: "We must win, no matter how. Remember that, if we lose, and it's not at all cut and dried, some people will have to leave Spain. The PP of today will lift up the carpet, unlike Aznar, and may find a whole lot of shit against us". So, "we must win, no matter how". This went down the chain of command and ended up with this person, probably a spy from ETA itself, who has the mobile number to talk it over with ETA, among other missions, and who does not hesitate to call them again to plan the affair. ETA people may be despicable but that doesn't mean they're idiots, as we saw just yesterday, and they are therefore rather unwilling for the supreme simpleton, better known as ZP, to lose power and consequently the presidency of the government is no longer a good deal for criminals."

There is no doubt that these ideas are located at the extreme right of the ideological spectrum. The question is: are they genuine opinions? Are the blog's authors also the creators of this "focus"? Not by a long chalk. For example, see the content of the daily article by Pío Moa on *Libertad Digital*, published the same day, 7 March.¹⁵

"Zapo (Zapatero) is the greatest collaborator ETA has had in its history. Zapo once again legalised ETA's political disguises, which means, among other things, that he gave murderers money from all Spaniards, he gave them the census of Basque citizens, he even made it easy for them to avoid legal persecution (...) Zapo's collaboration with ETA has legitimised murder as a way of doing politics and has fantas-

tically rewarded the murders, and thereby he is attacking the very foundations of the free society established thirty years ago."

The discourse of the "progressive side" tends to be much more moderate. However, this does not mean, at all, that it is any "less party-based". As with the "liberal" blogs, authors of "progressive" blogs clearly favour one political party in particular and have no problem in explaining this constantly. In one case, *A sueldo de Moscú*, votes are requested for (the political party) IU in almost all the notes published throughout the campaign (which is quite logical taking into account the fact that it is the only blog whose author presents himself as a political militant for a party and, moreover, is director of Communication for the Rivas-Vaciamadrid council, governed by the IU).

In other cases, in particular *Netorotón 3.0*, the judgment warranted by the policies and actions of the (socialist party) PSOE is always very positive. So, on 4 March, César Calderón wrote an article entitled "Zapatero wins the debate with proposals";¹⁶ on 2 March he unreservedly praises the presentation on the PSOE website of this party's electoral programme¹⁷ and a long etcetera complemented with equally clear criticism of the (rival) PP.

An exception to this rule might be Marc Vidal, who gives a (politically) less passionate opinion of what is happening in the campaign.¹⁸ The "victory of Zapatero with proposals" becomes here a "cheap and dirty debate between the two candidates to preside over the Spanish state, [but] I still have the aftertaste that what was said there doesn't have the slightest importance

for the final straight in the election campaign. Nothing would have happened if it hadn't been broadcast (...) An army of fans of each party were distributed around the radio and television broadcasters to flatter their leader of the day without providing anything and further swelling the beast". Although, it must be said, Marc Vidal is also convinced that, ultimately, "Zapatero won".

4. Conclusions

The combined analysis (qualitative and quantitative) we have carried out on the blogs in the electoral campaign and pre-campaign in 2008 has clearly shown that the approach taken by the big media for this format of publication is erroneous to a large extent.

On many media the blog format continues to be merely another publication format, without taking advantage of the benefits provided by the digital medium in terms of frequency, hypertextuality, multimedia, interactivity, etc. These are basic features of the Internet that become ultimately diluted by the force of journalistic routine and custom.

One part of the problem, in the specific case in point, is that the Spanish media took a long time to develop blogs extensively as part of the content they offer (Larrondo, 2005). Even today some of the most significant media, such as *El Mundo*, publish a notoriously inadequate and restricted blog format, without links or comments. The same thing happens with blogs started exclusively in order to follow the campaign, both on *El País* and *El Mundo*, where there are no links or multimedia integration and almost no interactivity.¹⁹

Given this slow response, blogs generated by citizens themselves, and in this case the most politicised and ideologically biased sector, started to establish a foothold on the Internet much more quickly. And, moreover, did so based on the concerns of their public and with the desire to keep up a rate of content publication that is particularly lively and in any case greater than the classic rate of the written press (the daily column).

We might say, using the opportune metaphor by sociologist Pedro Arriola (a privileged advisor to Rajoy and previously Aznar), that the strategy for success on the Internet has a lot more to do with the "fine rain" of blogs and social networks than the explosion of "blogs for", created with a specific aim on the part of the media (and political leaders who start up a campaign blog "for a", and then give it up). We might say that, with communication on the Internet, if the aim is to influence, this is achieved in the long term.

Of course, we don't mean that the most renowned journalists cannot influence the Internet public. To a large extent this is the same public. The question is whether this public is prepared to consume the same that, in many cases, it has already consumed in the press; to follow a discourse designed for a different medium and, very often, a different type of reader. It is

not by chance that the most successful blogs are those by journalists who bother to produce specific content for them, instead of rechanneling what they had previously published on paper. This is the case of Ignacio Escolar, and also of Pío Moa and Federico Jiménez Losantos.

This scenario leaves a lot of margin for "anonymous" citizens, blog managers, to let their message be heard on the social networks they belong to. In all, the fact that this is true does not mean, not by a long chalk, that these bloggers constitute a truly alternative or differentiated space of debate (and not to mention an ideological space) compared with what existed previously in conversations in cafés or in the traditional media.

Quite the opposite. The qualitative analysis has highlighted the fact that, with very few exceptions, successful blogs in the field of politics tend to compete with their ideological mentors in terms of their radicalism. Many blogs function as a simple instrument to echo political and media opinion leaders. In fact, many are created directly with this aim in mind.

The strong point of this communication model and this occupation of the blog format lies in the closed support of the traditional media which logically feels much more comfortable in this environment. It's not the only thing that can be done with a blog, nor does a blog make it impossible to have more impartial communication. The problem is that the nerve centres of the so-called blogosphere tend to concentrate precisely around this media system, either because they come from it (journalists associated with the traditional media, opinion-givers who place their blog as part of the content offered by a specific medium) or because, due to their success, they end up like that.

For this reason many blogs, and particularly those that, because they are dedicated to analysing political current affairs are located closer to this system, take a winding path during their growth, throughout a wide range of siren songs and veiled threats and promises. Possibly, together with hostility or ideological heterodoxy, the status of many of these bloggers as freelancers who keep up their blog as a simple hobby constitutes their main safeguard.

Notes

- 1 In: <<http://www.technorati.com/blogging/state-of-the-blogsphere/>>. In any case, we should remember that many of these blogs, the majority, are inactive or only sporadically updated. In fact Technorati detected "only" 7.4 million blogs with some updating over 120 days.
- 2 It should be noted that this work forms part of the findings obtained from the authors taking part in the R&D project "Cyberdemocracy in the 2008 election campaign. The citizen use of new technologies for electoral perception, deliberation and mobilisation", led by Víctor Sampedro Blanco (professor of Journalism at the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos in Madrid). Project financed by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science (2008-2010).
- 3 As rightly pointed out by the now classic study by Adamic and Glance: "Howard Dean's campaign was particularly successful in harnessing grassroots support using a weblog as a primary mode for publishing dispatches from the candidate to his followers" (2005; 1-2). Which undoubtedly led to savings for his campaign in financial terms: "In the third quarter of 2003, Dean's campaign raised \$7.4, of a total \$14.8 million, via the Internet, with a remarkably modest average donation of under \$100" (2005; 2).
- 4 SCOTT, E. "Big Media" Meets the "Bloggers": Coverage of Trent Lott's Remarks at Strom Thurmond's Birthday Party, 2004. <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/presspol/publications/case_studies/1731_0_scott.pdf>
- 5 This is the case of the, at least curious, movement of "Peones Negros", defenders of the conspiracy theory concerning 11 March encouraged by some journalists and media, among which stands out, precisely, the author of a blog, Luis del Pino (in *Libertad Digital*).
- 6 <http://www.elperiodico.com/default.asp?idpublicacio_PK=46&idioma=CAS&idnoticia_PK=469478&idseccio_PK=1008>
- 7 Two of these blogs present hybrid cases to a certain extent: on the one hand, *Escolar.net*, the personal blog of the director of the *Público* newspaper at that time, Ignacio Escolar, located off the *Público* website but, for obvious reasons, strongly interrelated with it. On the other hand, the personal blog of Arcadi Espada, *Diarios*, journalist for the newspaper *El Mundo*.
- 8 In those cases where the blog was started up after 1 January 2008, the ratio of daily publication is calculated based on the start date: for example, the blog *El Mundo por dentro*, which started up on 9 January, is calculated dividing the number of notes by 44.
- 9 The blog *Las dos orillas* is a dual blog that simultaneously publishes two articles at a time and, under these conditions, it cannot be said to publish more than one article a day.
- 10 At: <<http://www.escolar.net/MT/archives/2008/03/vuelvo-rouco.html>>
- 11 Naturally, the two blogs of *El País*, deserve to be treated separately, as they focus on relating the everyday activities of the candidate they are following.
- 12 <<http://batiburrillo.redliberal.com/011702.html>>
- 13 <<http://www.desdeexilio.com/2008/03/07/vota-eta-vota-zapatero-act/>>
- 14 At: <<http://batiburrillo.redliberal.com/011674.html>>
- 15 At: <<http://blogs.libertaddigital.com/presente-y-pasado/hechos-y-palabras-2993/>>
- 16 At: <<http://www.netoraton.es/?p=2072>>
- 17 At: <<http://www.netoraton.es/?p=2053>>
- 18 At: <<http://www.marcvidal.cat/espanol/2008/03/gestando-ladem.html>>
- 19 Only *La caravana de Rajoy*, the blog by journalist Carlos E. Cué on *El País*, offered the possibility of commenting on his articles. <http://blogs.elpais.com/carlos_e_cue/>

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The 2009 Galician elections through political leaders' blogs

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Abstract

This research has focused on the study of the 2009 Galician elections through the blogs of the leaders of the different political parties running in the elections. The study aims to determine if there is a relationship between how the various political leaders administered and carried out communication and political activity on their blogs and the election results. The research has employed a mixed methodological approach that combines quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. The study's findings indicate that certain features of the blogs analysed are closely linked to the change in the Galician government.

Key words

Galician election, communication, blogs, political parties, political blocks.

Resum

Aquesta recerca s'ha centrat en l'estudi de les eleccions gallegues del 2009 a través dels blocs dels líders dels diferents partits polítics concurrents. L'objectiu de l'estudi és esbrinar les correspondències entre la manera en què es va gestionar la comunicació i la política en els blocs per part dels diferents líders polítics i els resultats electorals. La recerca ha aplicat un enfocament mixt combinant dades qualitatives i quantitatives en la recollida i en l'anàlisi. Els resultats de l'estudi assenyalen que determinats trets dels blocs analitzats tenen una estreta relació amb el canvi de govern gallec.

Paraules clau

Eleccions gallegues, comunicació, blocs, partits polítics, blocs polítics.

1. Introduction

This research has focused on the study of the Galician elections through the blogs of the leaders of the different political parties running: PP, PSOE and BNG.

The study aims to determine if there is a relationship between how the various political leaders administered and carried out communication and political activity on their blogs and the election results.

The research does not aim to provide a causal analysis of the reasons for the electoral result in Galicia. Neither does it aim to establish any kind of determination between how the communication and politics were handled for a group with regard to specific electoral results.

It is therefore understood that there are many factors that affect the results of an election. However, our hypothesis has been that an analysis of the communication established by political leaders in their blogs has a certain correspondence with the strength or weakness of a party, entailing greater or fewer advantages when tackling an electoral campaign.

1.1. The 2009 Galician elections

The elections for the autonomous community of Galicia took place on 1 March 2009, producing an electoral shift in Galicia. The Spanish Workers Socialist Party (PSOE) that had governed in coalition with the Galician Nationalist Block (BNG) saw their hopes dashed of continuing in power, due to the absolute majority achieved by the Popular Party (PP).

The results of the 2009 Galician elections were quite similar to those before 2005. However, the surprising thing of the electoral shift was that it should occur after just one legislature of the government. Below is a table with the electoral results for 2009 and 2005.

There are many causes that have been attributed to the electoral swing. Analysts have noted, among others: the economic crisis and the scandals and corruption in the bipartite government (Oneto 2009); education policy concerning the Galician language and the "weak leadership" of Touriño. (Fernández Barbadillo 2009).

The most direct consequences for the parting government were the resignations of the presidential candidates for the socialist and nationalist parties, Touriño and Quintana respectively.

Table 1. Comparison of the Galician electoral results in 2009 and 2005

Results of the Galician elections						
	1 March 2009			19 June 2005		
Parties	Votes	%	Seats	Votes	%	Seats
PP	789,427	46.68%	38	756,562	45.03%	37
PSdeG-PSOE	524,488	31.02%	25	555,603	33.07%	25
BNG	270,712	16.01%	12	311,954	18.57%	13
Votes counted: 100%	Participation: 64.42% Abstentions: 35.58% Invalid votes: 0.89% Blank votes: 1.65%			Participation: 64.21% Abstentions: 35.79% Invalid votes: 0.46% Blank votes: 1.24%		

Source: produced by the author from the Galician government figures (2009).

1.2 Online communication in the 2009 Galician elections

The strategic use of the Internet's potential as a new communication channel was present in all the political forces. The parties' portals therefore included links to sites such as Flickr, YouTube, Twitter and Facebook, via which the campaign became more dynamic, accessing a younger public that are constant users of communication technologies.

On the other hand, from a communication point of view we should also note the rise in participative instruments on the Internet: blogs, forums, virtual communities, "social networks", etc. The latter have been growing among politicians. The significant presence has been pointed out of the Galician parties on portals such as Facebook, where the socialist candidate Emilio Pérez Touriño had 1,812 supporters on this network, and the PP candidate Alberto Nuñez Feijóo, with 1,758. (Gonzalo 2009).

Video has also picked up strongly as a means of expression. It's not surprising that some authors have classified the videoblog as the main tool in the Galician political campaign (Jiménez Cano 2009). An example of this can be found in the option of the videoblog as making the political message more appealing, on the part of the socialist leader Touriño and the nationalist leader Quintana.

2. State of affairs

This research is based on the field of research into websites, in particular blogs. The blog or weblog started in 1997 when Jorn Barge coined the term made up of the words "web" and "log" (Ortiz Barba, 2006:1). Blogs, also known as weblogs, "are a special kind of website: they are mostly made with predetermined templates, in general with comments online by the records and presented in inverse chronological order, with links other websites or online resources". (Gabriel Guerrero 2008:2).

As pointed out by Larrañaga (2007:16), blogs are important because they constitute a usual source of information among Internet users that is growing spectacularly, the number of

bloggers having tripled, going from 10.6% of Internet users in 2004 to 27.6% in 2006.

Beyond the growth in the number of blogs, the novelty is the appearance of new kinds of social relations by means of the technical resource of hyperlinks between different blogs that go to make up the social network or networks, also known as the blogosphere (Estatella 2006).

Drezner and Farrell (2004) have discovered that blogs can help to generate an agenda of critical issues, setting themselves up as sources of information for the mass media, thereby widening political debate.

The blogs under analysis are those belonging to the political sphere, going to make up, together with other online communication media, what has come to be defined as cyberpolitics (Amadeo, 2003), referring to politics carried out on the Internet.

Political blogs are the new agora for citizen participation and socio-political dialogue. According to Ortiz Barba (Ortiz Barba, 2006:2), political blogs acquired relevance and legitimacy during the US presidential elections in 2004. Since then, the emergence of political blogs has been unstoppable.

The research we have carried out is based on a study of political blogs made by professional politicians, in particular political leaders. This subject has been chosen, namely political leaders, as it represents a key element in the formation of opinion of citizens, as well as being legitimised by the fact that their group offers them as guides to political action.

The blogs of political leaders are characterised by their little presence on the Internet. In the case of Galicia, Roberto Vázquez has analysed their development right from the start. He therefore places the blog of the socialist member from A Coruña, Xosé Manuel Lage, as the pioneer in the jump to the Internet in January 2005, although he stresses that it has been irregularly updated. This is followed by the blog by the PP member from Orense, Xosé Manuel Baltar, and the Galician nationalist Carme Adán, from other political parties (Vázquez, 2006:482).

Blog analysis is starting to be a central theme in research.

Many variables can be analysed, depending on the focus of the research. From a political analysis, Torres Nabel (2007:104), in his study of protest blogs in the post-election conflict of 2006 in Mexico, analyses, among others: the content of the blog, the type of strategy and actions carried out by certain groups.

Other analyses have been carried out based on blogs as products of communication. Alonso (2007:2) has worked on a model of analysis that includes several elements: type of user, surfability, volume, structure and time-frame of content, interactive elements and aesthetics.

We can also find other kinds of very general variables that may be applied to any analysis: current status of the blog (active or inactive), blog structure (visual, technological) (Torres Nabel 2007:104).

An analysis of the content of political information must be based on the goals set by the researcher, in order to achieve these goals. This involves the difficulty of using variables that are totally similar to those of other research.

Given that our aim is to analyse how communication and politics have been handled in blogs, we have drawn up our own model of analysis that takes into account the variables affecting this phenomenon.

3. Goals

Overall goal:

Analyse the blogs of political leaders during the 2009 Galician elections.

Specific goals:

1. Discover whether the blogs of the political leaders from different parties have different features.
2. Establish to what extent the electoral results in Galicia are related to certain characteristics of the blogs.

4. Hypothesis / Open question

The specific goals above constitute a progression of specific points, it being our aim to answer the following question: to what extent do the Galician election results correspond to the characteristics of the blogs of the Galician political leaders?

The aim to find a correspondence must not be understood as an intention. It is far from our priorities to find necessary relations between the Galician electoral result and the characteristics of the political blogs analysed.

However, insofar as the blogs of Galician political leaders may be compared, we can relate these data with the election results as one of the possible variables that help to understand them.

5. Methodology

The methodology used is based on content analysis, a series of techniques created with the aim of serving to analyse communication (Bardin, 1977:13). Krippendorff (1990:28), one of its fundamental theorists, defines content analysis as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context".

To establish the sample of the different blogs, we have used the websites of the different political parties.¹ Given that the number of blogs of political leaders is few, most have been selected for the analysis: 13 from the PSOE, 13 from the PP and 8 from the BNG. The smaller sample from the last party is due to the absence of a larger number of blogs of Galician nationalist political leaders.

Blogs have been chosen according to the position of responsibility held by their leader, from higher to lower. More priority has therefore been given to the blogs by mayors, members of the autonomous government, senators, etc. and less priority to that of municipal spokespeople or the presidents of new generations.

The period of time for analysis was one month. The blogs selected follow a series of characteristics:

- Sites that comply with the blog format:² namely, their main part is made up of articles ordered in reverse chronological order.
- Blogs that have continual author activity in the month before the Galician elections, i.e. February 2009.
- The blog's theme had to be focused on political issues, excluding others such as: artistic, literary, philosophical, ecological, etc.

The number of blogs analysed was 34, which can be considered an intermediate point in line with other studies such as that by Torres Nabel (2007: 111), who analysed 20 blogs, and that of Gabriel Guerrero (2008:4), with 67.

The methodological difficulty lay in the small number of blogs among Galician political leaders, with the notable absence of the former vice-president of Galicia, Anxo Quintana, who had a video blog. On the other hand, the blog of the former president of Galicia, Touriño, didn't form part of the sample either as it was eliminated during the weeks following the elections.

The units of analysis chosen were the different entries made by the author of a blog to introduce his or her discourse, which constitute recording units. On the other hand, we have the context unit which is the blog itself of each of the political leaders.

The variables we have chosen are based on the aim for any researcher to be able to replicate the study. This has led to using a mixed methodological approach that has gathered and analysed both qualitative and quantitative data.

Appendix III contains the analytical procedure.

The methodological design was structured into four closely related blocks: burning campaign issues, interventions, blog political activity and expressive and interactive resources.

We have classified as burning campaign issues those of great controversy, with a regional or national scope, that appeared in more than two blogs from the sample.

Politicians' interventions have been measured according to the number of entries and the volume of words in each.

The block called 'blog political activity' has attempted to test the political atmosphere of the blogs: requests for votes; the kind of allusions to central and autonomous government; allusions to the campaign; and allusions to the political adversary. Insofar as they are present or absent and how they are valued, these elements constitute a symptom of the campaign's climate: from the most absolute relaxation to active, energetic militancy.

Lastly, the expressive and interactive resources as participation in the blog, multimedia elements and languages present also indicate features of a political party that is more open to society or more closed in on itself.

6. Findings

The study has highlighted the correspondences between the Galician electoral results in 2009 and the political communication and activity generated in the blogs of Galician political leaders.

With regard to the first goal, we can state that the blogs of different political party leaders show some dissimilarity. Focusing on the different political forces:

- Blogs for the Partido Popular (PP) have stressed regional issues in the campaign, highlighting central issues: language policy, the economic crisis and the expenditure and favouritism of Touriño. The number of interventions and their density was higher than for the rest of the parties. Political communication was more present than in the rest of the parties, with more references to the campaign and centred more clearly on pointing out the adversary (PSOE and BNG)³ and highlighting the negative aspects of the autonomous government. The expressive and interactive resources were high, similar to that of the socialists. However, the dominant language used was Spanish.
- The socialist blogs (PSOE) stressed regional issues but to a lesser extent than the PP, resorting to the politics of change as a *leit motiv* for the campaign. The number of interventions by each blogger was low, although with a similar volume of words to that of the PP and BNG. The PSOE was aware of being on a campaign but its adversary appears blurred in the figure of the PP. The expressive and interactive resources were high, similar to that of the PP. However, the language used was mainly Galician.
- Galician nationalist bloggers centred their campaign on fundamentally local issues. The number of interventions was very low, although the volume was similar to the rest of the parties. The political communication was characterised by focusing less on the campaign and asking for votes than the rest of the parties. References to the autonomous government of which they

form a part were very few. Only half the bloggers used multimedia resources. The only language used was Galician.

With regard to the second goal, it can be stated that the Galician electoral swing has a correlation with the communicative and political activity of the blogs of the political leaders in Galicia. This correlation must be understood as a more relaxed, less active predisposition, removed from the burning issues affecting the Galician community on the part of socialist and Galician nationalist bloggers.

- The interventions by socialist and Galician nationalist bloggers in the month analysed were fewer than those by the PP. While 46.1% of the PP's interventions exceeded a dozen a month, this only happened in 15% of the socialists and 12.5% of the nationalists.

With regard to the volume of the entries, we also find much more text in the PP's blogs. 76% of these entries exceeded 50 words, unlike those of the socialists and nationalists, whose figures are 61% and 62.5% respectively. This point must be interpreted with caution. Communication on the Internet must not be too dense because it can exhaust the user reading the information. In this respect, an excessive load of text could be counterproductive in order to understand the message correctly. However, it must be said that only 7.7% of the PP's blogs exceeded 200 words per entry, most being between 51 and 200.

- The absence of big issues that concern citizens was notable among the socialists and nationalists. While 77% of the campaign issues of the Partido Popular were wide in scope, this figure for the PSOE was 61.5% and for the BNG 37.5%.

On the other hand, the PP used the economic crisis and language freedom as recurring themes in their blogs, with a frequency of 61.5%. Unlike the PP, the PSOE did not have a clear *leit motiv* to support the campaign, resorting to the politics of change as their main weapon against Feijóo's team, with 38.5% of the blogs.⁴ Lastly, the BNG concentrated on local issues of little regional or national import. The crisis, with 25% of the interventions, was the issue with the biggest reach.

- Political activity in the socialist and Galician nationalist blogs was not very important compared with that of the PP. Although those blogs that asked for people to vote for their cause were a small majority of 0.8% in the socialists compared with the rest, it can be stated that the PP blogs were the ones that mobilised their electorate more extensively against the adversary. References to this are therefore 76.9% for the PP and 53.8% for the PSOE.

On the other hand, although the BNG mobilised its electorate against the adversary in 75% of its blogs, it forgot to appeal to the political campaign going on in Galicia at that time. Only 50% of the nationalist bloggers did so. There is the impression that the BNG bases its strategy on opposing its rivals, forgetting to strengthen its possibilities for the campaign, something which the PP and the PSOE always remember.

There is another significant piece of data that highlights the gap between the PSOE and the BNG, although they were two

parties in coalition. While the socialist blogger makes an effort to give a good image of the central and autonomous government, this is not the case of nationalist bloggers, who scarcely highlight the achievements of their own government. Also of note are the few references made by the BNG to the central government, focusing its politics on the local sphere.

- The expressive and interactive resources were worked notably by the political forces, except for the BNG. Multimedia elements were constantly included in most of the PP and PSOE blogs, using photographs and videos to enrich their information. On the other hand, 50% of the nationalist blogs had no multimedia element whatsoever.

Although the possibility of taking part in the blogs as high in all political parties, in the PSOE this facet became the norm.

Lastly, with regard to the use of language, the PSOE and PP opted for diversity in the blogs, with the socialists most often writing in Galician and the PP most often in Spanish. The BNG is a case apart in this point, as 100% of its blogs were written in Galician.

Below is a table with a summary of the findings from the content analysis carried out.

Notes

- 1** In the case of the PSOE and the BNG, it was enough to access the website of the regional party to obtain a list of the political bloggers. For the PP consultation, we had to access the national website, as the regional site did not have these data.
- 2** In this respect, other possible means of expression on the website have been ruled out, such as videoblogs, characterised by resorting exclusively or mostly to the format of video for interaction.
- 3** So, while the PP presidential candidate, Feijóo, refused to recognise the BNG candidate as his political adversary, refusing to accept him as part of the possible televised debate with the PSOE, the PP leaders refer to him as an adversary in their blogs on most occasions.
- 4** Of note is the paradox that the national PSOE would have carried out part of the campaign by pointing out the news concerning the corruption of the Partido Popular in Madrid and Valencia but, however, this issue was hardly picked up by the socialist bloggers.

Table 2. Analysis of the political communication and activity in blogs of Galician political leaders

		Campaign issues		Interventions		Blog political activity						Expressive and interactive resources			
Parties		Burning campaign issues	No. entries	Entry volume	Requests for votes	References central govt.	References autonomous govt.	References campaign	References adversary	Blog participation	Language	Multimedia			
PP		77%	46.1% + 10 entries/month	76% + 50 words	77%	69.2% neg.	84.6 % neg.	92.3%	46.1% BNG and PSOE	76.9%	38.5% Galician 45.1 % Spanish 15.3 both	30.8% photos 46.1 photos and videos 23% nothing			
PSOE		61.5%	15% + 10 entries/month	61% + 50 words	85 %	69.2% pos.	76.9 % pos.	85%	53.8% PP	100%	69.2% Galician 23% Spanish 7.7% both	30.7% photos 15.3% videos 15.3% photos and videos 30.8% nothing			
BNG		37.5%	12.5% + 10 entries/month	62.5% + 50 words	62.5%	12.5% pos.	37.5% pos.	62.5%	75% PP	75%	100% Galician	25% photos 25% photos and videos 50% nothing			

Source: author.

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- Alfonso Rueda <<http://www.alfonsorueda.blogspot.com/>>
- Ana Pastor <<http://www.pp.es/anapastor/blog.asp>>
- Antonio Erias Rey <<http://antonioeriasrey.blogspot.com/>>
- Anxo Quintana <<http://www.falaconquin.com/bng/quin/>>
- Belén do Campo <<http://www.belendocampo.blogspot.com/>>
- Blas García <<http://blasgarcia.wordpress.com/>>
- Carmela Silva <<http://carmelasilva.blogspot.com/>>
- Diego Calvo <<http://diegocalvopouso.blogspot.com/>>
- Dominga Brión <<http://bng-ribeira.org/domi/index.php/sobre-min/>>
- Eladio Osorio <<http://caldeadealadelas.blogspot.com/>>
- Fina Quintáns <<http://www.blogsnacionalistasgalegos.net/finaquintans/>>
- Francos Rodríguez <<http://www.blogsnacionalistasgalegos.net/francisorodriguez>>
- Iván Puentes <<http://ivanpuentes.com/>>
- Javi Dorado <<http://javidorado.es/>>
- Joaquín García Díez <<http://www.joaquingarciadieiz.com/>>
- José Blanco <<http://elcuadernodepepeblanco.blogspot.com/>>
- José Luis López Orozco <<http://www.joselopezorozco.com/>>
- José Manuel Becerra <<http://www.blogsnacionalistasgalegos.net/xosemanuelbecerra/>>
- José Manuel Lage Tuñas <<http://jmlage.net/blog/2009>>
- Juan Juncal <<http://www.juanjuncal.es/blog/>>
- Loli Rodríguez <<http://www.blogdeloli.blogspot.com/>>
- Lucho Lago <<http://elblogdelucholago.blogspot.com/>>
- Mar Barcón <<http://barconblog.blogspot.com/>>
- Miguel Fidalgo <<http://notasdemiguelfidalgo.blogspot.com/>>
- Paz Abraira <<http://www.blogsnacionalistasgalegos.net/pazabraira/>>
- Pepe Crespo <<http://www.pepecrespo.com/>>
- Rafael García Guerrero <<http://rafaelgarciaguerrero.blogspot.com/>>
- Raquel Jabares <<http://www.blogsnacionalistasgalegos.net/raqueljabares/>>
- Roberto Fernández Lores <<http://www.blogsnacionalistasgalegos.net/robertolores/>>
- Sandra González <<http://www.blogsnacionalistasgalegos.net/sandragonzalet/>>
- Santiago Amor <<http://santiagoamor.blogspot.com/search?updated-max=2009-03-01T01%3A19%3A00%2B01%3A00&max-results=7>>
- Silvia Carreño <<http://www.silviacarreno.es/>>
- Telmo Martín <<http://www.telmomartin.es/blog/>>
- Víctor Caamaño <<http://www.blogsnacionalistasgalegos.net/victorcaamano/>>

Appendix I. Political leaders of the blogs analysed

PP	PSOE	BNG
Feijóo	Mar Barcón	Francos Rodríguez
Alfonso Rueda	Carmela Silva	Roberto Fernández Lores
Diego Calvo	José Manuel Lage Tuñas	Sandra González
José Crespo	José López Orozco	Dominga Brión
Telmo Martín	Iván Puentes	Raquel Jabares
Javi Dorado	Loli Rodríguez	Xosé Manuel Becerra
Ana Pastor	José Blanco	Paz Abraira
Belén do Campo	Miguel Fidalgo	Fina Quintáns
Joaquín García Díez	Adriana Viz	Víctor Caamaño
Santiago Amor	Lucho Lago	
Juan Juncal	Blas García	
Miguel Prado	Rafael García Guerrero	
Silvia Carreño	Eladio Osorio	

Source: author.

This list includes: presidents, general secretaries of political forces, party coordinators, mayors, councillors, autonomous government members, senators, members of the national executive, municipal spokespeople and spokespeople/presidents of the new generations.

The blog of the former president of Galicia, Touriño, could not be chosen as it was eliminated days after the elections. The BNG candidate, Quintana, did not have a blog.

Appendix II. Table of findings from the analysis

Parties	Political leaders	Burning campaign issues	Interventions		Blog political activity				Expressive resources		
		Campaign issues	No. entries	Entry volume	References central govt.	References auton. govt.	References campaign	References adversary	Blog participation	Language	Multimedia
PP	Alberto Núñez Feijóo	1,4,6	1	2	2	2	1	2,3	1	1	1
	Alfonso Rueda	4	1	2	0	2	1	2,3	0	1	1
	Diego Calvo	1,4,6	4	2	2	2	1	2,3	1	2	3
	Pepe Crespo	0	2	2	2	0	1	0	0	1	1
	Telmo Martín	1,4,5,6	3	2	2	2	1	2,3	1	1	0
	Javi Dorado	5	1	1	0	2	0	2	1	2	0
	Ana Pastor	1,4,5,6, 12	3	3	2	2	1	2,3	0	2	1
	Belén do Campo	0	3	2	2	2	1	0	1	2	3
	Joaquín García Díez	1,10	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	3	0
	Santiago Amor	0	1	1	0	2	1	0	1	3	3
	Juan Juncal	1,4,6	3	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	3
	Miguel Prado	1	2	1	0	0	1	2	1	2	3
PSOE	Silvia Carreño	1,4,6, 14	4	2	2	2	1	2,3	1	1	3
	Mar Barcón	3, 8, 14	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
	Carmela Silva	1,2,15	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	3	3
	José Manuel Lage Tuñas.	3	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	1
	José López Orozco	3	1	3	1	1	1	0	1	1	0
	Iván Puentes	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	2
	Loli Rodríguez	1,3,7,8,9	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3
	José Blanco	1, 2, 3, 11	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	2	0
	Miguel Fidalgo	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
	Adriana Viz	7	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Lucho Lago	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
	Blas García	0	3	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	3
BNG	Rafael García Guerrero	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
	Eladio Osorio	2,7, 1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Francos Rodríguez	1, 4	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
	Roberto Fernández Lores	0	2	2	0	1	1	1	1	1	3
	Santiago Domínguez	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
	Dominga Brion	0	3	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Raquel Jabares	0	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0
	Xosé Manuel Becerra	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
	Paz Abreira	8	2	2	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
	Fina Quintáns	0	2	2	0	3	1	0	0	1	3

Source: author.

Appendix III. Analytical procedure

The analysis was divided into four broad blocks: the campaign's burning issues, interventions, blog political activity and expressive resources used.

A) Burning regional and national issues

0. There are no burning issues.
1. Economic crisis and unemployment
2. Corruption in the Partido Popular in Madrid and Valencia
3. Change/improvements in Galicia
4. Language freedom
5. Quintana as a problem: photograph of yacht, brother-in-law's deception, etc.
6. Touriño as a problem: excessive expenditure, favouritism, etc.
7. The return of Fraga
8. Televised debate
9. Free dismissal
10. Economic waste of the Galician government
11. Insults of José Luis Baltar
12. ETA
13. Feijóo as a problem: his lies, etc.
14. Garzón, Bermejo and hunting
15. The "decretazo" (decree)

B) Interventions

Number of entries/month

1. Between 1 and 5
2. Between 6 and 10
3. Between 11 and 20
4. More than 21

Entry volume

1. Between 0 and 50 words
2. Between 51 and 200 words
3. More than 201 words

C) Blog political activity

Request for votes

0. No
1. Yes

References to central government

0. No references
1. Positive
2. Negative
3. Neutral

References to autonomous government

0. No references
1. Positive
2. Negative
3. Neutral

References to campaign

0. No
1. Yes

References to adversary/ies

0. None appear
1. PP
2. PSOE
3. BNG
4. Other

D) Expressive and interactive resources

Blog participation (entries)

1. Yes
0. No

Blog languages

1. Galician
2. Spanish
3. Both

Multimedia elements

0. No
1. Photograph
2. Video
3. Both

E-ruptions in Party Politics?

The case of Web 2.0 and Norwegian Parties

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Abstract

This paper analyses how Norwegian political parties have handled the appearance of Web 2.0. The data consist of samples of the activity of all seven parliamentary parties and four smaller parties, mainly from the blogosphere, Facebook, YouTube as well as Twitter. The central topic is whether Web 2.0 has been a catalyst of "e-ruptive" change towards greater pluralism in the party system or more grassroots participation. The data indicate that the level of party activity on Web 2.0 roughly reflects the party share of votes, while a temporary enhancement of Web 2.0 participation from party grassroots and sympathizers appears to be reversed as the party organizations are now in the process of getting more control.

Key words

Norway, parties, campaigning, Web 2.0, Internet.

Resum

L'article analitza la reacció dels partits polítics noruecs davant l'aparició del Web 2.0. Les dades analitzades són mostres de l'activitat dels set partits amb representació parlamentària i de quatre partits més petits, extretes principalment de la blogosfera, Facebook, YouTube i Twitter. La qüestió central és determinar si el Web 2.0 ha actuat de catalitzador d'una "e-ruptura" que ha fet augmentar el pluralisme en el sistema de partits i la participació de les bases. Les dades indiquen que el nivell d'activitat dels partits en l'entorn del Web 2.0 reflecteix aproximadament el percentatge de vots que tenen, alhora que s'inverteix l'augment temporal de la participació de les bases i dels simpatitzants dels partits en el Web 2.0 a mesura que les organitzacions dels partits en van assumint progressivament el control.

Paraules clau

Noruega, partits, campanya, Web 2.0, Internet.

Introduction

Changes in the media environment of political parties invite speculation and claims about radical changes to the parties and party system. Howard Dean (2007) has, for instance, characterized the Internet "as the most significant tool for building democracy since the invention of the printing press ..(where citizens) can network with like-minded individuals to create a technology-enabled global grassroots movement". His conclusion is that "political parties have to evolve with the times: If we don't, we lose". In short, it works both on the vertical party dimension by empowering common citizens and on the horizontal party system dimension by changing the terms of party competition.

Web 2.0 is shorthand for a new breed of Internet applications for multilateral sharing, discussion and networking.¹ The collective of users becomes content producers, in contrast to Web 1.0 which represents an Internet based on unilateralism and a strict separation between content producers and users. This had led the OECD to use the term "the participative web" in their recent study *Focus on Citizens*, and "Participation 1.0" and "Participation 2.0" to differentiate between models of unilateral and multilateral communication (OECD 2009, 66ff). As

such, websites may be hybrids containing Web 1.0 elements side by side with Web 2.0 elements and be tilted more or less towards one side or the other. This article discusses the Norwegian political parties' adaptation to the Web 2.0 phenomenon, focusing on election campaigning.

In the course of roughly a fifteen year period, these parties have adapted to the rise of the Internet and established their presence on the Web. By 2005 this presence had taken the form of party websites geared towards professional political marketing, conforming to a standard resembling Web 1.0. If this represents a consolidation mirroring the standard business of politics, would it reasonable to expect that a Web 2.0 might trigger changes in how parties and activists operate on the World Wide Web (WWW) - or even how they operate as actual organizations?

Party theory suggests that, due to institutionally conditioned resistance, parties would resist or attempt to add web technologies as another "instrument" grafted onto the party organization. As noted by Harmel & Janda (1994, 265): "Party change does not just happen...", it involves decision-making, often against "a wall of resistance common to large organizations" (1994, 261) ... "A high level of institutionalization will therefore tend to stifle the effects of factors promoting change".

However, these institutional effects are balanced against political parties also being geared towards winning elections. They may not be the total opportunistic and single-minded vote maximisers as assumed in the rational choice model of Downs (1957) but the traditional ties between parties and voters have become dramatically weaker over the past 20-30 years. Political parties have therefore become more sensitive to the need to campaign and communicate with voters outside the "classé gardé" of the mass party model conceptualized by Duverger (Duverger 1954). Panebianco (1988) suggests a transformation into "electoral-professional" parties, both focusing on winning elections as well as a professionalization of the party organization by putting more emphasis on specialized skills.

Regarding the political parties' adoption of Web technology, Lusoli (2005) proposes that this is encouraged by what he calls "fluid situations" ("low voter turnout... an unaligned or dealigned political system... a traditional media system more or less in disarray..."). Of course, fluidity is not a sufficient condition in itself, as it has to correlate with widespread Internet access among voters. While this may provide a rationale for political parties to use new communication technologies, it does not necessarily imply any form of transformation of party politics.

Norwegian parties and the World Wide Web

Parties in Norway, as in most other established Western countries, have experienced environmental changes leading to the more "fluid situations" suggested by Lusoli (op.cit.), the most important being the coincidence of political dealignment (Dalton 1988) and increasing non-partisanship in the traditional mass media. The share of Norwegian voters deciding on party choice during the election campaign period rose from about a fifth to more than half from 1985 to 2005 (Aardal 2007a, 20). But as media campaigning has become vital, the parties now have little control over its form and content (Aardal et al. 2004, 17; Allern 2001, 125ff; Bjørklund 1991).² With an online population of daily Internet users reaching 66% of all Norwegian adults in 2007 (Norsk Mediebarometer 2007), the Internet offered the parties an attractive channel of direct communication.

By the 2001 election, 20 out of 22 registered parties had established their own website (Hestvik 2004), and the Web was fully integrated as a "normal" part of the parties' organization and communication strategy during the next five years (Saglie 2007, interviews). The development and maintenance of the larger and middle sized party websites were professionalized, while the website managers of the smaller parties were still unpaid activists. In the process, elements of multilateral interactivity via, for instance, open discussion forums were closed down, due to low activity, harassment and a lack of resources for moderation and participation by the party organization (Hestvik 2004; Saglie 2007; interviews). What

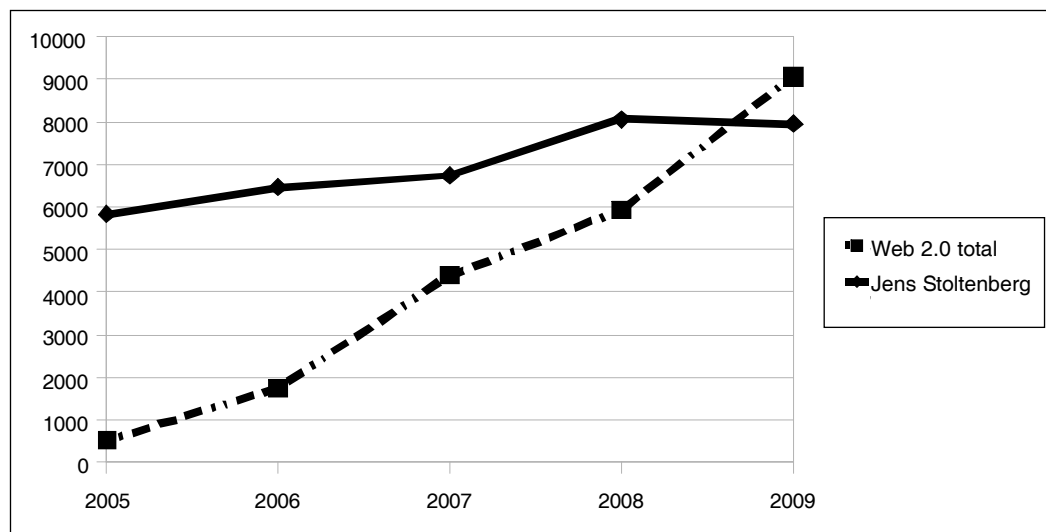
Panebianco termed "the electoral-professional party" appeared to have found its digital extension as Web 1.0, as a unilateral, professionalized channel through which parties could woo the voters. However, the Internet was regarded by very few voters as an "important source of information", and only 13% of them used party websites to gather information during the 2005 parliamentary election campaign (Karlsen 2007).

The following year the Web 2.0 phenomenon took off. The Alexa list of Norwegian top 100 sites (<<http://www.alexa.com/>>) in 2007 and 2009 included several Web 2.0 sites, Facebook and YouTube in the top three on both occasions. Flickr and MySpace appeared much lower (50th and 43rd position in 2009), while several blog sites also featured on the list. The major Norwegian social networking site, Nettby.no, figured high on the list, at ninth position in 2009. The much talked about newcomer in 2009 was Twitter, rapidly rising, but in late April still only at the 71st position. Media hype was perhaps as important in focusing politicians and parties on Web 2.0. Figure 1 indicates the accumulated number of articles in the printed press from 2005 through 2009 (estimate of whole year) mentioning a selection of Web 2.0 sites or concepts (Twitter, MySpace Nettby, Flickr, Facebook, YouTube and blog). Given the current trend, this sample of Web 2.0 will get more media attention than the Prime Minister (Jens Stoltenberg) in 2009.

Judging by comments in the press from the party leadership and leaders of the information departments of the major and middle-sized parties, they were all aware of the potential of Web 2.0 but also the costs involved in taking the leap (Aftenposten February 19, 2007; vg.no 2007ab). Questions on Web 2.0, as well as other aspects of the Internet, were included in semi-structured interviews with the web managers of all 11 parties, conducted immediately before or after the elections in 2007 (see the interview list at the end of this article). Information from the interviewed party informants confirmed this ambivalence among the majority of the parties (phrases like "opportunity and nightmare" were common).

Web 2.0: "E-ruptions" or "Web 1.5"?

Two competing scenarios will be used in the following discussion, an e-ruption scenario and a "Web 1.5" scenario. E-ruption rests upon the assumption that there are significant differences between old and new web technologies, as captured by the conceptual division into web 1.0 and Web 2.0. Time Magazine described this in 2006 as being "about the many wresting power from the few and helping one another for nothing and how that will not only change the world, but also change the way the world changes" (Time Magazine 2006). Pasqu et al.'s concept of "e-ruptions" refers to a "potentially disruptive power" contained in Web 2.0 (2007). While not focused on politics in particular, it is hypothesized that these technologies might be stronger agents of change than those

Figure 1. Appearances in printed press 2005-2009 reported by Retriever

Source: Retriever at <https://Web.retriever-info.com/services/archive.html>, 24 April, 2009

conceptualized as Web 1.0. A first type of vertical change can be deduced almost by definition, as the user is empowered to produce content, as well as to form or join networks. The second type of change is horizontal, as the technological changes may empower new or previously disadvantaged players. Translated into party politics on the web, the first disruptive effect would be that the national party organizations lose (or abdicate) control to local party branches and activists, the second that new or small parties get a chance to make themselves more visible and attract new supporters.

A less disruptive scenario is suggested through Jackson and Lilleker's analysis of Web 2.0 in the UK (Jackson and Lilleker 2009). Their contribution builds on the assumption that established parties enter Web 2.0 carrying a "mindset" of pre-existing goals and norms. This is not necessarily compatible with the inherent "mindset" of Web 2.0, where user control, participation and openness are norms that appear to be compatible with the technologies. This party "mindset" is the same as identified in the previous section, identifying parties as collective actors geared towards winning elections and as institutions resisting change. Hence parties may very well decide to jump on the Web 2.0 "bandwagon", to woo voters, or simply adapt to the media-generated hype on this phenomenon. But doing so does not necessarily imply yielding to the "Web 2.0" mindset.

As such, the Web 2.0 presence of political parties may indicate a clash of mindsets, as parties incorporate some of the Web 2.0 technology/applications but retain firm control of the user/networking effects. From the UK evidence, Jackson and Lilleker therefore suggest that "Web 1.5" gives a better description, as a hybrid of Web 1.0 regarding control and content and Web 2.0 regarding formal appearance.

For the "e-ruption" hypothesis to have any significance, at least some parties would have to use Web 2.0 elements, either

incorporated into the party websites and/or as profiles or groups on specific Web 2.0 sites. A second and related test regards the reach of these Web 2.0 elements in terms of actual users. If the Web 2.0 elements are present but fail to attract a significant number of users, the validity of the e-ruption thesis is significantly reduced as they still do not fully qualify as e-ruptions. What appear as formal Web 2.0 elements may very well reproduce the existing party system structure, as well as the internal party structure. Of course, a final test would be regarding the actual effects on voting behaviour.

The data presented in this article rely on a quantitative strategy to explore the parties' adoption of Web 2.0, rather than qualitative analysis of content. This strategy admittedly has its limitations in testing only certain aspects of the hypotheses. But it pinpoints some minimal requirements that should be met before entering into deeper qualitative analyses of the content of individual sites. For a given site, e-ruption in the party system structure would at least demand some deviations between party size and party activity on Web 2.0, including the activity triggered by this. Especially smaller and/or less established parties would be expected to use these technologies to make themselves visible and communicate with voters they do not reach through other channels. As for e-ruption in internal party structures, the Web 2.0 activities should be grassroots driven, rather than introduced and managed top down via the established party hierarchy.

Analysis: Political parties on Web 2.0 in Norway

There are now 23 officially registered Norwegian parties (Brønnøysundregistrene 2009). 11 of these are included in our sample; 7 parties are represented in Parliament while 4 are from the most significant parties outside parliament. The sam-

ple provides good variation in background factors, such as party size, ideological position and institutionalization, as summed up in table 1. The data on these parties on Web 2.0 was sampled during the two recent election years of 2007 and 2009, the first being local elections at municipal and county level and the latter being parliamentary elections. The two types of elections alternate regularly in September every second year. It should be noted that the 2009 data are collected at an early stage in the campaign, while the 2007 data reflect the whole campaign.

The horizontal dimension

In 2005 there were no signs of any Web 2.0 elements, apart from RSS-feeds on a couple of sites. By the local elections in 2007 most parties had started to at least try out the new technologies. But few apparently felt confident enough to market them on the main site. The exception that stood out was the Labour Party, who advertised their official presence on Facebook, VG-Blog, YouTube and Flickr. Most of the other parties were more cautious and advertised a single element, either Facebook or blogs, although other data indicate that they were present elsewhere as well. Only the Progress Party, the Pensioners' Party and Coastal Party did not advertise anything on Web 2.0. Table 2 indicates how far the parties have come in developing Web 2.0 as officially sanctioned instruments by 17 May 2009, 1 indicating presence and 0 non-presence.

These 35 Web 2.0 elements represent a considerable leap from the 12 elements registered in 2007. The Labour party

organization is still at the forefront but others have been catching up. At the other end, the smallest non-socialist parties, as well the Progress Party and partly the Christian People's Party, appear to be as hesitant as in 2007. This and the relatively strong official presence of other medium sized or small parties suggest that party size only matters in the sense of acting as a minimum threshold below the 1.9% of Red. Above that threshold it is a matter of taking a strategic decision concerning whether Web 2.0 is important enough to dedicate one's resources to.

Some key indicators on the political parties' relative shares of the most important Web 2.0 sites or activities are presented in table 3. While these indicators are crude and superficial measures, they reveal significant variations among parties, as well as among activities. There are five parties with roughly 10% or more of the activity each, Labour dominating by far. In total these 5 parties have 87.29 % of the activity, leaving slightly more than 12 % to the remaining 6 parties.

That the parties' share of Web 2.0 activity corresponds closely to share of votes ($r^2=0.79$), is not unexpected. Hence, the eruption thesis should perhaps be immediately regarded as disproved.

But there are variations that indicate different strategic choices about Web 2.0 activity and variations in the ability to mobilize. A simple measure would be the relation of Web 2.0 share to the share of votes, a score of more than 1 meaning a greater Web 2.0 share than predicted by share of votes and less than 1 a lower share. As plotted onto figure 2, it appears that 1 out

Table 1. Norwegian political parties sampled

Party	Votes (%) in 2007 municipal elections	Year of party establishment	Ideological position
Parliamentary parties			
Labour Party	29.6	1887	Left
Conservative Party	19.3	1884	Right
Progress Party	17.5	1973*	Right
Centre Party	8.0	1920*	Centre
Christian People's Party	6.4	1933	Centre
Socialist Left Party	6.2	1961*	Left
Liberal Party	5.9	1884	Centre
Non-parliamentary parties			
Red	1.9	1973*	Left
Pensioners' Party	0.9	1985	Centre
Coastal Party	0.2	1999	Centre
Democrats	0.2	2002	Right

* Party has changed name since year of establishment and/or merged with other parties.

Source: Kommunal- og regionaldepartementet: <http://www.regjeringen.no/krd/html/valg2007/bk5.html>

Table 2. Web 2.0 elements on front page of party website, 17 May 2009

Party	Facebook	Twitter	Blogs	YouTube	Flickr	Other	TOTAL
Labour Party	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Socialist Left Party	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Liberal Party	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Conservative Party	1	1	1	1	1	0	5
Red Electoral Alliance	1	1	0	1	1	1	5
Centre Party	1	1	0	0	1	1	4
Christian People's Party	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Progress Party	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Coastal Party	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Pensioners' Party	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Democrats	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	6	6	5	6	7	6	35

Source: authors' own

of 3 of the larger parties (>15%), 2 out of 4 of the medium sized (5-10%) and 3 out of 4 of the small parties (<5%) are doing better than expected. Labour, the Liberals, the Socialist Left Party and Red were the parties with the most conscious Web 2.0 strategy, also supported by the evidence from promotion on the party website. In all, the negative relation between size and relative mobilization is strong ($r^2=-0.4$). But while two of the three smallest parties are doing much better than expected, they still fall far below the other parties on almost all measures due to their low share of votes in the first instance. There appears to be a certain minimum threshold for disruptive Web 2.0 mobilization below the 1.9% level of Red. Above that, parties may mobilize and cause disruption, in which Red and the Liberals have been the most successful, although the sheer size of the Labour Party implies that it is also possible for large parties to use Web 2.0 to dominate.

But, as indicated in the introduction on parties as institutionalized organizations, one should not simply assume that the Web 2.0 is automatically adopted as an instrument. As indicated by two of the oldest parties (Labour and Liberals) being eager Web 2.0 users, established parties do not necessarily resist the type of change related to Web 2.0. Among newer parties, the Progress Party and the Pensioners' Party appear to be Web 2.0 resistant - or at least hesitant. Figure 4 uses the same measure of Web 2.0 activity relative to party size on the y-axis and year of party establishment on the x-axis. It appears to be a curve-linear relation between party age and Web 2.0 adoption, although parties established after 1960 are more eager to use Web 2.0. Using simple rank correlation, a Kendall's tau at -0.27 seems to confirm this pattern.

As for ideological effects, figure 5 indicates that all parties on the left appeared to have embraced Web 2.0, while the parties at the centre and right side of the spectrum were more ambivalent or hesitant. Using rank ordering on both the ideological and activism dimension, we arrive at a Kendall's tau of

0.55. This may indicate that the leftist ideological mindset is closer to the Web 2.0 mindset, although it does not appear to be a necessary condition, bearing the Web 2.0 activity of the Liberals in mind. However, the ideological position of the Liberals is also ambiguous, being a declared non-socialist party but also devoted to classic post-materialist issues of environmentalism and anti-authoritarianism, which puts them closer to the left of the Labour Party. If so, then Web 2.0 would be the expression of New Left values, which makes sense in terms of what is defined as the "Web 2.0 mindset".

The vertical dimension

During spring 2007 there was frenetic activity at the grassroots level. Local activists, party branches and sympathizers were establishing blogs and Facebook groups and uploading self-made videos. As for the party organization, interviews with the party website managers in 2007 indicated a more professionalized "Web 1.0" mindset. They were concerned about control and resources for quality assurance, in the sense that Web 2.0 activities should not be bad publicity for the party in question. But the party organizations hesitated to interfere and no one expected to fully monitor or control developments. Web 2.0 technologies made it easy for individuals and groups to establish a presence using the name - and even logos - of the parties, without the party's knowledge or consent.³ Even the web manager of the Liberals, the party that appeared to be the most enthusiastic about Web 2.0, was concerned that:

Until two years ago we thought it would suffice to own the domain name but now new places appear every day, using our name and even our logo. A lot of the people behind this are probably (party) members with good intentions, but the result is that we have no control.

As reported in the previous section, the party organizations

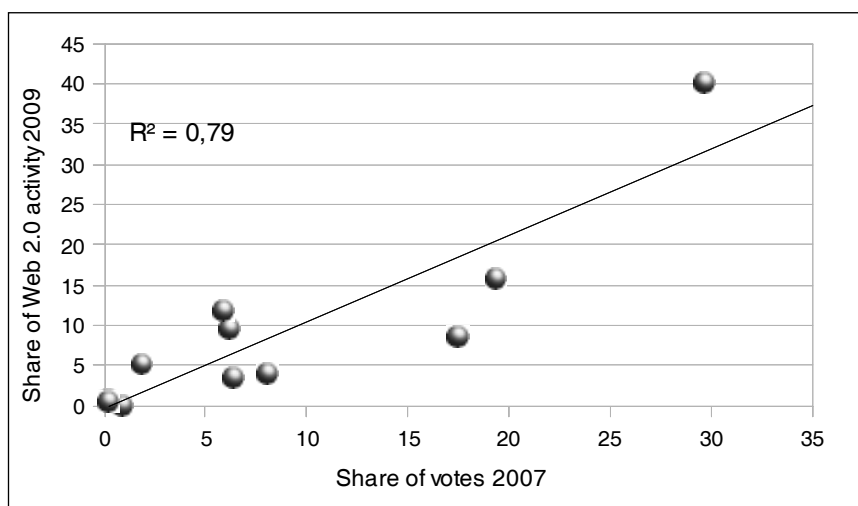
Table 3. Parties' activity on Web 2.0, spring 2009

	Blogs ¹		Twitter ²		Facebook ³		YouTube ⁴		Average
	Politicians	Leader	Politicians	Followers	Groups	Members	Videos	Views	
Labour Party	20,83	29,70	47,69	50,69	17,31	24,99	36,89	92,96	40,13
Progress Party	8,33	22,17	1,92	1,45	12,06	20,82	1,87	0,18	8,60
Conservatives	15,97	14,13	11,54	15,13	34,16	21,87	13,00	0,81	15,83
Centre Party	5,56	5,68	5,00	2,45	5,26	3,50	3,41	0,60	3,93
Christian People's Party	12,5	3,86	2,69	2,23	2,16	3,61	0,22	0	3,41
Socialist Left Party	11,81	15,73	15,00	14,76	8,96	7,08	3,52	0,11	9,62
Liberals	12,5	5,66	10,77	8,82	13,6	11,10	30,07	2,29	11,85
Red	11,11	1,42	5,38	4,48	4,79	5,32	7,60	0,87	5,12
Pensioners' Party	0	0,01	NA	NA	0,15	0,01	0,33	0	0,06
Democrats	0	1,59	NA	NA	0,77	0,92	0,99	1,88	0,77
Coastal Party	1,39	0,05	NA	NA	0,77	0,80	0,99	0,31	0,54
TOTAL	100	100	99,99	100,01	100	100	100	100	99,86
N	144	85098	260	55503	647	45766	908	189316	

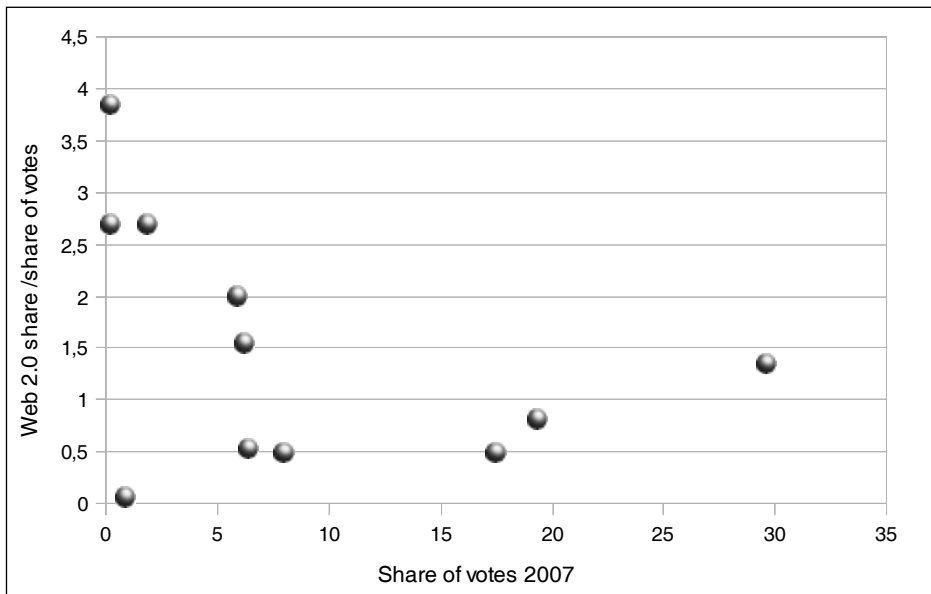
- 1 Blogs –active politician bloggers (<http://valgprat.no/bloggoversikt/>) 2 July 2009. No categories for Democrats and Pensioners' Party. Mentions of party leader in blogosphere (<http://blogsearch.google.com/>). 10 April 2009
- 2 Twitter – Number of politicians and their followers. Source Twitteringet <http://www.twitteringet.no/>, 19 May 2009. No records for 3 smallest parties. However, a search on party names revealed there is a small group for Democrats with 55 followers.
- 3 Facebook – Search on party name and abbreviation 9 April 2009
- 4 YouTube - Search under "News & Politics, Nonprofits & Activism", 9 April 2009

Source: authors' own.

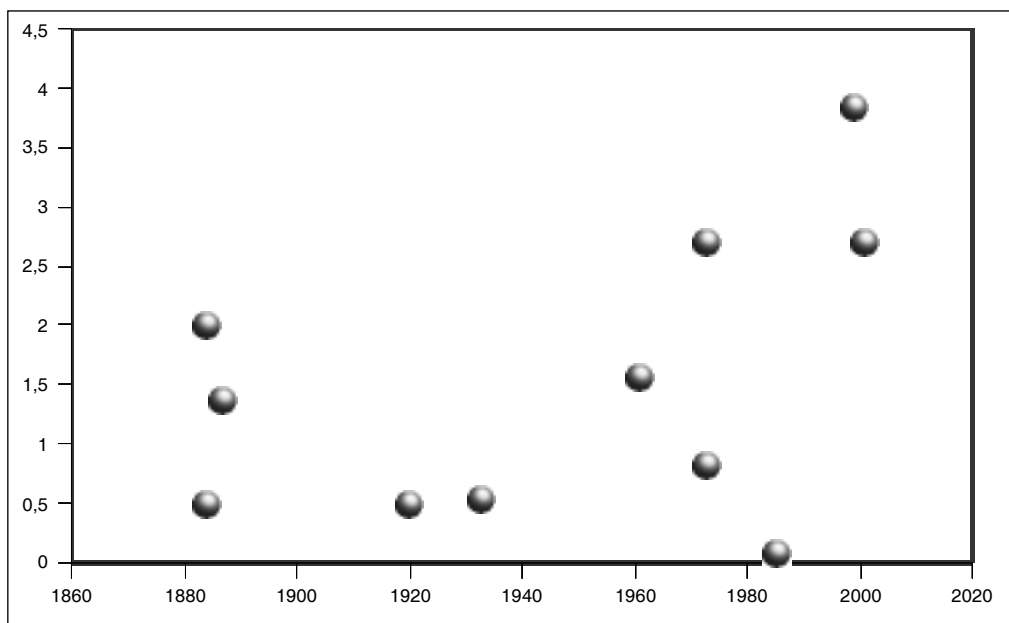
Figure 2. Share of Web 2.0 activity in 2009 and votes in 2007



Source: authors' own

Figure 3. Relative Web 2.0 mobilization

Source: authors' own.

Figure 4. Relative Web 2.0 activity and year of party establishment

Source: authors' own.

became increasingly proactive on Web 2.0 from 2007 to 2009, establishing official sites or pages they could control, and they felt assured enough to advertise. Still, below this official Web 2.0 layer, the large unofficial and unadvertised layer established from the start has continued to exist.

Blogging is perhaps the most vital part of this layer, being the strictest individual and personal element in the Web 2.0 “mindset”. The party informants recognized this and felt blogging was something the party organization should not interfere with. On the other they were concerned that blog readers could mistake individual opinions for official party policy. As such, this expresses awareness of the principal differences between Web 1.0 and 2.0.

The exact number of party political blogs is not known but the most comprehensive Norwegian site on the subject (Valgprat.no 2009) has registered 5,675 posts and 173 political blogs which can be categorized under distinct parties. Party leaders appear mostly as reluctant bloggers. Since the election campaign in 2005, the media has set up dedicated blogging forums for the parties, leaving them very little choice. VG-Blog in the Web edition of VG has been the most important and by 2009 all party leaders, except the leader of the Pensioners’ Party, had their own blogs here. But apart from the leaders of the Liberals and partly the Conservatives, the Democrats and the Coastal Party, the level of activity has been low since the end of the election campaign in 2007.

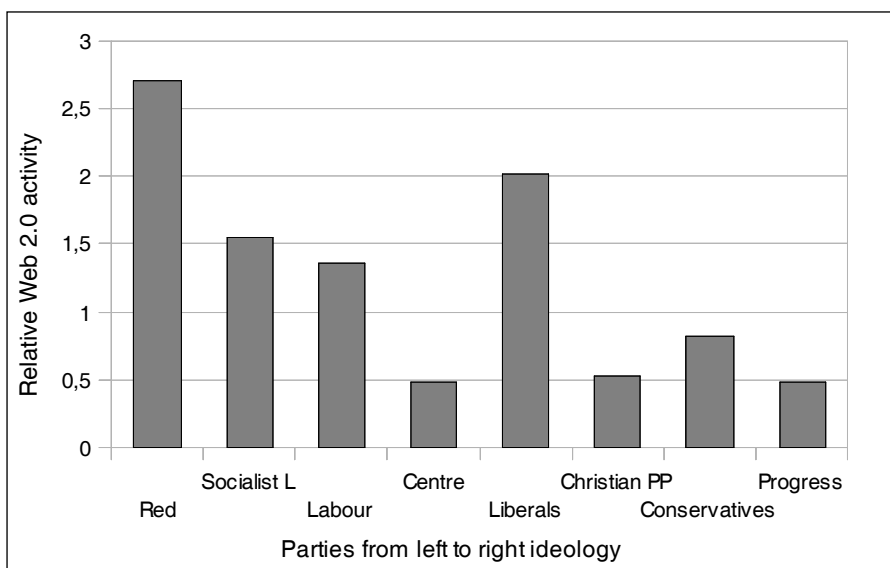
Furthermore, only three parties (the Liberals, the Conservatives and the Christian People’s Party) found it worthwhile to link to their leader’s blog on VG-blog or elsewhere. This may be a reflection of the problem of blogging on behalf of institutions such as political parties. Besides the obvious bad publicity of not having time to update, an individual blogger like the party leader also acts as the representative of the institution. This is

restrictive for the blogger role but, for the party, a blogger uninhibited by such restrictions may appear as a loose cannon. Of course, a depersonalized or (self)censored form of blogging is probably not very attractive for blog readers.

While at least 5 blogs in the Twingly Top 100 of Norwegian blogs could be identified with politicians from specific parties, none of these were party leader blogs. Four of them had ten times as many reported links on the WWW as the most popular party leader blog, and the fifth still outperformed all the party leader blogs added together (347 versus 256 links) (Google Web). Hence blog successes of other party politicians lower in the ranks indicate the potential for getting exposure, providing one dedicates time to updating and conforms more to the Web 2.0 mindset. Still, there is a considerable focus on party leaders among bloggers,⁴ closely correlated with party size ($r^2=0.85$). While party leader position is no guarantee for success as a blogger, such success is not a necessary condition for party leaders to get attention in the blogosphere. The party leader position in itself and size of the party in question is what decides.

In 2009 microblogging, and Twitter in particular, became the fastest growing member community on the WWW in Norway and globally (Nielsen 2009, Tvitte.no 2009). On Twitter the party organizations apparently have taken a pro-active approach from the start. By May 2009, 9 of the 11 parties in the sample were already established with an official profile for the party, the party leader, or both, 6 of these linked to the party website. These 11 profiles had 30% of all 65,235 followers of the 260 party politicians with registered Twitter profiles (Twittertinget 2009). However, they had just posted 6.27% of the tweets, so Twitter was a considerable outlet for other than the party organization and/or leader as such, although the attention is skewed in favour of the leader and the organization.

Figure 5. Relative party Web 2.0 activity and party ideology



Source: authors' own.

As for online party political videos, by the start of the 2007 election campaign YouTube was the leading website. But in 2007 other sites provided by national media, such as the VG-owned snutter.no and Nettavisen Video (<http://www.2play.no/>) were important video outlets dominated by local branches, candidates and activists. By 2009 YouTube's role appears even stronger, through more activity from the national party organizations, while local activity on the other sites appeared more or less to be dormant after the local elections. Five national party organizations; the Liberals, Labour, the Conservatives, the Centre Party and Red, established official channels on YouTube five months or less before the 2007 election and, by April 2009, only the Pensioners' Party and the Christian People's Party were absent. That only 1 out of 5 channels were linked from the party website in 2007, compared with 6 out of 9 in 2009, further indicates that YouTube is well on its way to becoming an established part of the parties' communication strategies. Still, searches on party name indicate that the number of videos related to the parties outside the official channels at least matches the 268 and 420 videos found there in 2007 and 2009.

In tandem with the general explosive growth of Facebook in Norway in 2007, at least 326 groups with 21,721 members sympathizing with particular Norwegian parties were established within a few months leading up to the local elections in September.⁵ Only the Conservatives, the Labour Party and the Centre Party established groups to represent the national party organizations,⁶ sanctioned through a link from the main party website. By April 2009, as the parties were preparing for the parliamentary campaign, this situation changed somewhat. 5 parties now had an official national page or group, visibly linked from the party website, and all parties had supporter groups on Facebook. The number of party-relevant groups and their membership has more than doubled, to at least 647 groups with 45,766 members. Another important change on Facebook in 2009 was the 6 official supporter groups or pages for the leaders of all the major or medium parties, except the Christian People's Party and the Socialist Left Party, as well as one for the leader of the Democrats. These had 39,439 members or followers, which accounted for almost as much as membership in party groups.

Norwegian social networking sites contain little party political activity compared to Facebook. The generally popular Nettby.no had 38 local and unofficial groups with 2,780 members, supporting almost all political parties. However, the much smaller network site Origo.no (<http://origo.no/>) is more interesting, as it may indicate a new direction towards an integrated and national party web strategy. 7 national political parties have recently established their own "zones", which may include blogs, collaborative tools, calendars or traditional web pages, also incorporating the activities of local branches and individual politicians. By 23 June 2009 these 7 "zones" had 1,145 members, the Labour Party once more dominant with 961 of these members in their "zone". Due to the few mem-

bers, Origo.no may appear insignificant in the short run but points to a future trend of greater integration, with the Labour Party leading the way. They are clearly inspired by Obama, even imitating the approach by the address and name, which translates to mylabourparty.no.

As the overall party political activity on Web 2.0 probably has more than doubled from 2007 and 2009, the national party organizations are now well on their way towards coordinating the activity. The ad hoc and somewhat chaotic characteristics from the Web 2.0 campaign of 2007 are being ironed out. Most national party websites give clear cues as to the official presence of the party on Web 2.0 and top politicians are more established through blogs, profiles and official fan pages. Furthermore, as noted, the use of Origo.no points to an ambition of greater integration of Web activities. The very nature of Web 2.0 means that there still is – and will be – a myriad of independent political blogs, Twitter profiles, unofficial Facebook groups and YouTube channels. But overall the signs of a moderate vertical e-ruption in 2007, triggered by the rapid introduction of new technology under the particular circumstances of local rather than national elections, have now weakened.

Discussion and conclusion

As indicated earlier in this article, the development of the Web (1.0) suggests that, after a period of transition, political parties adapt new technology according to the "electoral-professional" party model. As for Web 2.0, the "e-ruption scenario" of Pascu et al. (2007) suggested that these particular technologies might be stronger agents of change than those conceptualized as Web 1.0, while the "Web 1.5" scenario suggested that technologies would be adapted to existing party models.

For all its limitations, the material presented here on the Norwegian case indicates weak e-ruptions, first and foremost in the pioneering phase of the political application Web 2.0 technology. E-ruptions on the horizontal dimension should be evident due to the fact that new or small parties in the party system get a chance to make themselves more visible and attract new supporters, at the expense of larger and more established parties. There are some trends in this direction, indicating that, given a minimum of resources, parties and activists can decide to be "big in Web 2.0 politics" – or decide not to. Still, the parties' share of activities on Web 2.0 has mainly followed what might be expected from their share of votes in 2007. The deviations are probably too small to significantly offset the competition for votes. Furthermore, some of the previously hesitant larger parties seemed to have become more proactive by 2009, indicating that any modest disruptive effect may be reduced over time. On the vertical dimension, one disruptive effect would be if the national party organizations lost (or abdicated) control to local party branches and activists. The material suggests that the role of the national party organizations and their leaders has increased significant-

ly from 2007 to 2009. The situation in 2007 may partly be interpreted as ad hoc anarchy due to the sudden introduction of new technologies combined with it being a local election year. However, over time the local versus national elections 2-year cycles in themselves will probably continue to have an effect. But this activity cycle will probably take place within a more integrated and proactive party strategy, as indicated by the guidance and cues provided on party websites, as well as setting up party specific networks or “zones” on places like Origo.no.

The developments analyzed indicate that the potential of e-ruptions is contained and has not changed over time, at least in our particular case. The less disruptive scenario of Jackson and Lilleker’s Web 1.5 (2009) appears to be the most realistic. Established parties may indeed enter Web 2.0 carrying the “mindset” of pre-existing goals and norms, inherent to institutionalized organizations. Although deviating from the alleged Web 2.0 “mindset” of user control, participation and openness, parties jump on “the bandwagon” without necessarily implies yielding to this. Of course, this also may lead to questions about the actual validity of the assumptions that there is such a distinct Web 2.0 “mindset” in the first place. As parties incorporate some of the Web 2.0 technology/applications but retain firm control of the user/networking effects, this indicates the technological determinism behind such assumptions.

However, Web 2.0 may have little political significance, both in its “e-ruption” or Web 1.5 format, given its modest reach in terms of actual users. Of course this is most serious for the overall validity of the e-ruption thesis, as even an actual e-ruption within the Web 2.0-sphere would have a small effect on changing actual voting behaviour or more demanding political activism. For any e-ruption to spill over into electoral politics, Web 2.0 elements have to attract – and influence the decisions of – a significant number of the 3.5 million Norwegian voters. Although the party political Web 2.0 has grown significantly since 2007, by April 2009 it still only consists of, for instance, 55,503 followers of politicians on Twitter, 45,766 members of party political groups on Facebook, while the videos on the party channels on YouTube had a total of 189,316 views. Activity will undoubtedly increase, especially during the months leading up to the elections in September 2009. But for now, the “potential disruptive power” attributed to Web 2.0 by the “e-ruption” thesis should at best be regarded as a potential yet to be fulfilled on the horizontal dimension of party competition. The Progress Party’s strategy of almost neglecting Web 2.0 in favour of established mass media and the party web site seems rational, at least in the short term.

One possible qualification to this argument, which has not been examined here, is that the viral quality attributed to Web 2.0 need not be limited to Web 2.0 itself. This qualification builds partially on the two-step hypothesis formulated by Lazarsfeld and his collaborators (Lazarsfeld et al. 1944, Katz & Lazarsfeld 1955). According to the Lazarsfeld thesis, the voting decisions of relatively few voters may change directly as the

result of mediated messages. But substantial effects may still occur if the few active media users act as opinion leaders within their own social networks. Furthermore, we may also add an indirect two-step effect through the established mass media, as journalists report on parties’ use of Web 2.0, retrieve information from Web 2.0 sites such as Twitter, or may even become more sympathetic to parties through such sites. Hence the minority that participates in the digital social networks on Web 2.0 may act as hubs, interconnecting these with actual social networks or the public at large. The Lazarsfeld thesis is a reminder that the importance of Web 2.0 may be underestimated as a tool for mobilizing or organizing voters and activists in actual social networks. But it should be added that, as Web 2.0 stands for multilateral communication, it will also intermediate support or opposition from these networks.

Success stories of Internet campaigning, and especially the campaigns of Howard Dean and recently Barack Obama, have had a significant impact on Norwegian media and party strategists (Digi.no 2008ab). Comments like the one quoted below are quite common:

Norwegian politicians have a lot to learn from Obama and his staff when it comes to running electoral campaigns. In particular, they should notice his priority of digital media, a part of the campaign which can be run without especially high costs. (Digi.no 2008a, my translation)

But some vital contextual differences between the American and Norwegian party systems should be noted. The party system and the party organizations in the USA and Norway are quite simply different entities. The size and diversity of both population and territory place different demands on local networking and autonomy, as well as effective coordination and communication between the localities. Furthermore, American parties have a much looser organizational structure, with relatively few members and often dormant local branches. Norwegian parties on the other hand are still relatively strong organizations and less reliant on ad hoc networking. Thirdly, American elections are candidate-centred, in contrast to the party-centred approach found in Norway. These differences may be reduced over time, as Norway – along with other European countries – is approaching a model with detached local branches, disloyal voters, fewer members and more focus on individual leaders. But they are still significant enough to warrant the question as to whether Web 2.0 is more functional for American parties and therefore more “rational” to use for winning elections, exactly because these parties are more like network parties in the first place (Anstead & Chadwick 2008).

Notes

- 1 Cormode and Krishnamurthy (2008) has a thorough discussion of Web 2.0, as opposed to Web 1.0
- 2 The lack of control in the Norwegian case is amplified by a long-standing ban on political advertising on TV. This ban may be lifted after a recent judgment by the European Court of Human Rights (2008).
- 3 When party informants were asked about activity on Web 2.0. "... as far as I know" was a frequent addition to their statements.
- 4 Mentions of party leader (full name) on blogs per 10 April 2009, according to Google Blogsearch
- 5 Search on party name and -abbreviation on 15 August 2007
- 6 Facebook group IDs; Conservatives: 2431161089, Labour Party 2421715973 and Centre Party 2256306844.

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The impact of political events on blog conversational patterns: two cases from Greece

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Abstract

Blogs are becoming a major source of communication, a good way of circulating new ideas, producing a well-informed public and helping people's participation in political processes. This paper studies how two recent political events about the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement, are discussed through blogs. It uses Social Networking Theory and Statistical Analysis to examine whether political polarization is reproduced in blogging, for the Greek case. The paper also considers how different political events have a different impact on the polarization of bloggers' political communication. Findings suggest that polarization is reflected in blogs' conversational patterns. Debate events are associated with more polarized social networks of blogs.

Key words

Political blogs, links distribution, social networking, focal points, Greece.

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Resum

Els blocs s'estan convertint en una de les principals fonts de comunicació, una bona manera de difondre noves idees, produir un públic ben informat i fomentar la participació popular en els processos polítics. Aquest article analitza com es debaten a través dels blocs dos fets polítics recents sobre el Moviment Socialista Panhel·lènic. L'article utilitza la teoria de les xarxes socials i l'anàlisi estadística per determinar si la polarització política es reproduceix en els blocs en el cas grec. L'article també analitza com diferents fets polítics tenen diferents impactes sobre la polarització de la comunicació política dels blocs. Les dades obtingudes indiquen que la polarització es reflecteix en els models conversacionals dels blocs. Els episodis de debats estan associats amb xarxes socials de blocs més polaritzades.

Paraules clau

Blocs polítics, distribució d'enllaços, xarxes socials, pols d'atracció, Grècia.

Introduction

Web 2.0 brings significant changes to the way Internet is used (Yap et al. 2008). It offers a plethora of social media including blogs; file, photo and video sharing systems like YouTube, Flickr, SlideShare; social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, SecondLife; wikis like the collaborative encyclopaedia Wikipedia; and RSS and atom feeds that keep users updated with the latest web content. One of the key characteristics of Web 2.0 is the idea of User Generated Content. Users have the ability to create their own content rather than passively consume what is created for them by others (Zappen et al. 2008, 17-25).

In the political context, use of the Internet makes information more compelling, lowers the costs of participation and creates new opportunities for involvement (Turnšek and Jankowski 2008). More specifically, Web 2.0 has created an architecture of participation (O'Reilly 2005) which, in terms of political discourse, facilitates the co-production of information and social networking, offers spaces for individuals to interact and encourages bottom-up communication (Lilleker and Jackson 2008).

Barger (1997) used the term weblog for first time and defined blog as "a web page where a blogger 'logs' all the other web pages he finds interesting". Later on Drezner and Farrell (2004) defined a blog as "A web page with minimal to no external editing, providing on-line commentary, periodically updated and presented in reverse chronological order, with hyperlinks to other online sources". The term blogosphere refers to weblogs as a social network (Hill 2004).

"A major attraction of weblogs is their relative ease of construction/updating and the lack of the need or any special skills in web design or of HTML coding" claimed Pedley (2005, 95-100). Blogging tools provide enhanced features for between-blog interactivity, thus promoting the creation of social networks among bloggers (Du and Wagner 2006, 789-798) another key feature to their success (Williams and Jacobs 2004, 232-247). Interactivity between blogs takes three forms. The first form is that of a "blogroll" that many bloggers maintain. The blogroll is a list of blogs that bloggers frequently read or especially admire. Albrecht et al (2007, 504-520) refer to this form as "connectedness of weblogs". The second form is achieved by posting comments to entries and is a key form of information exchange in the blogosphere (Drezner and

Farrell, 2004; Mishne and Glance 2006). Marlow (2004) wrote about comments “a simple and effective way for webloggers to interact with their readership”. Drezner and Farrell (2004) highlighted the fact that links and page views are the “currency” of the blogosphere and Blood (2002) mentioned that the most reliable way to gain traffic to a blog is through a link on another weblog. Lastly there are trackbacks and pingbacks. Trackback is a citation notification system (Brady 2005). It enables bloggers to determine when other bloggers have written another entry of their own that references their original post (Waggener Edstrom Worldwide 2006). “If both weblogs are enabled with trackback functionality, a reference from a post on weblog A to another post on weblog B will update the post on B to contain a back-reference to the post on A” (Marlow 2004). A pingback is an automated trackback. “Pingbacks support auto-discovery where the software automatically finds out the links in a post, and automatically tries to pingback those URLs, while trackbacks must be done manually by entering the trackback URL that the trackback should be sent to” (http://codex.wordpress.org/Introduction_to_Blogging#Pingbacks)

The political blogosphere

Blogs are powerful because they allow millions of people to easily publish and share their ideas, and millions more to read and respond (www.technorati.com). In the political blogosphere, blogs are “a potential alternative to the traditional media as gatekeepers of information and news” (Pedley 2005, 95-100). McKenna and Pole (2004) claim that blogs have the potential to shape politics, political discourse and political participation. Blogs have also been described as a mobilization tool due to their ability to spread political news very quickly (Albrecht et al 2007, 504-520; Kahn and Kellner 2004, 87-95).

Commenting on political blogs into American politics, Graf (2006) wrote “In just a few years they have become a finger in the eye of the mainstream media and a closely watched forum of political debate”. There have been times that bloggers have broken major news (Jackson 2005, 292-303), their point of view sometimes contradicting that of the mainstream media (Lankshear and Knobel 2003). In September 2001, bloggers created a protest against Trent Lott who supported Strom Thurmond’s segregationist stance in the 1948 presidential election at the 100th birthday of Senator Strom Thurmond (Bloom 2003). Bloggers also echoed the suspicion that “President Bush was using a listening device for assistance during the presidential debate and worries over the validity of voting machines” (Su et al. 2005). In November 2005, bloggers in Germany found that the picture used for the claim of the social marketing campaign had already been used by some Nazis in 1935 (<http://www.spreeblick.com/2006/01/27/you-are-deutschland-too-just-kidding/>). In the US-led invasion of Iraq, blogs posted photos before other media and sometimes

contradicted the point of view of mainstream media like CNN (Lankshear and Knobel 2003).

Blogs are tools for politicians to campaign and reach out to their constituency (Trammell et al. 2006, 21-44). Jackson (2006, 292-303) wrote “during an election campaign, a weblog is a means for a party to promulgate its policies through a virtual network of political bloggers”. An example of a highly successful blog is Howard Dean’s *BlogforAmerica*. This blog was used to mobilize supporters and funding, even though Howard Dean’s candidacy was not successful (Kerbel and Bloom 2005, 3-27; McKenna 2004 Pole 2004). Chadwick (2009, 9-41) pointed out that “the 2004 primary and presidential campaigns in the United States saw the emergence of a campaigning model based on online venues loosely meshed together through automated linking technologies, particularly blogs”. According to Albrecht et al. (2007, 504-520) paradigms of blogs being used as campaign instruments are the 2004 presidential election, the 2005 U.K. general election, the 2005 Danish parliamentary election, the 2005 New Zealand general election, the 2005 German Bundestag election, the 2007 French election and the 2007 Australian Federal Election. At recent presidential elections, Barack Obama maintained a blog at his webpage <http://www.barackobama.com>.

Drezner and Farrell (2004) found out that, even though there are over a million bloggers posting thousands of new items daily, the average blogger has almost no political influence as measured by traffic or hyperlinks and they highlighted that “this is because the distribution of weblinks and traffic is heavily skewed, with a few bloggers commanding most of the attention. This distribution parallels the one observed for political websites in general. Because of this distribution, a few “elite” blogs can operate as both an information aggregator and as a “summary statistic” for the blogosphere”. The same was claimed by Jackson (2006, 292-303) who wrote “elite bloggers can act as a “focal point” encouraging influential visitors to congregate around them. To influence the news, political and policy agenda, political actors need to attract an “A” list audience to their weblog”.

Blogs have the advantage of speedy publication and an advantage in socially constructing interpretive frames for understanding current events. Blogs appear to play an increasingly important role as a forum for public debate, with knock-on effects for the media and politics. In Greece, where the ratio of Internet users is relatively small, there is nonetheless an expanding portion of bloggers who comment regularly and have the power, to a certain degree and under certain circumstances, to trigger political movements. Posting opinions on the Internet can be considered as an expression of activated public opinion in contrast to public opinion per se, which is recorded through surveys and concerns the wider public. Based on the relevant literature, the paper uses the established blog search engine Technorati.com in order to track Greek political blogs and provide indicators of their popularity and interconnections.

Aims and methodology

The paper examines the degree of interconnectivity, cohesion and polarisation of Greek political blogs. The basic hypothesis supported by the literature is that, within polarized political systems, blogs are forming clusters around central blogs that are considered reliable or share the same affiliation. Internet users who wish to be informed quickly locate the focal points of discussion and, to save on surfing, they read only the posts on these blogs. Bloggers also locate focal point blogs and place their posts along with a link to their blog. They therefore expect the readers of focal point blogs to visit their blogs as well. This research examines whether this hypothesis holds for Greek political blogs.

In order to deal with this question the paper studies two cases, specifically political events, both concerning the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK). The first case is about the recent debate that took place on the web regarding the election of PASOK's new President. The Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) (one of the two major parties in Greece) was defeated in the national elections of 16 September 2007 and this defeat led to a major leadership crisis. Elections for a new leader were held 11 November 2007. The paper examines blogs that were for or against the two main presidential candidates for the period from 16 September to 13 November 2007. The political event of the election of a new PASOK President was chosen because it is a debate that lasted two months. It is a significant political event since it not only relates to one of the major parties in Greece but also motivated nearly one million PASOK supporters to cast their vote on 11 November. The president's election was accompanied by extensive political discussion, mainly on TV but also in the media in general. The event had all the features of a debate.

The second event concerns the dismissal from the parliamentary party group of Mr. Costas Simitis. Mr. Simitis, a former Prime Minister of Greece, was dismissed by the newly elected President of the party George Papandreou (June 2008). Blogs commenting on this event from 12 to 30 June 2008 are also studied. The dismissal of a former Prime Minister by the newly elected President is an important event in itself but becomes more so since it relates to the efforts of George Papandreou to build a strong self-image. Unlike the election for President, it was not a debate. Rather it was an already accomplished and therefore momentary event when discussed by the media. Concerning bloggers reactions, this event also provoked an immediate and extensive discussion.

George Papandreou was elected as the new President of PASOK on 11 November 2007 with a marginal victory of 53% over his main opponent Mr. Evangelos Venizelos. In June 2008 the newly elected President of PASOK adopted a resolution concerning the critical comments and interventions of the former Prime Minister, Member of Parliament and member of the Parliamentary Group of PASOK, Mr. Costas Simitis. Mr Papandreou dismissed Mr Simitis from the parliamentary

group of PASOK via a movement that was noted as an attempt by Mr. Papandreou to appear decisive and capable of resolving his party's critical issues. Both the election of President and the dismissal of Mr. Simitis from the parliamentary group were discussed and commented at length in the media and considered to be very significant. Blogs also had a share of this discussion. Both issues gathered high percentages of comments.

The paper uses Technorati.com, which is considered a reliable and popular blog search engine. Blogs with some authority are recorded, which link to the two main presidential candidates through G. Papandreou's and E. Venizelos' websites and blogs. Technorati Authority is the number of blogs linking to a website in the last six months. The higher the number, the more Technorati Authority the blog has. In the authors' view, this consideration grants greater validity in the blog selection process. Through the search via technorati.com, 65 blogs with some authority were found. Links within these blogs included on the blogrolls of these specific blogs were recorded. Blogrolls are lists of blogs that bloggers frequently read or especially admire and they include them at the side of their blogs. Also through the same search engine, 54 blogs with some authority were recorded, commenting on Mr. Simitis' dismissal. Links within these blogs included on the blogrolls of these specific blogs were recorded.

The methodology uses Social Networking theory. Links between blogs (recorded from blogrolls) are used to represent blog interconnections on directed graphs. A study of the networks reveals, firstly, how blogs are self-organized into groups around focal conversation points and, secondly, how this formation changes depending on the impact of the political event that is being discussed. Findings reveal whether the original hypothesis also holds for the cases we examine, and whether blogs have different polarizations in the sense that debates, compared to static events, may conform better to the original hypothesis concerning both the quantitative features of the networks and also the content of the comments posted on blogs.

Next, Multidimensional Scaling is used in the analysis to quantify the data. This method reproduces the original data and maps them onto a space with fewer dimensions (namely two, in our analysis) while an effort is made to keep the distances between the original data intact in the newly reproduced data. Hierarchical Cluster Analysis uses quantified data to produce clusters of blogs with similar properties. Blogs in the same cluster are linked by nearly the same set of blogs. The blogs in a formed cluster are therefore considered to be of the same family (political or otherwise) through the blogs that link them. Some of the clusters produced by Hierarchical Cluster Analysis gather together the largest number of incoming links. If this happens, then they may serve as conversation focal points or "focal point" blogs (Fuchs, 2007). This property is a consequence of the skewed distribution of links, also mentioned by Drezner and Farrell (2004). Only a few blogs have a very large number of incoming links while the rest, the majority

ty of blogs, have only a small number of incoming links. This paper also presents the distribution of incoming blog links.

Findings

Figure 1 presents the blog interconnections. The 69 blogs commenting on election of the president and the 54 blogs commenting on Mr. Simitis' dismissal are presented in graphs. As Drezner and Farrell (2004, p. 13) mention, "blogs with large numbers of incoming links offer both a means of filtering interesting blog posts from less interesting ones, and a focal point at which bloggers with interesting posts and potential readers of these posts can coordinate. When less prominent bloggers have an interesting piece of information or point of view that is relevant to a political controversy, they will usually post this on their own blogs. However, they will also often have an incentive to contact one of the large 'focal point' blogs, to publicize their post. The latter may post on the issue with a hyperlink back to the original blog, if the story or point of view is interesting enough, so that the originator of the piece of information receives more readers. In this manner, bloggers with fewer links function as "fire alarms" for focal point blogs, providing new information and links". They also mention that "we note that this implies that, even while focal point blogs play a crucial mediating role, smaller blogs may sometimes have very substantial political impact by bringing information to the attention of focal blogs" (Drezner and Farrell, 2004 p. 13). This paper argues that "focal point" blogs are recognized as authority blogs by the bloggers' community and they may serve as the blog cores where the interesting and informational discussion is taking place.

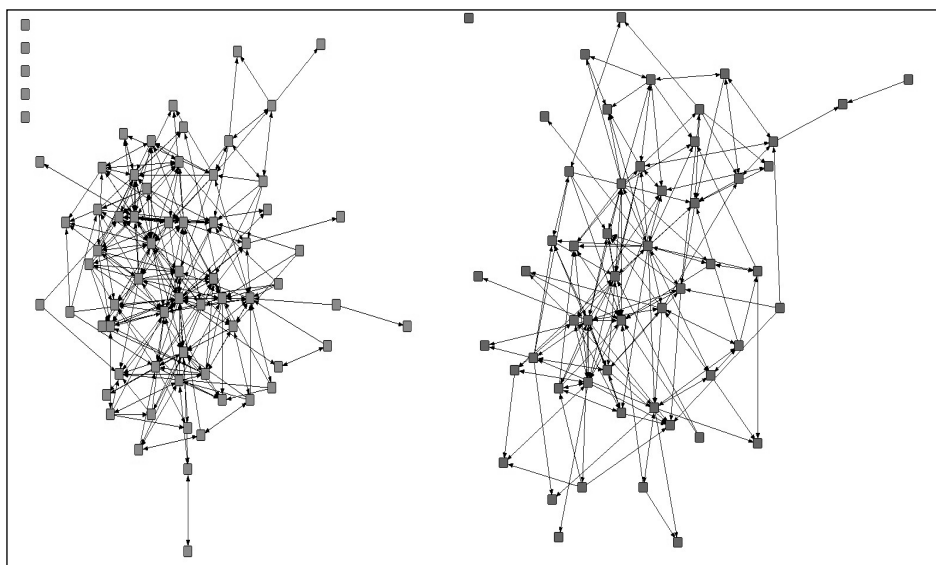
To test whether this hypothesis holds for political blogging in Greece, this paper examines the distribution of incoming links for the two sets of networks of the study. Figure 2 presents the histograms of incoming links. Most of the blogs have a very small number of incoming links, while only a few blogs have a large number of incoming links. This is true in the case of the presidential election but is less obvious for Mr. Simitis' dismissal. This finding provides some evidence that Drezner & Farrell's (2004) argument about the skewing of incoming links holds true.

Next, Multidimensional Scaling (MS), which presents a very good fit with Stress < 0.05 in both cases, followed by Hierarchical Cluster Analysis (HCA) result in the formation of six clusters in both the cases studied.

From Figure 3 it can be concluded that, in the case of the presidential election, three clusters (right tail of the left graph), and in the case of Mr. Simitis' dismissal two clusters (right tail of the right graph) have the feature of having only a small number of blogs and at the same time gather together a large number of incoming links. These clusters are of interest since they represent focal discussion points.

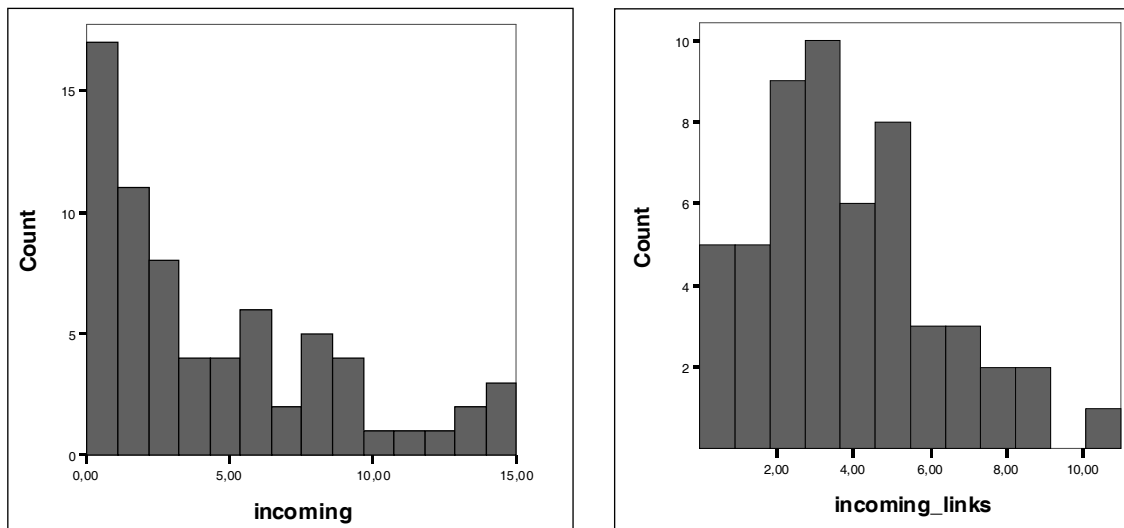
Partisan focal points are more interesting to study. These are clusters where the majority of the blogs within the cluster are maintained by people who are politically involved in and active members of PASOK and these are not characterized by just a journalistic style. Regarding the presidential election, 9 out of 65 blogs are distributed into three clusters: one cluster with four blogs is partisan pro Papandreou and the other two clusters (4 and 1 blog respectively) have various and mixed political characteristics. All of them are placed at the right tail of the graph. Further quantitative analysis reveals that 61% of the blogs commenting on the presidential election link to blogs of

Figure 1. Social Networks of blogs commenting on: election of PASOK President (left) and dismissal of Mr. Simitis (right)



Source: authors' own.

Figure 2: Histograms of incoming links: election for President (left) and Mr Simitis' dismissal (right)



Source: authors' own.

these focal point clusters, while 26% of the blogs link to all the blogs of at least one of these clusters.

Regarding the dismissal of Mr. Simitis, 3 out of 54 blogs are distributed into two clusters: one cluster has just one blog, which is partisan and pro dismissal, while the other two blogs constitute the second cluster. They are mainly characterized by a journalistic and informative style. Further analysis suggests that 37% of the blogs commenting on Mr. Simitis' dismissal link to blogs of these focal point clusters, while 20% of the blogs link to all the blogs of at least one core cluster.

In conclusion, it seems that Greek bloggers are indeed organized into centralized and focused networks. Their communication is organized around core blogs, which are considered popular or significant. Profile analysis of the cluster blogs shows that the only partisan blogs that take part in the discussion are indeed members of only these core blog clusters, and this in turn provides evidence of the degree of polarization of the discussion. Our case studies provide evidence that polarization is more obvious for the case of electing the president of PASOK, for two reasons: 1. more partisan blogs are members of the core (or focal points) blog clusters, and 2. the skewed nature of the links distribution is greater. Consequently, a small number of blogs group together an even larger number of incoming links and are, in turn, considered as focal points. In the case of the election for the PASOK President, it seems that conformity with the general patterns supported by the literature for western countries is more obvious, while the case of the dismissal of Mr. Simitis offers less evidence of adaptation. In this sense, polarization for the second case should be considered smaller.

Differences concerning blog political discussion could be summarized as follows:

a. In the different mobilization and attendance of bloggers in the discussion: In the dismissal of Mr. Simitis, only one blog still maintains participation out of the nine blogs that participated in the presidential election. This blog originates from the most partisan and purely political cluster that was present at the discussion for the election of President. It appears that the special characteristics of Mr. Simitis' dismissal (as an already finalized political action and therefore unable to be influenced further), does not considerably affect the mobilization of other active bloggers.

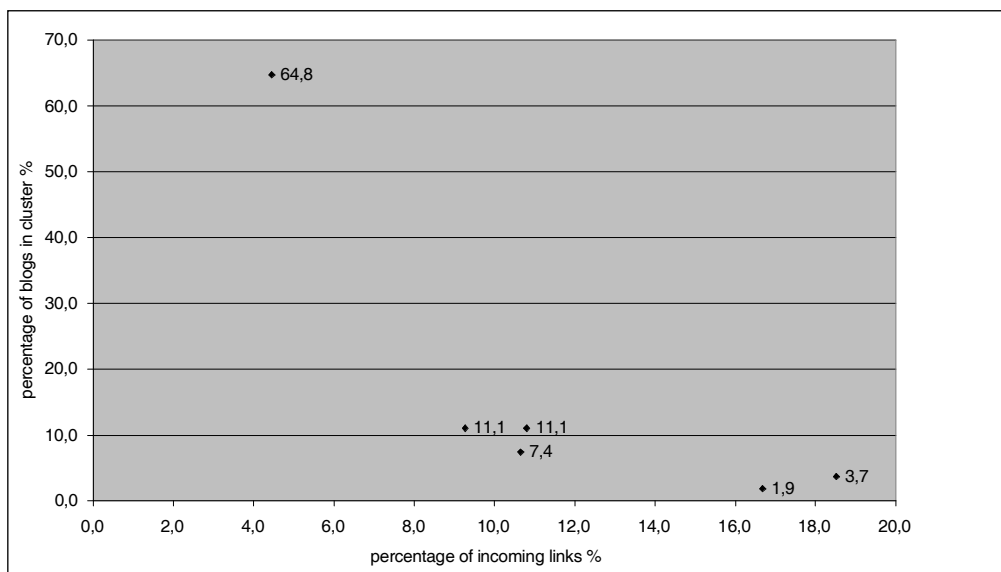
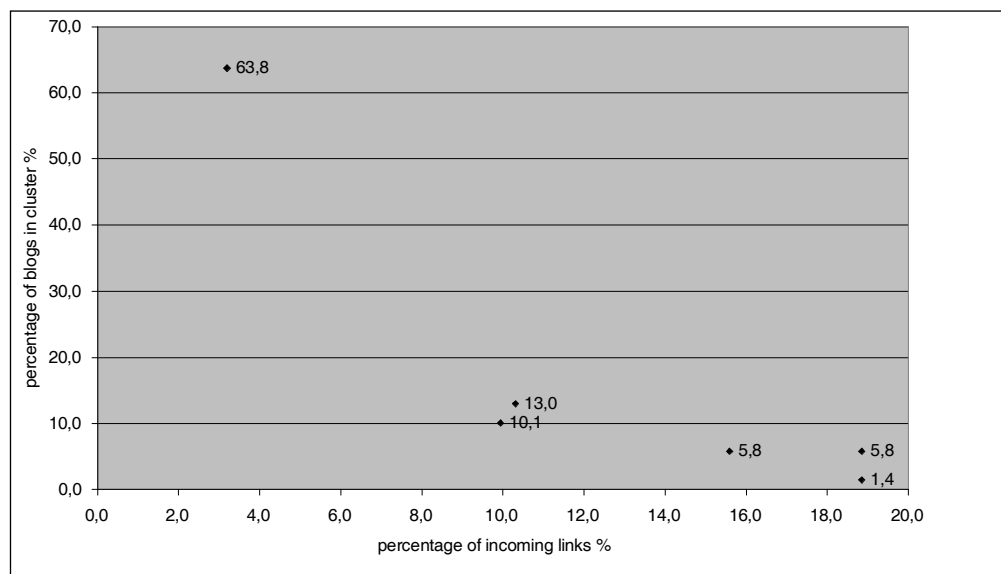
b. In the polarization – formation recorded for partisan clusters of blogs: For the case of the presidential election, one partisan cluster has four partisan blogs, as opposed to the case of the dismissal of Mr. Simitis, where one partisan cluster has just one partisan blog.

Qualitative differences in the discussion regarding the two events

The previous section presented how conversational patterns differ from each other according mainly to quantitative indexes of linkage among bloggers. Further analysis reveals that there are also qualitative difference regarding the presentation, discussion of and commenting on the two events. These differences can be found through extended content analysis of the blogs' comments.

There are common characteristics regarding comments for both cases i.e. description of the event, attempts at interpreting the protagonists' choices and actions, expression of agreement or disapproval, the relation of the political events with the media as a theme of discussion, the protagonists' personal characteristics and profiles are discussed, the general tenden-

**Figure 3: Representation of the clusters by size (percentage of blogs in cluster) and popularity (percentage of incoming links compared to total number of blogs).
First election for President and second Mr Simitis' dismissal**



Source: authors' own.

cy is recorded in favour of one candidate G. Papandreou (Papandreou as opposed to Venizelos/Papandreou as opposed to Simitis) and, finally, attempts are made to predict the future of PASOK. However, there are some differences among comments about the two events. For the discussion with regard to Mr. Simitis' dismissal, the number of issues discussed and the number and length of comments are smaller, comments are less aggressive and readers and commentators record less personal stories and views. Also, support in favour of the main protagonists is generally smaller; prompts to citizens to act following a specific political plan are absent. In general, the dynamics arising from the fact that a political event is still evolving and thus susceptible to influence are absent.

Conclusion

This paper is original due to two issues. First, social networking theory was used along with multivariate statistical analysis to search for focal point blogs. Based on the original hypothesis that political blogs are organized around central blog groups, the paper made an effort to locate them. Second, it used this idea to explore possible differences in this self-organization across the political discussion of different political events. In this way, the paper locates not only frequencies of posts through blogs but also finds which blogs monopolize the discussion in a sense. Also, by locating the most partisan of these blogs, the paper offers findings concerning the discussion's degree of polarization.

The research has provided evidence that political blogging in Greece conforms to the characteristics described in the literature regarding political blogging in polarized political systems. Greek political blogs act within a social network of blogs, which form authority core groups where the discussion is taking place. Greek bloggers are organized into focused social networks according to the specific event. This happens especially when a public debate takes place. The findings offer some evidence concerning the degree of political participation and mobilization is recorded in political discussion through blogging. The skewed nature of incoming link distribution and the formation of core blog groups may be used to explain the importance of some blogs in providing information and in discussion.

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Grassroots Organizations Go Online: The Case of Party-List Winners and New Media Technologies in the 2007 Philippines Elections

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Abstract

This study will look into the differences between the strategies of the Internet campaigns during the 2007 Philippines elections by the two groups that used Internet as an campaign tool: Gabriela (a women's group) and Bayan Muna (a militant group), both claiming to represent the poorest, disadvantaged and marginalized members of the society. Both party-list groups won seats in Congress and where Bayan Muna's strategies were more effective than those of Gabriela's. Drawing from theoretical concepts of Personal Influence by Gitlin (1978) and from Grönlund's understanding of the same, this study, through content analysis and in-depth interviews with members of the party, looked into where Bayan Muna had done right where Gabriela evidently fell short. The researchers address the following questions: Were the core supporters of both parties ready for the new style of campaigning? Did the parties effectively send the message to their supporters through the Internet? Will there be more active campaigning on the Internet in future Philippines elections despite the setbacks?

Key words

ITC, political communication, Philippines, Internet.

Resum

Aquest estudi analitza les diferències entre les estratègies de les campanyes per Internet durant les eleccions filipines a meitat del mandat del 2007 dels dos grups que van utilitzar la xarxa com a eina de campanya: Gabriela (un grup de dones) i Bayan Muna (un grup militant), els quals afirmen representar els segments més pobres, desfavorits i marginats de la societat. Ambdós grups van obtenir escons al Congrés, però les estratègies de Bayan Muna van ser més eficaces que les de Gabriela. A partir dels conceptes teòrics de la influència personal de Gitlin (1978) i de la seva interpretació per part de Grönlund, aquest estudi, a través de l'anàlisi de continguts i d'entrevistes a fons amb membres del partit, va analitzar on l'havia encertat Bayan Muna i on Gabriela evidentment es va quedar curta. Els investigadors van tractar les qüestions següents: els partidaris principals d'ambdós partits estaven preparats per al nou estil de fer campanya? Els partits van aconseguir transmetre el missatge als seus partidaris per mitjà d'Internet? En el futur hi haurà una campanya més activa per Internet a les eleccions filipines malgrat els fracassos?

Paraules clau

Noves tecnologies de la comunicació (NTC), comunicació política, Filipines i Internet.

Much has been studied about the emergence of new media technologies (NMT) in political communication but most of the literature is coming from the West where the use of the Internet and mobile phones seems to be quickly catching on, as seen in the political campaigning leading up to the 2008 US Presidential elections.¹ The new administration of US President Barack Obama is heavily engaging the Internet for public support through its change.gov website,² mainly because of their successful fundraising efforts on the Web that earned him hundreds of millions in campaign funds through online donations from supporters. This trend of high-tech political campaigning is crossing over to Asia, where political actors

in countries like India, Malaysia and the Philippines are creating their own websites for the purpose of reaching mass audiences. In the Philippines, where the number of Internet users is slightly over 14 million (merely 15% of the total population) and concentrated in urban areas, the aggressive approach to political campaigning on the Internet is picking up steam not only among individual candidates but also among civic and interest groups vying for party-list representation in Congress.

This article presents an account of how grassroots organizations in the Philippines, specifically the women's group Gabriela Women's Party (GWP) and a militant group Bayan Muna (People First), have joined the bandwagon of political

campaigning on the Internet and their experimental approach to NMTs as a strategy to reach more voters. To assess this, we analyzed the websites of both parties and conducted interviews with their representatives in Congress.

This article is comprised of three sections. We present relevant previous and current literature on political communication in both the Western and non-Western regions in the *Overview of Political Communication*, which has subsections on the personal influence hypothesis and accounts of the different NMT applications that we examined in relation to the two party-list groups and their use of these technologies. In the second section, we provide a background of the political landscape in the Philippines through a brief background of the system and a brief account of both the GWP and Bayan Muna is also provided. Finally, we present our findings on the use of NMTs by the two party-list groups in the third section. Our findings show that the use of these technologies in election campaigns is still at a premature stage, where we have observed both success and failure due largely to the lack of public access to such technologies. However, we see a trend of increasing political participation, mostly through social networking sites and discussion boards on the Web and through the popular mobile phone.

Overview of Political Communication

The study of political communication has considerably evolved from what once used to be a heavy concentration on the West to one that embraces the intricacies of politics in non-Western regions (Kluver 2007; Park et al. 2000; Takeshita & Makami 1995). Many election campaigns employ “attack and counter attack” strategies that are often observed in the American style of campaigning (Diamond & Bates 1988; Elebash 1984; Blumler 1987; Johnson et al. 1991; Karan 1994). Earlier accounts of political campaigning looked into mass and interpersonal campaigns that reported “partial success and partial failure” (Kraus & Davis 1976; Rice & Paisley 1981, Kluver 2007). In the Philippines, election campaigns are generally personality-based and seldom focus on issues of reform; thus, candidates win or lose by popularity or lack thereof. However, the Internet and new mobile technologies are changing the way political campaigning is done in the country from the one-to-many (candidate-to-electorate) model to the many-to-many, where members of the electorate tend to communicate more with each other regarding the issues (Karan, Gimeno, & Tandoc, 2008). Personal influence plays a vital role in this scenario.

Personal Influence

Gitlin (1978) and Grönlund (2001) explained personal influence as a process whereby people communicate directly with each other sans gatekeepers and middlemen, and that this type of communication promotes better understanding of the issues at hand. Although new technologies make interaction more dynamic, Grönlund stated that this does not always translate to

a higher number of voters in past years. This said, there are differences in the results achieved by both the GWP and Bayan Muna.

Social Networking Sites in Political Campaigning

Social networking sites are a category of personalized websites that contain an individual's or group's profile with several interactive applications that people encounter on the Internet. These are especially prevalent in elections in the West, where candidates and political parties make their profiles and platforms available online to the public. In the Philippines, where the first Internet service was provided in 1994, Cuevas (2004) explained that this new technology became prominent in political communication at the height of the country's massive criticism of the then President Estrada, as evidenced in disgruntled exchanges posted on message boards, blogs and political commentaries online. These activities are believed to have led to the ousting and subsequent arrest of the president. However, given the relatively young and less aggressive penetration of the Internet in the country, its effect on political communication in Filipino society can only be gauged with difficulty.³

Political Hyperlinking

One of the most important methods in analyzing candidates' interactions and presence on the Internet is by looking at their use of political hyperlinking (Karan, et al. 2008). Much like connecting offline to people and groups of similar beliefs to widen one's political network or further one's agenda, political hyperlinking has become very important to candidates. Several studies have looked into the benefits of hyperlinking, suggesting that they, among others, build presence and recognition and provide easy access to the electorate via a network of supporters who also have online presence, as well as a more robust and dynamic interaction that could increase political participation. Political hyperlinking is a two-way process where one links to others (outlinks) and where one also receives a link from others (inlinks) (Park, Thelwall, & Kluver 2005).

Mobile Phones in Politics

The mobile phone, with its portability and affordability, has become one of the most sought-after communication devices in most parts of the world, especially in areas where personal computers (and thus, the Internet) remain largely unaffordable. Pertier (2005) and Steenson (2006) acknowledged that the mobile phone is changing the dynamics of people's relationships, depending on the cultural structures and economy of each country. For instance, Wei (2005) concluded that the device serves as a double-edged sword in political communication in China where, on one hand, people can express their opinions against the government and, on the other hand, it also facilitates more effective government control. In the United States, Dale and Strauss (2007) found that the mobile phone has increased youth participation in political communication. In the Philippines, most people are believed to have greater access to

the mobile phone compared to the Internet and are said to have the most number of users of the SMS application (Suhaimi 2008).

Grassroots Movement and NMTs in Philippine Politics

Political System in the Philippines

Since the Philippines were ceded by the Spanish to the Americans through the Treaty of Paris in 1898, this Asian country of more than 7,000 islands had been through several political transitions.⁴ The Philippines is a republic where citizens aged 18 and above are accorded the right to suffrage and its democratic, presidential form of government is comprised of the executive (the President), the legislature (Senate and House of Representatives) and the judiciary (Supreme Court and lower courts). After the much heralded bloodless revolution in 1986, elections are held every six years for the president and vice-president and every three years (called midterm elections) for 12 of the 24 Senate seats,⁵ congressmen and local officials. Election into office is by popular vote; whoever gets the highest number of votes in the whole country or district shall win the contested positions (unlike, for instance, in the US, where primaries are held and the president is not directly elected by the people but through an electoral college).

In 1995, more defined segments of the electoral population were given representation when Republic Act 7941 came into force, introducing the party-list system⁶ where civic and interest groups were allowed to run for seats in Congress. Under this quota system, 20% of the 260 seats in Congress are reserved for party-list groups and a two percent share of the total votes won entitles a group to one seat, with three seats being the maximum that can be won. The Gabriela Women's Party (GWP), a spawn of the well-known GABRIELA women's group, and its closest ally, Bayan Muna, are two of the most prominent groups to join this political system.

GABRIELA - General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership, and Action

GABRIELA was founded in 1984, two years before the dictatorial reign of Ferdinand Marcos was overthrown by a bloodless "people power" (a term made popular by this historic event in the country) revolution.⁷ Women's rights in the Philippines were largely neglected during this authoritarian regime and, together with 42 local organizations, GABRIELA sought to overthrow Marcos. When the first female president took office after the revolution, the status of women in the society still did not improve. As a result, GABRIELA found its place in the newly liberated country where the fight for women's rights was starting to peak (Alojamiento 2007). The group's name is also in honour of Gabriela Silang, one of the first female generals who led several revolutions against the Spanish in the 18th century. After more than two decades in

operation, the movement has expanded into an alliance of 250 groups with 100,000 members, including a chapter in the United States which opened in 1989. Core members of the movement include women workers, peasants, urban poor, housewives, professionals, religious groups, and students who have their respective GABRIELA chapters on campus. Several issues are said to be the focus of the movement which include land reclamation, militarization, prostitution and trafficking, among others. In describing the movement, Ty (2007) stated:

"GABRIELA, as a social movement, is a learning site that mobilizes and organizes women, moves them to critical reflection, raises the consciousness of women through popular education, and incites them to action. Unlike Western feminist movements, which treat women's struggle as a distinct struggle, Third World women's movements, such as GABRIELA, consider women's struggle as integral to the whole society's struggle against poverty and patriarchal domination (page 4)."

When the party-list system was introduced, GABRIELA was one of the most active groups to run for Congress and thus enlisted Gabriela Women's Party (GWP) as its official party name in the year 2000, although it only registered as a candidate in 2004, where it won a single seat with Liza Maza as its representative and the only party in Congress representing women.⁸ The major breakthrough for GWP came in 2007 when the party won again; this time, not just one but two seats represented by Maza and Luzviminda Ilagan. According to the Commission on Elections' (COMELEC) Results, GWP ranked fourth in the party-list elections, winning two percent of the popular votes behind *Buhay Hayaan Yumabong* (BUHAY or Let Life Grow, a pro-life group), Bayan Muna, and the Citizen's Movement Against Corruption (CIBAC).

Bayan Muna (People First)

Bayan Muna is a conglomerate of several civic groups that came together in 1999 to form a political group⁹ in anticipation of their participation in the newly established party-list system, which they formally joined in 2001, enlisting Gabriela's then Secretary General Liza Maza as its candidate; the group won amid legal conflicts with the Commission on Elections. Bayan Muna also won seats in the 2004 and 2007 party-list elections.¹⁰ Representing marginalized groups in the society with 13 regional offices and 57 chapters nationwide, Bayan Muna stresses that:

"We embody the yearnings and aspirations of the most oppressed and the least heard, the "common tao (people)" – workers, peasants, fisher folk, indigenous peoples, urban poor and other downtrodden. We also give voice to the concerns of the middle social strata and the cause of women and youth as well as other various pressing issues."

It is no secret that elections in the Philippines are often marred with violence and Bayan Muna is said to be among

those at risk. In a testimony by Amnesty International's T. Kumar before the United States Senate in 2007,¹¹ the human rights organization stated that, along with other legal leftist groups (i.e. *Anak Pawis* or Toiling Masses), Bayan Muna is on the list of the most-targeted by the Armed Forces of the Philippines based on accusations that these militants serve as front for the rebel Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA). The testimony further stated that there has been a marked increase in fatal attacks on these groups since 2003.

Findings

In an archipelago of 88 million people, about 10 percent of whom are working outside the country, the promise of progress attached to NMTs seem to cater perfectly to the needs of the Filipino people. We explored the role of these technologies in political communication in the Philippines by looking at the cases of two allied party-list organizations that won seats in the 2007 party-list elections: Bayan Muna and GWP. These groups, in their quest to reach as many voters as they could, had the motivation to maximize new technologies to further their political campaigns. However, we argue that, given meagre funds and weaker machineries compared to bigger and more established political parties, Bayan Muna and GWP should have taken advantage of the lower costs of mass communication offered by the NMTs.

Bayan Muna finished second in the party-list race with more than 920,000 out of the almost 17 million votes that were cast.¹² This success gave the party two seats in the 14th Congress. The GWP ranked fourth with some 620,000 votes which also gave the party two seats. We looked into the campaign strategies of these groups. More specifically, we looked into how they used the Internet by setting up their own party websites, building their presence on social networking and video sharing sites, and how one of them campaigned through text (SMS) messaging via mobile phones.

GWP's 'multi-media campaign'

In acknowledging their limitations in terms of machinery and funding, GWP campaign coordinator Cristina Palabay said they could not just rely on grassroots campaigning considering the widely dispersed geographical nature of the country (personal communication, December 2007). In order to reach as many voters as they could, she explained that the party "formulated a multi-media plan alongside grassroots campaigning". A staunch critic of the administration, the GWP maximized their popularity as an opposing force against an unpopular government by joining street protests and issuing statements to the press.¹³ The Internet proved helpful to GWP in disseminating their press releases for possible coverage by the mainstream media, replacing the tedious and slower fax machine. GWP member Joan Salvador said:

"Whereas before we would have relied solely on snail mailing and faxing to communicate and enjoin our members, network organizations and even various media institutions in our various campaigns and activities, we now make use of the Internet (e-mailing, web feeds, online petition/signature gathering, at some point multimedia feeds) to promote our analyses and positions on issues, our programmes, advocacies and campaigns (personal communication, October 2007)."

Political advertisements were allowed in the Philippines, so the GWP produced its own television commercial early into the campaign. Popular local actress Angel Locsin endorsed Gabriela in the plug. Palabay said they also got help from popular and well-known leftist film directors Bibeth Orteza and her husband Carlitos Siguion-Reyna, who directed the commercial. Locsin's endorsement was for free but, due to huge airtime costs, Gabriela only managed to run it on national television for three days. On provincial television stations, where airtime was much cheaper, they managed to run it for a week. To compensate for this lack of funding, the group decided to upload it instead on the video sharing site YouTube. Salvador stated: "This helped our campaign a lot, since our resources for putting these videos on TV were very limited and we could only afford very few exposures on TV and radio." Palabay added that the video's presence on YouTube helped the group reach out to the middle class and other poor urban youth who had access to the Internet, albeit limited. The video emphasized the essence of an average Filipino woman, her plight and survival against all odds. Two YouTube accounts hosted the video, one of which was started by Palabay herself. The video received a total of 2,913 views. It is simple footage showing Locsin as well as a montage of images of different sectors of women from those in the slums to those in Congress.

Bayan Muna and YouTube

The GWP's use of YouTube pales in comparison to how Bayan Muna maximized the free video sharing site. Our search of the group's name on YouTube in January 2008 led us to an account named "bayanmunadotnet" which was set up in April 2007 and had nine videos: the party's political advertisement, a music video of the group, two "grabs" of what appeared to be television news clips about Bayan Muna and five videos showing Bayan Muna representative, Satur Ocampo, being interviewed. The video with the most number of viewings (20,831) was one of the five instalments of the interview. Bayan Muna's use of YouTube was both creative and practical because it provided Ocampo with the much-needed media exposure at a time when he was forced into hiding amid arrest orders, after the government had filed murder charges against him in March 2007.¹⁴ Ocampo stated that it was his staff who suggested they upload videos on YouTube (personal communication, February 2008). While in hiding, Bayan Muna came up with the idea of doing an interview with him and uploading it onto

YouTube and, about this endeavour, Ocampo said: “It was an experimental move but it turned out to be successful.” This success can be attributed not only to the number of viewings the videos got but also to the fact that the mainstream media used the videos in their reports. Ocampo believes that the attention they got from the videos built the “momentum” the group needed until he resurfaced in the Supreme Court on 16 March 2007

Bayan Muna’s YouTube activity, quoted in mainstream media reports, also contained a link to the group’s well-developed party website which also generated interest for the whole party because of the free promotion. Through this strategy, the group managed to direct online users to their website and Ocampo had only good things to say about this technology:

“Information technology is really a big help. It has enabled small parties which otherwise would be unable to spend on communications in an election campaign, to promote advocacies. It has become an equalizing factor for small parties against big-moneyed political organizations.”

Building networks in Friendster

The Gabriela Women’s Party started an account on the social networking site Friendster¹⁵ in February 2007, when the campaign period began. Exploring the party’s account in October 2007, we noted that it described itself as “female, 29, single.” In the section “More About Me,” the party stated:

“...a sector party dedicated to promoting the rights and welfare of marginalized and under-represented Filipino women through participation in the country’s electoral system and organs of governance. It is a sector party composed of women aged 18 years and above, having varied occupations, education, interests, ethnic origin, religious affiliations and sexual orientation. The Gabriela Women’s Party seeks to harness the potential, initiative, skills and leadership of marginalized women towards empowerment, justice and equality”

By the time we visited the account, it already had 175 listed friends, the majority of whom were females, although at least 34 were males. There were also 13 militant groups, four Gabriela chapters and one school listed on its list of friends. There were also Friendster accounts of school-based Gabriela chapters at the University of the Philippines, Manila, University of the Philippines, Diliman, and Polytechnic University of the Philippines. But looking for “Gabriela” in a simple name search on Friendster is problematic because thousands of users are registered under that name.

Putting up websites

The GWP launched its website in time for the 2007 elections.¹⁶ Though started a few weeks into the campaign period, the site developed into an important tool for reaching Internet-savvy young people and overseas voters, as Palabay explained:

“We think having a website was a positive thing. We were able to reach some sections of the middle class as well as

some members of the young urban poor who access the Internet. They were able to access more information about GWP because of our website.”

Palabay also said the party site created opportunities for women to report cases and to encourage them to seek help from the organization. However, there was a need to develop the website to make it more comprehensive in detailing the party’s activities, ideologies and development strategies. We visited the website in November 2007 and noted that it mostly contained press releases about the party’s progress during the campaign. These touched on issues of negative publicity and the party’s stance on court decisions concerning election fraud, allegations of widespread cheating among contenders and other issues. Palabay does not attribute their victory to the website: “For a website to be popular, you have to develop and advertise it. We only mounted the website late into the campaign period, so time really mattered to us. We had a problem maintaining the website because we did not have enough funds.”

The website of Bayan Muna is better organized and loaded with more information; it had basic information about the party, press releases and offered interactive email and RSS feeds¹⁷ when visited in December 2007. We also noted that neither Bayan Muna nor GWP asked for campaign donations on their websites. Both websites are mostly in English, which may be related to the difficulty of engaging other members of society whose exposure is to Filipino, the native language of the country.

Political Hyperlinking

Using the program PowerMapper Standard, we mapped the websites of both Bayan Muna and GWP to analyze their hyperlinking practices – whether their huge network of hundreds of members and groups in their respective alliances are reflected in their online presence.

Of the 1,000 web pages of Bayan Muna’s website that we mapped, we found that the group “outlinked” to several organizations outside its domain, www.bayanmuna.net (mapped 8 April 2009). Some of the organizations that Bayan Muna linked to are its close ally *Bagong Alyansang Makabayan* (BAYAN – New Patriotic Alliance), KARAPATAN (Alliance for the Advancement of People’s Rights), and the Philippine Congress and Senate websites. We found it surprising that Bayan Muna does not link to either GWP or GABRIELA.

We mapped GWP’s website twice. First on 5 January 2008 and, at that time, its website did not link to any organization or individual outside their domain, www.gabrielawomensparty.net. Even when there was a chance for the GWP to link to their video they had uploaded on YouTube, the group embedded the video on the website instead. When we tried to access their supposed links in the ‘Resources’ section, all external links were invalid and could not connect us to any outside groups or individuals. The second mapping was done on 8 April 2009 and much has changed in the political hyperlinking practice of

GWP. It is clear that the party had been more active in establishing its website, unlike in 2007 when it was built haphazardly in time for the elections. GWP links mostly to other women's groups both in the country and abroad; it also links to Bayan Muna's website.

The software we used for site mapping is limited in that it does not show inlinks or other websites linking to GWP and Bayan Muna. This can only be done through a more advanced program or by looking at the websites of external organizations to which both groups link; in any case, we know that Bayan Muna received an inlink from GWP.

GWP and mobile phones

The GWP members expressed mixed feelings about the Internet and its potential in political campaigning but they appeared satisfied with their use of mobile phones as a campaign tool. The strategy was simple: a writer would compose messages and send them out during special occasions observed by the party. Palabay reported that the effort paid off in terms of expanding the party's social network: "We sent it (a text message) to our friends and urged them to send it to five of their friends. We also asked the members of our public information team to send the messages to everyone in their phonebooks."

When Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV) started in April 2007, mobile phones were also used to expand the campaign through text messaging to Filipinos abroad. Under OAV, Filipinos outside the country can register as absentee voters. The GWP appealed to their supporters in the Philippines to send text messages to their relatives abroad to urge them to vote for the party. A "Text Back" campaign, launched a week before Election Day, reinforced this approach. The campaign was significant; Palabay stated that the GWP had around 500 members in Australia and 1,000 in Hong Kong, each of whom sent a text message to their relatives in the Philippines.¹⁸

The GWP sent these chain text messages five times during the campaign period, beginning on Valentine's Day 2007, which they called "Mahalin Mo Ako (Love Me) Day." They also sent messages on International Women's Day (8 March). The next set of messages was sent when OAV began in April, on Mother's Day, and finally before the campaign ended on 12 May. Palabay personally sent each message to all 600 contacts in her phone directory, though it was impossible to track how many friends forwarded her message.

Traditional Campaigning

The GWP members we interviewed revealed that the party used new media minimally, usually to make communication more convenient. The online campaign functioned only to support the grassroots campaign. Salvador said there were limits to what the new media can do, since the support base of Gabriela are poor women in far-flung areas with no access to the Internet:

"The Internet is effective only if it is accessible and, unfortunately, the reality is that many Filipinos, especially those at

the grassroots, still do not have access to the Internet. This, of course, is a concern for Gabriela, which emphasizes the empowerment of grassroots women and whose primary means of communication is identified by the women and people they organize and try to empower.

To reach grassroots levels, Maza said they also conducted door-to-door campaigns and motorcades (personal communication, October 2007). Save for a few street protests they organized and joined, like the Labour Day Rally on 1 May 2007, Gabriela did not hold any party rallies or sorties. But these rallies not only exposed the party to bystanders in the street but also generated some mainstream media exposure. She noted that traditional door-to-door canvassing was important and the group also had small motorcades in some areas.

Discussion and Conclusion

We have presented how two successful party-list groups used new media technologies in their political campaigns for the 2007 national elections. Of all the new media technologies (NMT) applications we looked at, Bayan Muna's use of YouTube and GWP's use of the mobile phone provide relatively successful examples.

Bayan Muna's maximization of YouTube was born out of a need. Avoiding prosecution, Ocampo had to be visible to the public to continue their campaign and he found an ally in the Internet. However, the relative success of the group's use of YouTube can only be measured by looking at the number of visits or hits their uploaded videos got from Internet users and the resulting coverage from the mainstream media. We are unwilling to conclude that Bayan Muna's use of YouTube brought in a significant number of voters unless voters are questioned regarding the factors that influenced them to vote for the group. What is certain in Bayan Muna's case is that their efforts at capturing the mainstream media's attention through YouTube worked to the group's advantage, from what we have gathered in our interview with its representative.

The GWP also used YouTube and even Friendster, but its efforts were more organized and geared towards harnessing the mobile phone, a technology that is very common in the country. This is consistent with a previous event in the country where the SMS application is believed to have helped galvanize Filipinos during the People Power II demonstrations that ousted former President Joseph Estrada in 2001. Though surfing the Internet requires some skill, mobile phones are easier to use and have much higher penetration rates in the country compared with personal computers.

These examples show that the assessment of NMTs and their potentials in political communication should be juxtaposed with the prevailing social context. Though these technologies have not singlehandedly defined the outcome of the 2007 elections, contrary to earlier expectations put forward by studies

which had expressed high hopes for their potential, the examples of Bayan Muna and the GWP prove that NMTs have become important and promising components of a bigger network of political campaigning strategies. YouTube made it easier for Ocampo to keep himself visible while hiding from the authorities. The GWP used mobile phones to reach potential supporters inside and outside the country whom they otherwise could not have reached through door-to-door campaigns or through the Internet. The examples of these two successful political parties illustrate the growing importance of these technologies among the available and cost-effective political campaigning strategies. Trends in using NMTs in political communication, and particularly during elections, would be apparent and enhanced in the many Asian countries like Indonesia and India that are going to the polls in the near future. Political parties are constantly engaging the use of all available mass media and interpersonal forms to reach the electorate. New media technologies do not impose themselves as replacements of traditional strategies; rather, they widen the alternatives in an ever changing political landscape.

Notes

- 1 The Internet worked very well in Obama's favour since the rookie senator had very few resources to start a campaign. His aggressive online campaign is believed to have widened his political reach in mainstream America where the Internet plays a major role in people's daily lives. To see more, *Internet key to Obama victories*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/7412045.stm>.
- 2 According to the website, it serves as the new administration's transition, featuring one of its most important groups, the TIGR (Technology, Innovation, and Government Reform). The website enables interactive participation from citizens through applications such as the "Citizen's Briefing Book" and "Join the Discussion".
- 3 Cuevas further explained that most candidates' websites and profiles on other social networking sites mainly present their personal details and political achievements. In other words, educating the electorate about pertinent issues in the country is not always a priority.
- 4 After its declaration of independence led by opposition leader Emilio Aguinaldo was not recognized, the country's political system went from military rule to a civil government under the Americans and would continue to fight for independence until 1946. In 1972, the Philippines were once again under military rule when Ferdinand Marcos declared Martial Law that lasted until 1981 (To see more, http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761557463/ferdinand_marcos.html).
- 5 Since 1992, the first 12 senators with the highest number of votes serve for six years and the remaining 12 for three years (Senate of the Philippines, www.senate.gov.ph).
- 6 The party-list system has been active in the 1998, 2000, 2004, and 2007 elections. It also saw the most active participation with 93 registered parties, the highest since 1998.
- 7 Also known as the EDSA Revolution (for Epifanio Delos Santos Avenue, the site of the massive protests), this event would be repeated in 2001 (known as EDSA II or EDSA Dos) when Joseph Estrada was overthrown in the same manner and for which the country was given the first Global Nonviolence Award.
- 8 To see more, <http://gabrielanews.wordpress.com/about/>.
- 9 To see more, <http://www.bayanmunanet.net/about.php>.
- 10 Official records from the Commission on Elections show that Bayan Muna won the highest number of votes in 2001, winning more than one and a half million or 11% of the total party-list votes and again in 2004, winning 1.2 million. The party came second in 2007 with almost one million votes. To see more, <http://www.comelec.gov.ph/results/intro.html>.
- 11 T. Kumar is the Advocacy Director for Asia and the Pacific for Amnesty International. The testimony was delivered before the Subcommittee on East Asian & Pacific Affairs of the US Senate's Committee on Foreign Relations. To see more, <http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2007/KumarTestimony070314.pdf>.
- 12 More than 30 million voters participated in the 2007 national elections, but only 17 million voted for the party-list groups. Any group that earned at least 334,462 votes (two percent of the projected maximum total party-list votes), got one congressional seat.
- 13 Midway in the campaign period, the government accused five leftist group leaders, including Gabriela's Liza Maza and Bayan Muna's Satur Ocampo, of involvement in the slaying of activists discovered in a mass grave in a province. Throughout this period, Gabriela was very active in sending press releases to the media, reacting to accusations hurled against the group and condemning the government for alleged repression.
- 14 Ocampo was accused of being involved in the killing of suspected spies within the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the National Democratic Front between 1985 and 1991, an allegation he denied.
- 15 Friendster remains the most used SNS in Asia and in the Philippines and claims to have more than 60 million registered users and more than 33 million monthly unique visitors.
- 16 To see more, <http://gabrielawomensparty.net/>.
- 17 To see more, www.bayanmunanet.net.
- 18 The GWP got the most number of votes from the Overseas Absentee Voting. Of the 77,993 Overseas Absentee Voters who voted in the 2007 elections, 9,921—or more than 18 percent—rooted for Gabriela.

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List of Interviews

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- Satur Ocampo, BAYAN MUNA
Party-list representative, 8 February 2008.
- Cristina Palabay, GABRIELA
Party-list representative, 2 December 2007.
- Joan Salvador, GABRIELA
IT Officer, 15 October 2007.

Women on TV news programmes

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Abstract

The report drawn up by the Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya on the presence of women on TV news programmes for the last quarter of 2008 shows significant data which are commented on in this article. It is observed that the broadcasting media do not sufficiently reproduce the greater presence of women in society. Moreover, the appearances of women are concentrated in certain areas and roles, something that contributes to stereotyped representations. Comparing this with data from previous years, we can confirm a slight rising trend in the presence of women, associated with an improvement in their position in society. The study methodology, based on an analysis of a considerable amount of data, as well as the measurement of speaking time, reveal hitherto unknown data, such as the fact that statements by female politicians last half that of male politicians. The report provides elements for reflection and debate concerning how to improve women's representation and to make their actions more visible.

Key words

Women, media, gender, Catalonia, television.

Resum

L'informe que ha elaborat el Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya sobre la presència de les dones en els informatius de televisió del darrer trimestre del 2008 mostra dades significatives que són comentades en aquest article. Consta que els mitjans audiovisuals no reproduïen prou la major presència de les dones en la societat. A més, les aparicions de les dones es concentren en determinats àmbits i rols, cosa que contribueix a reproduir representacions estereotipades. Comparant-ho amb dades d'anys anteriors, es confirma una lleugera tendència a l'increment de la presència de les dones, que està associada a una millora en la seva posició en la societat. La metodologia de l'estudi, basada en l'anàlisi d'un considerable nombre de dades, així com en la medició del temps de les intervencions, revela dades fins ara desconegudes, com el fet que les declaracions de les dones polítiques duren la meitat que les dels homes. L'informe aporta elements per a la reflexió i debat sobre com millorar la representació de les dones i donar visibilitat a les seves activitats.

Paraules clau

Dones, mitjans de comunicació, gènere, Catalunya, televisió.

Over the last few years, women have undergone significant changes in their participation in social, economic, cultural and political life but the media, for various reasons, do not sufficiently reflect this reality. This is one of the main conclusions of the report by the Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya (CAC) which deals with the presence of women on television news programmes broadcast in the last quarter of 2008.¹

This article aims to present the most relevant data from the CAC report. The diagnosis offered actually constitutes an invitation to reflect on the part of journalists and programmers in the media regarding which aspects might be improved and how to achieve female representation that is more in line with their real presence in society.

The representation of women in the media. Prior considerations

Studies on the presence of men and women in the media provide predictable results, as the same phenomenon is repeated again and again in different places in the world: little presence of women, narratives and texts that reinforce the traditional role of women and almost an absence of alternative models. This is confirmed, for example, in the data from the *Global Monitoring Media Project*,² which also show significant variations between one country and another, in line with the differences in position and power of women. The media therefore reflect the social environment but, in spite of this, women's presence and representation lag behind their achievements. The studies carried out in Spain and Catalonia show the same trends.³

The Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya has drawn up several reports on the presence of women in broadcasting. A

report prior to the one we are presenting here, in this case commissioned by the CAC, deals with gender parity on national public radio and television (Cóppulo 2008). Although the sample is small, the data from this report are quite interesting and should be highlighted as not only news programmes are analysed but programming as a whole, taking as its reference the content broadcast on two days in the week, a Monday and a Saturday. Table 1 presents the most significant findings.

We can see that the presence of men is mostly among professionals with greater responsibility and media projection, both on the radio and television. Within programming this male presence is also greater among those invited to debates or discussions and among those starring in fictional series. In the case of advertising, women acquire greater protagonism, although when it is a question of inviting you to buy a product, the voice of authority is predominantly masculine. Moreover, (and this does not appear in the above table), the roles of women in TV advertising are as follows: young woman (69.9%), mother (27.7%), executive/worker (25.1%) and housewife (20.4%). On the radio, the roles are slightly different: professional/workers (40.2%), young woman (19.6%), expert (14.1%) and housewife (8.7%). The difference lies in the fact that the target audience for the advertising is different on television and radio and that the power of the image conditions the message: so, in the case of television, physical appearance becomes more relevant, as is the use of erotic or seductive images. In summary, in the different programmes, and even more so in advertising, women appear as more immature people with less authority than men; also more closely related to domestic tasks.

Other CAC reports of note are those referring to how news treats gender-based violence. This was analysed in 2002, 2004 and 2007, something which means that trends can be followed. We note the maintenance of news attention, which highlights the recognition of this kind of violence as a structural fact, as well as an improvement in the quality of the information, as less weight is given to the aggression per se and greater presence is afforded to the court cases and policies. For the purposes of

what we are discussing in this article, the 2007 report on violence states that news items on domestic violence has women as the protagonist, unlike the rest of the items.⁵ The speaking time of women occupies 61.1% and that of men is 38.9%, a proportion that inverts the usual share for news as a whole analysed in 2007, where women have 22.1% of the speaking time and men have 77.9%. The little representation of women in news as a whole is combined with their over-representation in items on violence, which might contribute to women's image of victimisation and forces us to reflect on its effects.

In all, it leads us to deal with the media in their role as producer and reproducer of cultural representations, taking into account the fact that the media not only inform on but also reinterpret reality, recreating it and shaping a media reality that feeds back into reality per se and helps to modify it. With regard to the differences in representations of men and women, three factors should be considered:

a. **The gender conceptions present in society.** Gender constitutes a part of the sexual difference that appears as social, as constructed. It is the series of signifieds that each society gives to the physical and biological features that differentiate men and women, providing ideas on attitudes, values, beliefs and symbols that give meaning to the experiences and help to construct identity.⁶

b. **Power/representation.** Gender differences are power differences expressed in the imbalance between men and women and are projected in the implicit policy of representation in the media: power to stand out, assign and classify, symbolic power, power to exclude. One of the mechanisms is the use of stereotypes in representing women, which "reduce, essentialize, naturalise and fix the difference" (Hall 1997) and also help to make them inferior, which is a form of exclusion.

c. **Changes in representation policy.** Social and political changes are translated by the media. In fact, social and political dynamics are expressed in the media that are associated with power but also with the response to power.⁷ The main changes in the policy for representing women have taken place at strong moments, as the result of the accumulative cultural

Table 1. Gender parity on the public radio and television of Catalonia. 2008⁴

	TV		RADIO	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Stars of fiction	78%	39%	-	-
Directing programmes	88%	12%	90%	10%
Presenting programmes	68%	32%	80%	53%
Responsible for a section	78%	27%	61%	39%
Number of people invited by the programme	5.09	2.26	4.03	1.45
People explaining their life experiences	97%	68%	83%	72%
Advertising. Number of people per advertising space	1.84	1.29	1.24	0.65
Advertising. Leading role	34%	37%	65%	41%
Advertising. People explaining their life experiences	32%	63%	39%	16%
Advertising. Use of prescriptive voices	75%	25%	76%	41%
Advertising. Use of nude or semi -nude people	44%	84%	-	-

Source: Own, based on Cóppulo (2008)

revolution that has eroded the patriarchal structure and given value to women's rights. It should be stressed that the media do not limit themselves to reproducing a certain status quo; they can also play a part in promoting changes, thematising social problems and encouraging debate in the public arena.

Reports such as that prepared by the CAC and which we present below can contribute to the debate regarding journalistic routines and practices that are conditioned by the imbalances between men and women and to the reflection of how alternative approaches can be designed for a more just and balanced gender representation.

Object and methodology of the CAC report on the presence of women in the news

The CAC report on the presence of women in the news, analyses the television news programmes and news magazines offered by six channels from Catalonia (TV3, 3/24, TVE a Catalunya, 8tv, Barcelona TV and Badalona TV) between 1 October and 31 December 2008,⁸ comparing the presence of women with that of men and taking the following aspects as the lines of analysis:

- Overall presence of women expressed as speaking time and number of inserts in which they appear.⁹
- Themes and news items in which the presence of women is found.
- Presence of women in items from the political arena and the role they play in them.
- Presence of women in items from the social arena and the role they play in them, understanding the social arena in a broad sense, including items of an economic, cultural, health, educational, association-based, employment or personal nature.

We should stress two important contributions from the methodology employed in this report, adding value compared with other studies on the same area as it provides different data and information that have been novel. One is having analysed such a considerable volume of data (11,440 inserts, corresponding to 376 broadcasting hours of 654 TV news programmes). The other, the most notable, is the fact that the speaking time of men and women is known and not only the frequency of their appearance, information which provides more details regarding the function of protagonism in news and especially helps to weigh this up in proportion to the duration of appearance. The fact that there is also a similar report for 2004 means that comparisons can also be made over time and the trends analysed.¹⁰

One methodological caveat should be remembered when analysing the data, namely that the time dedicated to each TV channel is not the same, due to the differences in duration of their news programmes, so that the data obtained may vary

from the almost 194 hours seen on TV3 to the 23 hours on Badalona TV.¹¹ This big difference is not offset by the expression of the data in relative amounts. On the other hand, the sports block included in news programmes is treated as a whole, without breaking down the different items, and only the speaking time of any political agents appearing in this block is counted.

The news for the quarter analysed (October-December 2008) focused particularly on the economic and financial crisis and its consequences, both for Spain and internationally. Also of note were news items on the presidential elections in the United States, the debate on the new financing model for the autonomous communities in Spain and ETA terrorism. With non-political news, of note are items related to the Christmas festivities, weather and news on immigration, especially regarding the signing of the immigration pact.

The main conclusions of the report are presented below, based on the overall findings, as no substantial differences have been found between the TV channels analysed. The graphs and tables appearing in the text are either taken from the report itself or have been produced based on its data. In summary, the conclusions are as follows:

1. Little presence of women in news programmes.
2. Lack of thematic balance in terms of the presence of men and women.
3. In politics there is a dual under-representation of women: in presence and in speaking time.
4. In the social arena, there is little diversity in the representation of women and a strong presence of stereotypes.
5. In all areas the presence of women is less than their real presence in society.

1. Little presence of women in news programmes

The presence of women on news programmes is low. This is not only seen in the number of inserts (27.5% compared with 72.5% of men), but also in the average duration of their interventions, which in the case of women (28 seconds) is significantly less than that of men (44 seconds). The proportion of speaking time is 24.5% among women and 75.5% among men. It should be added that the presence of women is not only lower than that of men in absolute terms (the proportion is 1 to 4), but also in relation to their real presence in society. We will deal with this later.

Nonetheless, these data show quite a substantial improvement compared with the situation in 2004, where the appearance of women was 20.1% (compared with 27.5% in 2008) and speaking time 17.7% (compared with 24.5% currently).

Apart from these absolute data, there is another form of under-representation of women, where they appear without being identified with their names and/or surnames, which totals 13% of the speaking time (compared with 4.9% for men). In general, the name and surname of the person are given when it is thought that what they are saying is of some sig-

nificance. But when the aim is to have people appear in news items who are limited to expressing emotions or drama, then more women are used.

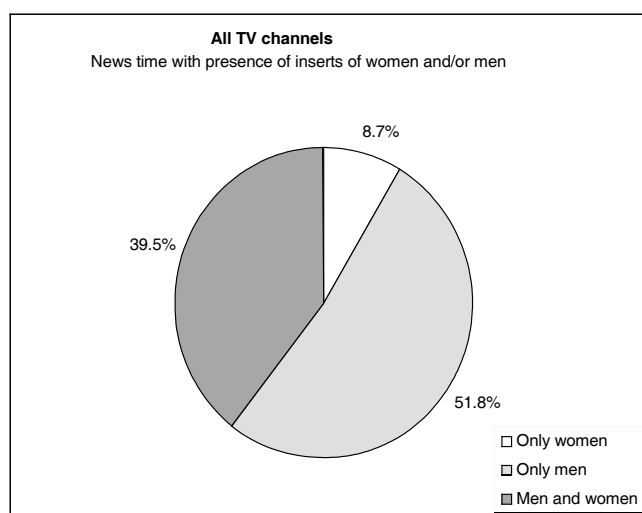
Another highly significant piece of data, which we represent in Figure 1, is that only 8.7% of the news time contains interventions by women on their own, while the percentage rises to 51.8% in the case of men on their own (the rest of the time, 39.5%, corresponds to news items where men and women appear at the same time).

2. Lack of thematic balance in terms of the presence of men and women

One initial aspect to highlight refers to the protagonism in news items and to the different weight occupied by the political sphere. In the case of men, almost half the total speaking time corresponds to political figures (45.5%), while in the case of women this percentage falls to 25.8%.

With regard to the thematic content of the news items, and focusing on the speaking time, women are mostly to be found in news items of *Society* (35.5%), followed at quite a distance by *Economy and business* (13.7%) and *Art and culture* (10.9%). Women's remaining speaking time (37.7%) is highly fragmented and divided up among 11 different themes. The different television channels analysed have some notable details. For example, 8tv has the largest concentration of speaking time of women in *Society* (42.1%). On the other hand, TV3 (14.1%) and 3/24 (16.5%) are the only ones where the proportion of women's speaking time for *Political events* is significantly above the overall average (9%). Finally, of note is the 22.8% of speaking time obtained by women on Badalona TV for *Art and culture*.

Figure 1. Proportion of news time with presence of inserts of men and/or of women



Source: Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya.

Table 2. Proportion of speaking time per theme by the variable of gender¹²

Theme	Women's speaking time (%)	Men's speaking time (%)
Health	47.4	52.6
Education and teaching	33.9	66.1
Society	32.6	67.4
Media and telecommunications	27.2	72.8
Art and culture	26.8	73.2
Environment	26.7	73.3
International events	26.7	73.3
Traffic	26.1	73.9
Social conflicts	24.6	75.4
Science and technology	24.5	75.5
Work	23.9	76.1
Economy and business	19.3	80.7
Sports	13.2	86.8
Political events	10.9	89.1
Total	24.5	75.5

Source: Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya.

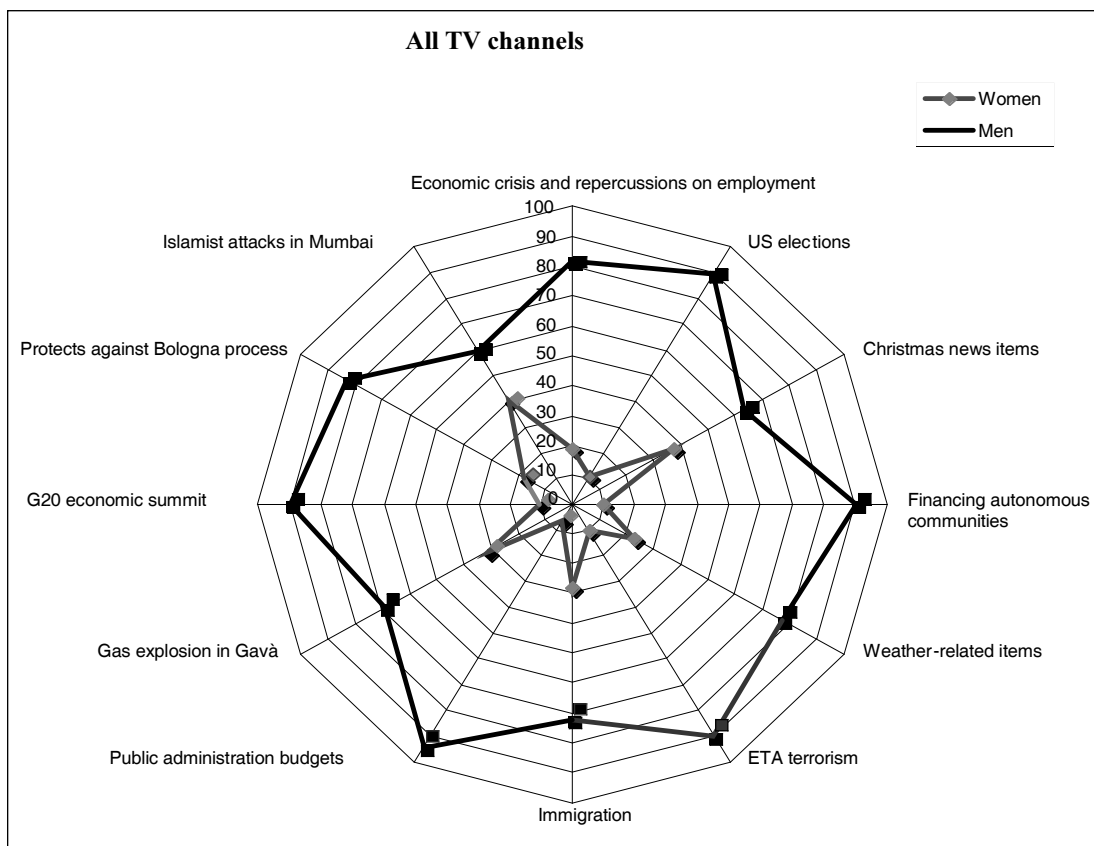
If we take as a reference the distribution of speaking time between men and women, we will see (table 2) that women appear less than men in each thematic area and that the news items related to *Health* (47.4%), *Education and teaching* (33.9%) and *Society* (32.6%) are those that concentrate a greater proportion of women. The speaking time of women is below average (24.5%) in three themes (excluding the category of *Sports*): *Work* (23.9%), *Economy and business* (19.3%) and *Political events* (10.9%).

With regard to the most notable items for contemporary news, women obtain a proportion of speaking time that is lower than men in all cases. As can be seen in Figure 2, this ranges from 6.2% in the item on the approval of the budgets for the different public authorities for 2009 (especially the general state budgets but also those of the Catalan government and Barcelona council) to 40.3% in the Islamist attacks against tourist interests in Mumbai, where the president of the Community of Madrid, Esperanza Aguirre, was affected, as well as the CiU MEP, Ignasi Guardans. In "hard" news items, such as those about the financing of autonomous communities, public administration budgets, US presidential elections and the G20 summit in Washington, women's speaking time was under 15% in all cases.

3. In politics there is a dual under-representation of women: in presence and in speaking time

The political sphere has particular characteristics as there is a dual under-representation of women. Their presence (23%) is lower than the average (27.5%) but if we pay attention to the

Figure 2. Proportion of speaking time for men and women in the main news items for the quarter October-December 2008



Source: Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya.

speaking time, this proportion falls to 15.5%, ten points below that of news as a whole, which is 24.5%.

The CAC report reveals a relevant piece of data: the average duration of interventions by male politicians almost doubles that of female politicians; 2 minutes and 1 second for men compared with 1 minute and 12 seconds for women. The explanation can be found in the fact that men occupy more important positions in the different political institutions as presidents of governments, mayors, heads of the opposition, spokespeople for parliamentary groups, presidents of parties, etc., and their interventions warrant more news coverage. For example, the president of the Catalan government, José Montilla, concentrates 36.1% of speaking time for the Catalan government, and José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (the Spanish president) accounts for 45.9% of the time for the Spanish government. However, this explanation focusing on the degree of responsibility is not enough since, as we will see below, the presence of women in the media is below that of men occupying equivalent positions. In other words, under the same conditions, men have more speaking time, something that also indicates the influence of stereotypes and prejudices so that what women do is undervalued.

A high concentration of speaking time for female politicians has been observed, as only four women account for more than

25% of time of all female politicians: María Teresa Fernández de la Vega, Vice-President of the Spanish government (8.2%), Mar Serna, Catalan Minister for Employment (6.7%), Alicia Sánchez-Camacho, President of the Catalan political party PPC (6.0%), and Montserrat Tura, Catalan Minister of Justice (5.1%). This degree of concentration is higher than for men, as interventions by 7 men need to be added together to reach this same percentage of 25%.

If we consider all politicians, male and female, then María Teresa Fernández de la Vega, who is the first woman to appear, is ranked 13 on the list of interventions, ordered by speaking time, with 1.3% of the total speaking time,¹⁴ Mar Serna ranks 15 (1.0%), Alicia Sánchez-Camacho is 18th (0.9%), Montserrat Tura 26th (0.8%), Marina Geli 31st (0.6%), Carme Capdevila 35th (0.6%), Carme Chacón 44th (0.4%), Mercè Rius 48th (0.4%), Dolors Camats 49th (0.4%) and Esperanza Aguirre 50th (0.4%).

We should note the timid upward trend over the last five years in the presence of women in the area of politics. In 2004 the average speaking time of female politicians was 13.8%, lower than that of the last quarter in 2008, which was 15.5%. There is therefore not such a notable difference, almost 2 percentage points. On the other hand, the increase is much more marked in the specific case of the parties. In fact, the figure of speak-

Table 3. List of the 10 female politicians with the most speaking time¹³

	Identification	Group	Speaking time	% of total speaking time for female politicians
1	Fernández de la Vega, María Teresa	Spanish government	0:15:11	8.2
2	Serna, Mar	Catalan government	0:12:29	6.7
3	Sánchez-Camacho, Alícia	PPC (political party)	0:11:09	6.0
4	Tura, Montserrat	Catalan government	0:09:27	5.1
5	Geli, Marina	Catalan government	0:07:44	4.2
6	Capdevila, Carme	Catalan government	0:06:44	3.6
7	Chacón, Carme	Spanish government	0:05:16	2.8
8	Rius, Mercè	Badalona council	0:04:49	2.6
9	Camats, Dolors	ICV-EUiA (political parties)	0:04:38	2.5
10	Aguirre, Esperanza	Autonomous community government (not Catalonia)	0:04:37	2.5
Total speaking time for female politicians			3:04:54	100

Source: Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya.

ing time for women from political parties in 2004 was practically anecdotal (around 3%) and in 2008 this has increased by about 10 points. This has been helped by the appointment of female spokespeople for ERC (Marina Llansana) and ICV (Dolors Camats) and particularly the presidency of the PPC, on the part of a woman, Alícia Sánchez-Camacho. In Figures 3 and 4 below, we can see the trends in speaking time in the areas of institutional politics and political parties, where the difference is evident. The data have been taken from the monthly pluralism reports produced by the CAC, which have included the gender variable since 2004, allowing these trends to be monitored.

4. In the social arena, there is little diversity in the representation of women and a strong presence of stereotypes

In the social arena there is less imbalance in the appearance of men and women in news programmes than in the political arena, especially in certain areas, such as health and education. The average speaking time is 30.6% for women and 69.4% for men. Of the different television channels analysed, this proportion ranges from 27.3% on TV3 to 36.1% on Barcelona TV.

Unlike the situation in the political arena, here there is a strong spread in interventions by women and less continuity. Remember that 4 female politicians concentrated 25% of all the speaking time. In the social arena, however, the 4 women with most time accumulate only 2.3% of the time. The reason is that women's interventions are particularly concentrated in the group of *Other* (46.8%), which fundamentally contains occasional agents, witnesses of the events being explained in the news items. In the case of men, the social group with the highest concentration is that of *Trade Unions*. In addition to the category of *Other*, women's interventions are also concentrated

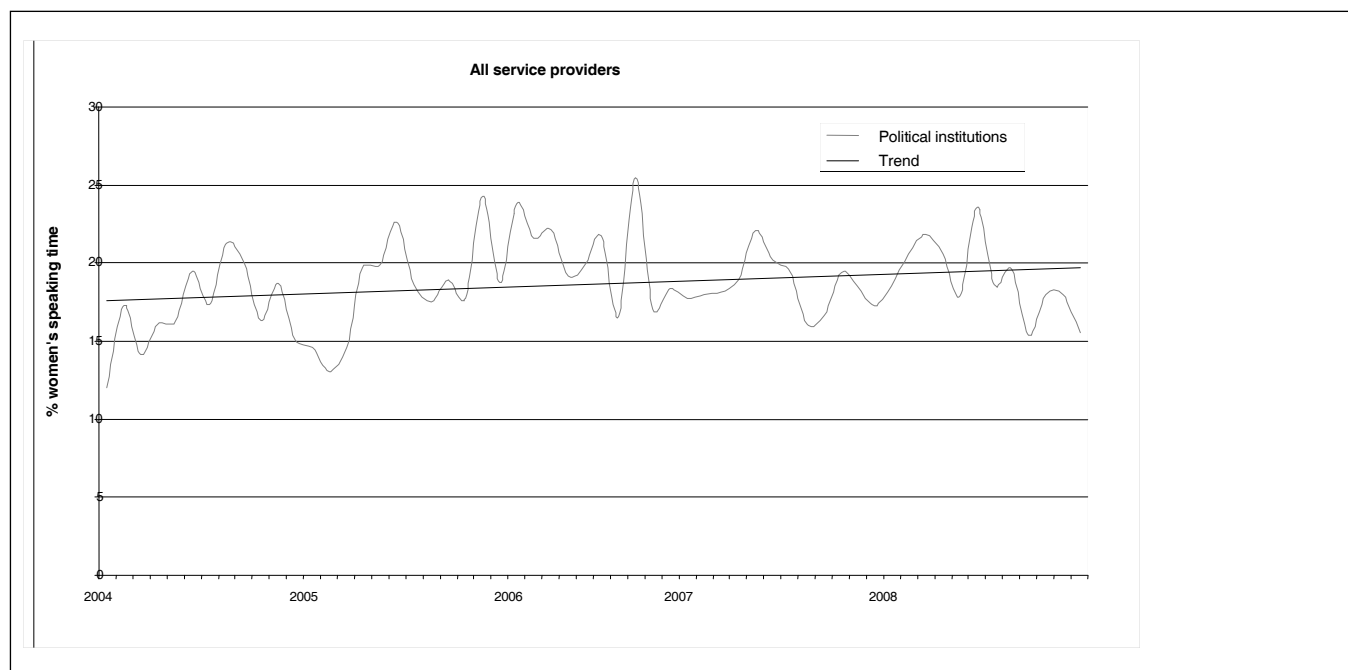
in *Cultural Acts* (14.5%), *World of Associations* (9.9%) and *Economic Agents* (8.4%), and the four go to make up almost 80% of the interventions.

It is in social roles where the stereotyped representations of women are most strongly expressed, concentrated into specific occupations and also in activities with less prestige and power. In effect, as shown in Table 4, women have a relevant presence in terms of speaking time in the personal area (45.5%), in health (34.8%) and education (32.1%).

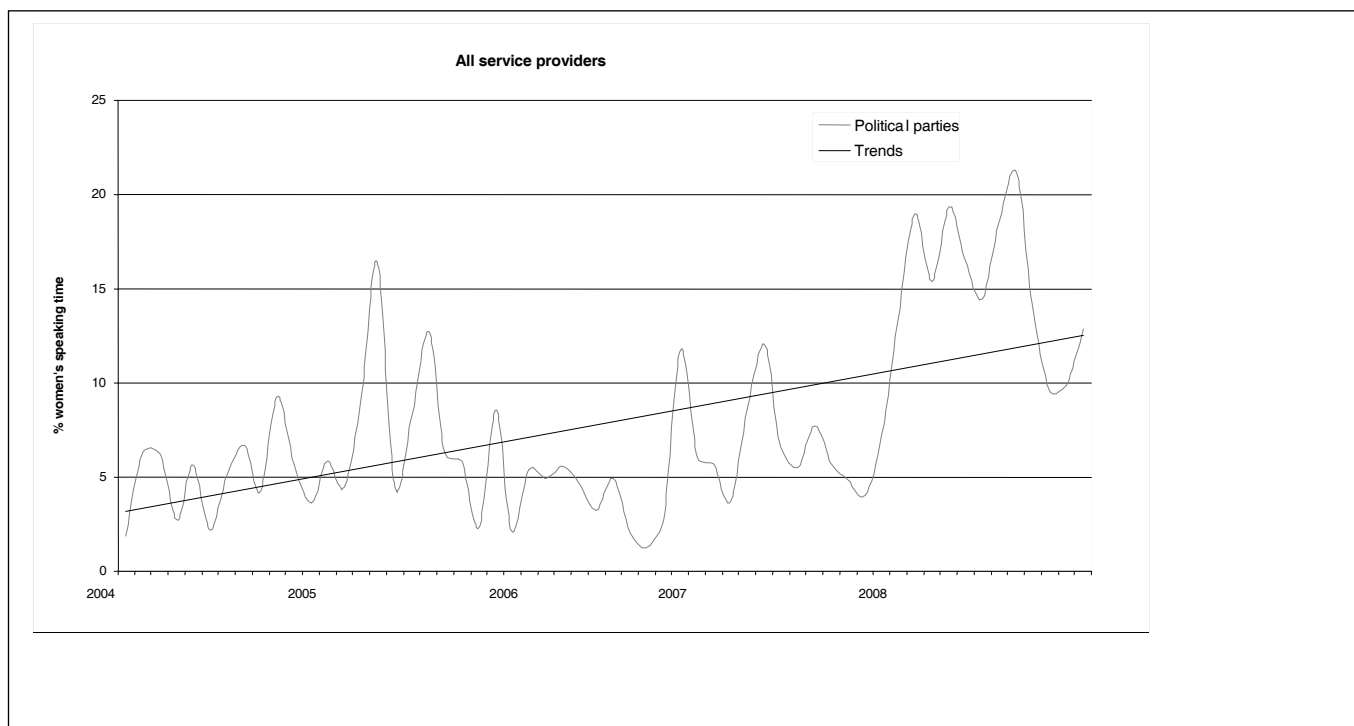
When we break down the news items for each of these three areas where women have more speaking time, another very relevant piece of data appears, namely that, among the different roles that can be observed, women predominantly appear in news items where they have less relevance. We can see this in Table 5.

In the social area there is a predominance of representations that tend to value women not so much as autonomous individuals but in their relationship with others, as shown by the specific roles that predominate in the areas of health, education and personal issues. With regard to health, significantly, women have more speaking time than men as receivers of health services (56.1%) and, on the other hand, when they are to appear as professionals, the proportion falls to 27.5%. The same thing happens in education: half the speaking time for students is by women (49.2%) but when we focus on educators, this falls to 29.1%. With regard to the personal area, this is where women's speaking time is highest (44.5%), exceeding that of men when appearing as a *relative* (68.5%), *user of public services* (65.2%) and *consumer* (55.7%). We should note that the personal dimension involves a private perspective, totally removed from professional or public activities of individuals and is therefore not associated usually with something that bestows status or power.

The impact on the formation of an image of women and men in the media is particularly significant in some of the sub-

Figure 3. Women's speaking time as part of all groups of institutional politicians between 2004-2008

Source: Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya.

Figure 4. All service providers. Women's speaking time as part of all party politicians between 2004-2008

Source: Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya.

Table 4. Proportion of speaking time by area according to the gender variable

Area	Women's speaking time (%)	Men's Speaking time (%)
Economic	25.8	74.2
Cultural	26.2	73.8
Health	34.8	65.2
Education	32.1	67.9
Associations and socio-political organisations	26.4	73.6
Personal	44.5	55.5
All women - social	30.6	69.4

Source: Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya.

groups mentioned that, in addition to relative terms, have a considerable weight in absolute speaking time. This is the case of the sub-groups *relative* (39 minutes and 45 seconds of speaking time) and *consumer* (35 minutes and 47 seconds), where women predominate. On the other hand, two of the sub-groups with the most speaking time in the case of men are *large firms and multinationals* (1 hour 16 minutes and 30 seconds of speaking time) and *business organisations* (59 minutes and 59 seconds). This all helps to reproduce the stereotypes associating men with activities that significantly impact the economy and society important and women in other sub-groups where they are dependent.

5. In all areas the presence of women is less than their real presence in society

Not only is the presence of women lower than that of men in absolute terms; it is also below their real presence in society. Politics is a clear example. 15.5% of women's speaking time is far below their real presence in governments (26.7% in the Catalan government, 50% in the Spanish government, 55.5% in Barcelona council, 33.3% in Badalona council), as well as in parliaments (35.6% in Catalonia; 36.9% in Spain) or in local administration as a whole (29.3%).

Table 6 compares the speaking time obtained by members of governments in TV news programmes for all the TV channels analysed, discounting the time used by presidents of governments (Catalan and Spanish) and mayors, as they have more news coverage due to their position and responsibility. Consequently, comparing equivalent data, we can see that the representation of women is a third of the real presence of female ministers in the Spanish government, although the government is evenly balanced and its spokesperson is a woman. In the case of the Catalan government, however, women's representation is closer to reality. With regard to local governments as a

whole, women's speaking time on television news programmes (18.1%) is 11 points below their real presence (29.3%). Executives from Barcelona and Badalona council specifically have a similar pattern: women are under-represented in television news programmes in comparison with the composition of these governments, even after deducting the time dedicated to the respective mayors.

In the social arena, there is a similar situation to that of the political arena, with women's representation being below that of their real presence in each of the sub-groups of this area. Table 7 shows this situation.

In the economic arena, the comparison between two similar concepts (*worker* in the report and *salaried worker* in the statistical data) reveal a notable coincidence: 41.1% of speaking time and 45.1% of the employed population (total men and women).

Health and education, which in global terms are the areas where there is the greatest correspondence between women's presence in news programmes and in reality, are nonetheless distorted because women are under-represented in their

Table 5. Proportion of speaking time by gender in the area of health, education and personal

	Women	Men
Area of health	34.8	65.2
Person providing health services	27.6	72.4
• Medical staff	21.2	78.8
• Nursing staff	100	--
• Pharmaceutical staff	34.5	65.5
• Other (health area)	--	--
Person receiving health services	56.1	43.9
Area of education	32.1	67.9
Teaching	27.1	72.9
• Non-university official education	55.9	44.1
• University education	14.9	85.1
• Non-official education	32.2	67.8
Student	49.2	50.8
Personal area	44.5	55.5
Person affected by an event	35.5	64.5
Relative	68.6	31.4
Consumer	55.7	44.3
Citizen	38.3	61.7
User of public services	65.2	34.8
Assisting/Taking part in public act	38.7	61.3
Other (personal area)	4.0	96

Source: Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya.

Table 6. Comparison of composition of executives and women's speaking time

Executives	Composition (% of women)	Women's speaking time in TV news programmes (%)	
		Of all executive	Without president or mayor
Catalonia (all television channels)	26.7	19.7	31
Spain (all television channels)	50	15.5	31.9
Catalonia – local ¹⁵ (all television channels)	29.3	18.1	--
Barcelona council (Barcelona TV)	55.5	26.7	42
Badalona council (TV Badalona)	33.3	15	21.8

Source: Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya.

respective professional categories. In health, for example, women appear little as doctors (43.6% in reality, 21.2% of speaking time) or as pharmacists (70.2% in reality, 34.5% of speaking time) whereas they are over-represented as nurses (83% in reality, 100% of speaking time). With regard to education, there is a correspondence of data at the level of non-university teachers but, in the case of university lecturers, women are under-represented (14.9% of speaking time) compared with their actual presence (36.9% of university lecturers are women).

In these areas we need to make the same considerations as previously with politics, namely that both for men and women, speaking time is higher in the socio-labour categories of higher prestige, higher positions or more responsibility in the chain of command: the doctor more than the nursing staff; the university lecturer more than the primary or secondary school teacher. But this trend is more evident in the case of men, as doctors and university lecturers almost monopolise all the speaking time of men in the area of health and education respectively.

In the area of associations, while statistics show parity in the participation of men and women, speaking time attributes 32.2% to women and 67.8 to men. Further analysis would require data on the degree of responsibility of women and men within associations and a classification of membership according to the purpose of the associations.

Finally, women are also under-represented in terms of speaking time compared with their trade union membership: 14.7% speaking time, although the membership of women in Catalonia is around a third of the total.

To finish

The significant imbalance that appears in the representation of women in news programmes comes from two factors of a very different nature, although they are related; one being cultural and the other resulting from the inequality and power imbalance between men and women.

Gender is a cultural construct based on perceived capacities and qualities that are attributed to each sex. These perceptions

Table 7. Comparison between real data and speaking times for sub-groups of social agents

Area	Concept - report	Concept - statistical data on society	Women (% of total men/women)	
			Speaking time	Society data
Economic	<i>Worker</i>	<i>Salaried worker</i>	41.1	45.1
Health	<i>Doctor</i>	<i>Doctor</i>	21.2	43.6
	<i>Nursing staff</i>	<i>Nursing diploma</i>	100	83
	<i>Pharmacist</i>	<i>Pharmacist</i>	34.5	70.2
Education	<i>Teaching non-university official education</i>	<i>General education: special education; other</i>	55.9	62.3
	<i>Teaching official university education</i>	<i>Universities</i>	14.9	36.9
Associations (...) socio-political	<i>Related to the non-labour world</i>	<i>Associations</i>	32.2	50
	<i>Trade unions</i>	<i>Trade union membership</i>	14.7	33.4

Source: Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya.

influence the lower visibility and importance given to activities carried out by women, which the media tend to reproduce. In this respect, we should reflect on the fact that inserts containing statements by female politicians last half as long as those by men. Also the fact that women are more represented in "soft" news items, in themes concerning society, entertainment or fashion or to illustrate news items as one-off witnesses; more as common people talking at a personal level rather than experts.

The other factor is related to social and power dimensions and to the inequalities that still exist in society between men and women. The media largely reflect what exists in parties, in institutional activity, in professional representation and in the leaders of associations. Women appear more and with representations more in line with their real situation when they hold important positions of a political, social or professional nature. More presence for women in these areas should also lead to greater balance in the representation of men and women in news programmes.

Based on these comments, it is useful to remember the recommendations given by the World Conference on Women in Beijing, held in 1995, which noted that the media are not reflecting the real changes taking place for women in our societies, fixing as a strategic target the fact that the media should represent appropriately, without prejudice or stereotypes, the images, speeches and knowledge generated by women.

Comparing the 2008 report with the one produced by the CAC in 2004, we can see a slight upward trend in the presence of women in TV news programmes, associated with an improvement in the position in those areas where they carry out their activities. This is a trend that reflects the tendency towards greater understanding and respect for women's rights, both on the part of the media and also by society. However, there are still notable deficiencies, but if these deficiencies are questioned instead of being accepted as a *fait accompli*, we can then say that the data from the CAC report have the potential to transform and must help to advance towards more satisfactory results concerning the presence of women and towards the need to promote the focus of news from a gender perspective.

Notes

- 1 IST Report 1/2009. *Informe sectorial trimestral. La presència de les dones en la informació*. October-December 2008. Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya. The CAC also made some assessments based on this report that were approved by the Full Assembly of 18 March 2009.
- 2 The Global Monitoring Media Project, GMMP, was created in 1995 after the Beijing Summit to analyse the presence of women in the media. In 2005 it issued its third report based on the news appearing in the broadcasting and written media on a single day (16 February 2005) in 76 countries in the world.
- 3 See Altès 2000; Altès and Gallego 2004; Bach et al 2000; Bengoechea and Gutiérrez 2004; Berganza et al 2004; Còppulo 2008; López Díez 2001, 2004, 2005).
- 4 Both in this table and in the data that appear in the text, there may be percentages that do not add up to one hundred. This is either because all the possible situations have not been exhausted or because the same criterion has been applied to both men and women when they share a programme or advertisement.
- 5 See the IST Report 1/2008 by the CAC.
- 6 See Butler 2004; Castells and Subirats 2007; Comas d'Argemir 1995; del Valle et al 2002; Mascia-Lees and Black 2000, Touraine 2007.
- 7 Comas d'Argemir 2008; Curran 2005; Dines and Humez 1993; Gaunlett 2002; Macé 2006.
- 8 The report on the presence of women in news programmes is a quarterly report drawn up by the CAC based on data from the monthly reports on political pluralism, which are those that determine the criteria for the sample of TV channels analysed. It is produced by the Content Area of the CAC and we would like to stress the expertise and rigour in obtaining and exploiting the considerable volume of data contained in the reports.
- 9 The inserts result from breaking down the news into different meaningful fragments. The speaking time measures the direct presence, with voice and image, of those people in the news item.
- 10 See the report IDP3/2005, by the CAC.
- 11 The news programmes analysed are as follows: TV3 (*TN migdia*, *TN vespre*, and *l'informatiu de Els matins*), 3/24 (*News items 3/24*), TVE a Catalunya (*Edició migdia*, *Edició vespre*), 8tv (*News items 8*), Barcelona TV (*Edició migdia*, *Edició vespre*), Badalona TV (*Badalona news items*).
- 12 The shaded area is the percentage of those themes where women's speaking time is below the overall speaking time global for women.
- 13 The women have been shaded that go to make up the first 25% of the total speaking time for female politicians.
- 14 Ahead of them are José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (7.2%), José Montilla (6.0%), Artur Mas (3.1%), Joan Saura (2.5%), Mariano Rajoy (2.4%), Jordi Hereu (2.2%), Jordi Serra (2.2%), Pedro Solbes (2.1%), Joan Ridao (1.7%), Antoni Castells (1.7%), Joan Puigcercós (1.7%) and Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba (1.5%).
- 15 Includes the groups *Government of Catalan local authorities*, *Government of Barcelona Council* and *Government of Badalona Council*.

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The use of images of dead people on television and other media. The opinion of the journalists of Catalonia

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Abstract

The victims' right to privacy is paramount, although percentages vary according to each particular situation. There is full agreement in the case of images of people who have committed suicide and a lot of agreement when the images show victims of domestic violence or catastrophes. However, if the death has been caused by a political authority and might affect a large number of people, most would use these images, no matter how shocking, because they feel they raise the awareness of the population.

Among the different types of journalists answering the questions, women and young people defend stricter deontological positions to preserve the image of the victim, unlike men and older professionals. The research, which has been promoted by the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, was carried out via an online questionnaire in January of 2009, with the participation of 1,198 professionals.

Key words

Journalism, pain, affliction, images, corpse, television, information, Catalonia, ethics

Resum

Els periodistes catalans es declaren en general contraris a l'ús d'imatges de cadàvers i de despulles humanes a la informació. Preval el dret a la intimitat de les víctimes, tot i que els percentatges varien segons les situacions plantejades. Hi ha ple acord quan es tracta d'imatges de persones que s'han suïcidat i un acord destacat quan les imatges mostren víctimes de la violència domèstica o de catàstrofes. Ara bé, si la mort té una autoria política i pot afectar gran quantitat de persones, la majoria farien servir aquestes imatges, per dures que fossin, perquè consideren que sensibilitzen la població.

Entre els perfils de periodistes que responen, les dones i els joves defensen postures deontològiques més severes per preservar la imatge de la víctima, a l'inrevés que els homes i els professionals de més edat. La recerca, que està impulsada per la Universitat Pompeu Fabra, es va realitzar a través d'un qüestionari en línia el gener de 2009, en què van participar 1.198 professionals.

Paraules clau

Periodisme, dolor, aflicció, imatges, cadàvers, televisió, informació, Catalunya i deontologia

Introduction

One of the most persistent ethical concerns in the broadcasting media consists of determining what must be shown and what must be protected in the images that illustrate or show tragic events such as wars, natural catastrophes or large accidents, terrorist attacks, acts of violence or suicides. In these cases, it is very difficult to discover the role of some explicit images that, in addition to information, have an associated effect of morbidity or sensationalism. A choice must be made between the right of citizens to information and the right to privacy of the people appearing and this is an ongoing ethical debate.

Even more delicate is the treatment of images of dead people. Is it appropriate to show dead bodies in news items? Does seeing images of victims and specifically of dead bodies in accidents, wars or catastrophes help to raise the public's awareness of these issues or to provoke, by repetition, collective insensibility? It is not only a question of the effects that might be provoked in the receiver or of protecting the rights of the victim but also of preventing the suffering caused to relatives in seeing images of the death of a loved one over and over again in the media.

At the Department of Communication of the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, the Journalism Research Group (GRP in Catalan) is carrying out a study on the ethical quality that pro-

professionals and citizens expect from the media. This research is called "Ètica i excel·lència informativa. L'ètica periodística davant les expectatives dels ciutadans" (Ethics and information excellence. Journalistic ethics compared with citizen expectations) and is funded by the R&D programme of the Ministry of Science and Technology. The research started in January 2007 and will end in the first quarter of 2010. The work does not aim to establish the deontological quality of the information provided to citizens but to discover whether this ethical quality is as expected by the professionals themselves and, moreover, by citizens. Consequently, the research measures the degree of expectation and to a certain extent the satisfaction of producers and targets of information in Catalonia. Coordinated with the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, the same research is being applied to three more autonomous communities: to the Basque Country through the Universitat del País Basc, to Andalusia through the Universidad de Sevilla and to Madrid through the Universidad Carlos III. The Universitat Pompeu Fabra is the initial promoter of the study.

In all, the research was divided into three phases, each carried out over the course of one year. In 2007 the most important general and specific deontological codes were gathered for Spain and Europe. In 2008 journalists were consulted on their deontological expectations, the core issue of this article, and in 2009 it was the turn of citizens, which is still underway.

In this article we are concerned with a very specific part of the results from the second phase, i.e. analysing a response of journalists to a precise issue on which they were consulted. This is the exhibition of images of accidents, catastrophes and tragedies in which human remains or dead bodies appear due to the very nature of the news item, as well as the professional treatment required by such sensitive material.

From the time when the research was designed, it was noted that all the situations that generate human pain constitute, in general, one of the most controversial and discussed issues of the profession, concerning which the codes often recommend respect to the victims and family, as well as scrupulous treatment of the identity of the people affected. This issue is even more interesting in the media with the greatest social impact, TV news. This article presents and compares the answers of journalists from television with the opinions of journalists who do not use images as the core of their work.

Regarding the news treatment of victims, there are a series of explicit deontological recommendations. The Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya (CAC) advises against the repeated broadcasting of images of a news item due to the pain this causes to family members, no matter how much the news programme warns of the shocking nature of the content and that the journalistic treatment may be correct. In their recommendations, moreover, the CAC (2004, 35-45) alerts to the peril of "media over-attention", of the disproportionate use of resources, of turning tragedy into spectacle and the use of archive images. It also explicitly states the following:

"As much as possible, and as a general rule, resorting to

images of dead victims, coffins or injured people must be avoided. Often these kinds of images are employed as simple illustration and in a repeated manner."

(CAC 2004; 44)

This problem is experienced constantly by editing teams. When news programmes have specific images of a tragedy, these are often used, as happened in July 2009 on the death of a young man in the festival of San Fermín, in Pamplona. Not only because a bull run is a spectacle that is broadcast live on television but because, throughout the run, a large number of cameras, both professional and amateur, take images from all angles of accidents and impalings. That's why the images of the death of this young man were repeated with the immediacy and repetition the CAC had warned against. Moreover, throughout that time other bloody and appalling incidents frequently occurred, involving injured young people, that received similar attention. The TV news programmes used a multitude of images to inform about these events and the newspapers put them on the next day's front pages. In fact, we might argue that, if the bull run had been broadcast live, what problem was there in using any image afterwards?

Often these images are used to enhance a piece of information, to illustrate the moment when the fact that is news and the multiple references made to it afterwards (Alsius, 1999; 397). Another case, also deontologically questionable but of a different nature, is the use of these images in a situation of emergency news stories, under the pressure of getting to the public in time. Normally both situations combine: the pressure to use very delicate material in little time and the subsequent repetition involved in continued information. The issue of the treatment of suffering is contained, moreover, in the codes and style guides of different news corporations and channels. We find specific recommendations in the code of ethics *Codi deontològic dels periodistes catalans*,¹ in the code of ethics *Código deontológico de la profesión periodística de la Federació d'Associacions de Periodistes d'Espanya (FAPE)*,² in the style guide *Libro de estilo de Telemadrid*,³ in the style guide *Libro de estilo de ABC*,⁴ in the principles *Principis d'actuació dels mitjans de la CCMA*,⁵ in the style guide *Libro de estilo de la COPE*,⁶ in the style guide *Libro de estilo de Vocento*,⁷ in the editor's guide *Estatuto de redacción de El Periódico de Catalunya*,⁸ in the editor's guide *Estatuto de redacción de la Agencia EFE*,⁹ and in the document "Compromisos éticos asumidos por la Asociación Nacional de Informadores Gráficos de Prensa y Televisión (ANIGP-TV)",¹⁰ among others.

Catalan journalists, on the whole, are aware of this problem, as commented in the in-depth interviews prior to designing the survey. Most of the thirty journalists interviewed mentioned the need to be careful with this kind of information and many even defended that this kind of images should not be shown, so that there was a clear discrepancy between what a large part of the profession says and what is sometimes done in news production. Precisely for this reason, the question about the images of

dead people had a quantitative place in the survey, because it asked about a controversial deontological point.

The in-depth interviews investigated this issue openly so that professionals would talk as freely as they felt was appropriate.¹¹ The question asked months later in the online questionnaire was formulated in the following way, as found by the journalists in a series of screens. The survey was available over twenty days in January 2009 and asked more than forty questions related to deontology.¹²

The same question was asked relating to five clearly different cases: the legitimacy of using images of dead bodies. The cases chosen were sufficiently different from each other to require an independent answer, as they ranged from traffic accidents to attacks and from wars to domestic violence. In all cases these were deaths with authors and circumstances that were sufficiently different to ask about each situation separately. Respondents were also asked about the suicides of anonymous people.

Three possible responses were provided for these five cases. Two were more or less resounding agreement or disagreement with the statement in the question, but with justification. And there was a third option, not exactly central, that was one of the justifications most widely employed by some liberal positions: it is appropriate to use images of tragedy and human suffering because it raises the population's awareness about certain offences being committed or about certain problems. The prior in-depth interviews helped to show that, with these possible answers, the range of typical attitudes would be covered that are held by journalists concerning this issue.

One further note concerning methodological issues. Why, in the question, did we use the expression "dead people" and not the more normal "shocking images of human suffering"? For reasons of accuracy. If a questionnaire asks about images that show the suffering caused by an earthquake or murder, it is not sufficiently clear what the person answering the question is imagining. Perhaps they are imagining collapsed buildings and rescue teams working there, i.e. hope. But if we ask about the use of images of dead bodies -of "dead people"- the question is more direct, simple and easy to understand. Moreover, it introduces some central elements to the debate, as we have already mentioned: the right of victims to their privacy, the right of viewers to information and also the right of viewers not to be offended.

Overall findings

As has already been noted, the survey was offered online. The messages accompanying the survey contained an explanation of the study's objectives and a direct link was provided to a website where they could answer a questionnaire of 48 questions, 18 of which were socio-demographic in nature. Number 35 was the one that asked about the use of images of dead people. 1,198 journalists answered the survey validly.

In general, the positions that defended absolute tolerance when showing any kind of image were the most limited in number, ranging from 21.6% in the case of war, a situation in which maximum freedom is given, to 1.5% of journalists who accepted this even in the case of suicides of anonymous people, the situation that, for the profession as a whole, warrants greater restriction.

Apart from these two extremes, the rest of the cases occupy the central positions: on terrorist attacks, 14.2% of respondents stated that images could be offered without any self-control; on catastrophes in general, 10.4%; on violence against women, 5.7%, and on traffic accidents, 4.3%.

As can be seen, those professionals are always a minority who state they have no problem in showing images of dead people, whatever kind. However, a leap can be observed when we go from collective tragedies to those that often have a more intimate and personal dimension. For wars, catastrophes or terrorist attacks, the result is over 10%, while in cases of violence against women only 5.7% believe it is justified to show images of dead people, as in traffic accidents. And, as has already been mentioned, the attitude of ethical permissiveness reaches its minimum in cases of suicide, where only 1.5% would show images of the dead person "without any problem".

Raising the awareness of the population

Most of the answers contain the argument of the need to raise the population's awareness. Specifically, all answers are between 35 and 50%, with the notable exception, once again, of the case of suicides. Only 6.5% of the respondents believe that images should be published to raise the awareness of the

Table 1. Should images of dead people be shown in the following cases?

Cases	Yes, because the public has the right to receive all the information	Only if they can help to raise the population's awareness	No, because the right to privacy of the victim must take priority
Traffic accidents	O	O	O
Wars	O	O	O
Domestic violence	O	O	O
Terrorist attacks	O	O	O
Suicides of non -public people	O	O	O

Source: authors' own.

population. In the rest of the cases this answer is the most common.

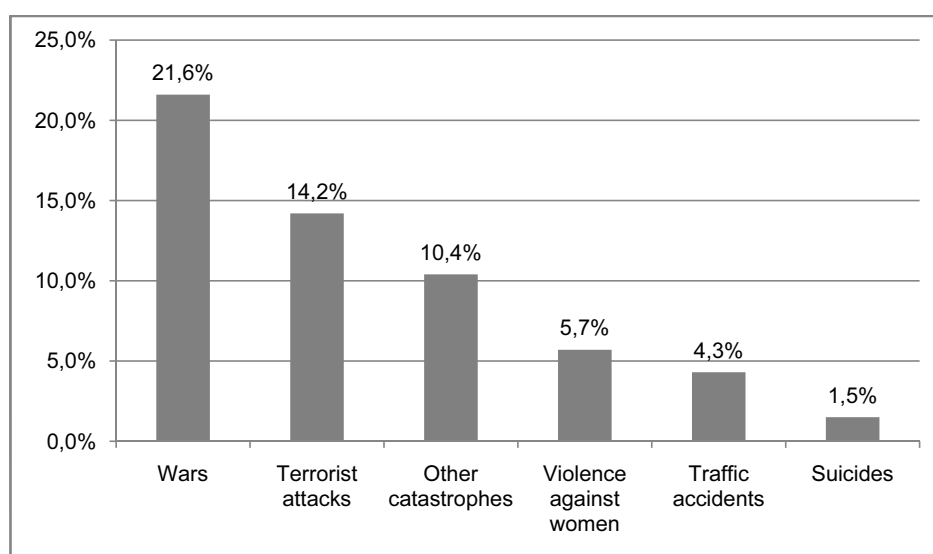
Once again, war is where the position taken is most permissive. 48.9% of the professionals accept using images to raise the awareness of the public. With the rest of the categories there is a clear similarity between them. For terrorist attacks, 37.9%; for traffic accidents, 37.4% and, for violence against women and catastrophes, two points less, 35.4% and 35.1%, respectively.

Absolute defence of the right to privacy

Perhaps when the results are turned around and we look at those professionals who, in one category or another, agree with defending, above everything else and solely, the right of people to their privacy, does the picture of journalism as a whole in Catalonia regarding this issue become easier to understand.

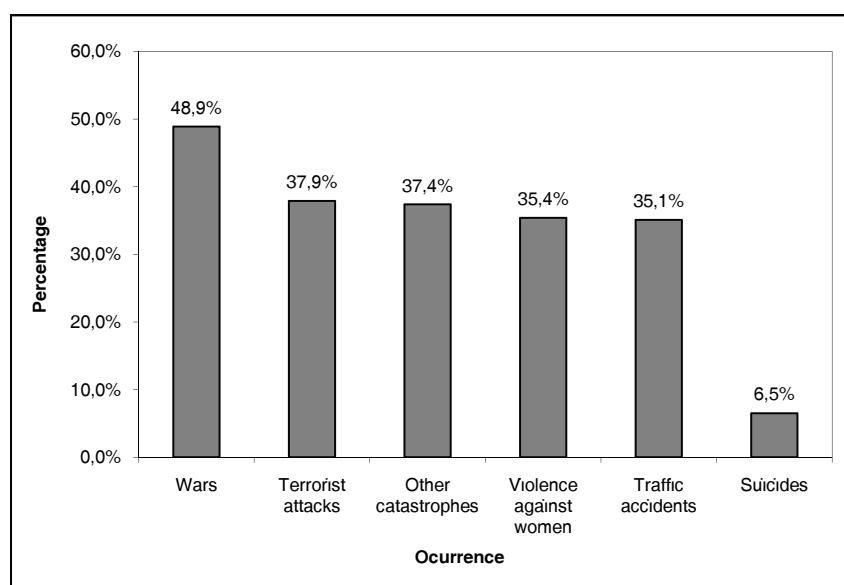
Victims' right to privacy prevails in the case of suicide and when the death, no matter how horrifying, is of a person who,

Graph 1. Cases in which the professionals surveyed find the showing of images of dead people totally justifiable (in %)



Source: authors' own.

Graph 2. Cases in which the respondents believe it is justifiable to show dead people in order to raise awareness (in %)



Source: authors' own.

so to speak, has an identity and face that must be protected. Especially in the case of unknown people, the answer is close to unanimous, with 90.3% of journalists rejecting the use of images. At the next level of answers, with a little more than 55%, come the cases of violence against women and traffic accidents, human tragedies with very different authors and conditioning factors that affect people more than communities. In these cases the right to privacy of the victims continues to be important. Also in the case of general catastrophes, which usually affect groups rather than individuals, the overall result is still above 50%: a small majority of journalists, 52.5%, defend the position that images of dead people should not be shown in this case.

The result changes when the horror of any violent death - and of the images that show this - is magnified by aggression of a political nature, be it in the cases of terrorism or war. These are the two cases that arouse the most justification for informing people of such occurrences and, in general, most journalists are in favour of using the images obtained. However, these cases differ significant from each other.

With terrorist attacks, the liberal position wins, albeit by a narrow margin. 53.9% prefer to use images for inform, while 46.1% of those surveyed wish to respect the right to privacy of the dead people. There are only seven percentage points' difference.

The results are much more decisive in the case of war, the only occurrence - together with suicide - with clear majorities. Only 28.3% of the journalists answering the survey were against showing these images. The right to information prevails resoundingly by a proportion of almost three out of every four journalists. 71.7% are in favour of using these images.

The variable of gender

If we introduce socio-demographic variables into the analysis, the first aspect that we wish to take into consideration is the gender of the journalists. This survey was answered by 57.3% men and 42.4% women,¹³ a proportion similar to that stated for 2004 in the *Llibre blanc de la professió periodística a Catalunya*,¹⁴ although the proportion of female journalists has risen by four percentage points, with the consequent reduction in the presence of men.

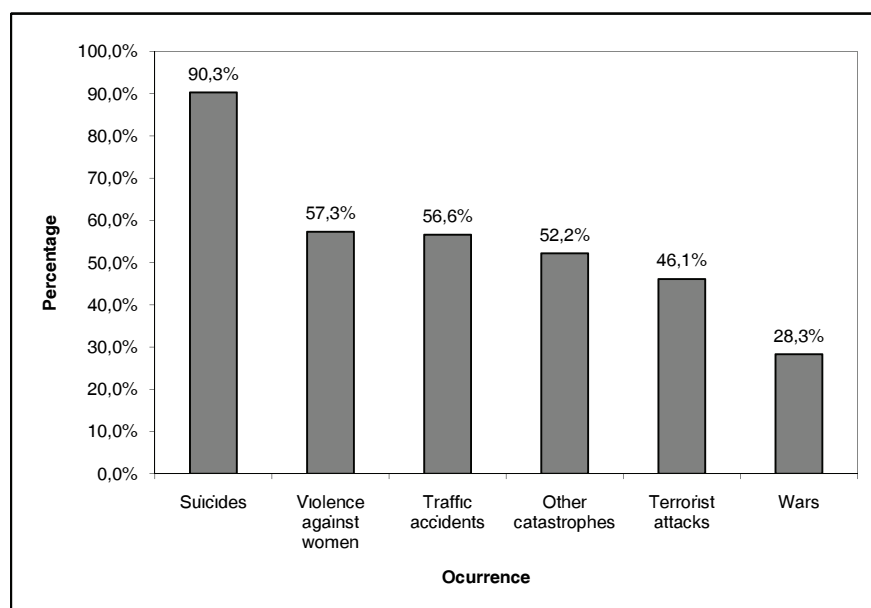
The comparative results by gender are quite significant. Among those defending the fact that the right to privacy comes before that of the need for information, the proportion of women is clearly higher than that of men: about ten points higher. In all the cases women are seen to be more reticent than men in using the images in question.

Male journalists are more permissive and lax. When they state that they defend the privacy of victims, as a gender they do so with less intensity than women. And within the completely liberal positions we find the same trend. The percentage of men defending the position of using images without restrictions is significantly higher than that of women, also in all types of occurrences.

Age and deontology

Very clear results are also obtained when the general answers are analysed according to the age of the respondents. The older they are, the more ethical lassitude appears and the permissive attitudes increase that pay less attention to the victim's right to

Graph 3. Cases in which the professionals surveyed believe that images of dead people should not be shown as the right to privacy prevails (in %)



Source: authors' own.

Table 2. By gender: against using images because the right to privacy prevails

By gender: against using images because the right to privacy prevails		
	Women	Men
Traffic accidents	64.9%	52.2%
Catastrophes	59.6%	48.9%
Wars	34.9%	23.4%
Violence against women	67.4%	51.6%
Terrorist attacks	55.5%	40.7%
Suicides	96.4%	88.4%

Source: authors' own.

privacy than the supposed needs for information. Journalists from the old school, so to speak, are more in favour of showing images of dead bodies in the media.

By age group, 30.7% of those surveyed are aged up to 35; 51.3% are between 36 and 55 years of age and 15.4% are older than 55. 2.5% did not answer the question about age.

The results show the clear trend noted before: the deontological permissiveness of the third age group, those aged over 56, with regard to this area in particular (because it should be noted that this is not observed - or is even the opposite case - when answering on other issues). Whereas there is a slight difference between the first and second age segment in favour of young people as more rigid defenders of deontological values and limitations, the difference is evident between these two first segments and that of the last age group. The difference is even more noticeable in the case, for example, of terrorist attacks, where there are almost twenty percentage points' difference.

If we review the opposite approach, i.e. the composition of the groups of journalists who do not take into account the objections that might be raised when these images are published, we find the same proportions. The liberal tendency increases clearly among those journalists aged over 56.

Television journalists versus journalists from other media

The third of the variables with a significant effect on the findings is the kind of media in which the respondent works. In general, journalists working for television are more rigid in

Table 3. By gender: in favour of using images without any ethical restriction

By gender: in favour of using images without any ethical restriction		
	Women	Men
Traffic accidents	1%	7%
Catastrophes	8%	12.6%
Wars	15.9%	26.6%
Violence against women	2%	8.8%
Terrorist attacks	10%	17.7%
Suicides	0.2%	2.5%

Source: authors' own.

deontological terms, i.e. they tend to defend the image of victims. They are more careful and prudent in their use than their colleagues working for other media, apart from the case of suicides, where both groups are equal.

The comparison has been made between the answers given by journalists working for newspapers, radio and news agencies, i.e. who tend to work with words - although there is the exception of press photographers - and do not handle or edit images. Specifically, of the 1,198 professionals answering the survey, 598 correspond to this group. 278 newspaper journalists answered (24.3%), 151 radio journalists (12.9%) and 174 working for news agencies (14.9%).

257 journalists answered the survey from the area of television (22.1%). The answers from journalists working on the Internet were not counted (146, 12.5%), nor those from unspecified media (86, 7.4%) as the work carried out by these is too imprecise to determine whether they worked with images constantly or not. Given this doubt, it was more prudent to leave these two groups out of the comparison.

As can be seen in table 6, the opinion of television journalists is more demanding from a deontological point of view for this issue in particular than that of their peers working for other media. The percentage of those who would like to have no professional restriction on the use of images of dead people on television is lower in all cases. The difference is very clear in the case of traffic accidents and reduces when the question is about catastrophes. But it widens again in the cases of terrorist attacks, violence against women and wars.

The same thing happens when we compare the percentage of

Table 4. By age: against using images because the right to privacy prevails

By age: against using images because the right to privacy prevails			
	Up to 35	Between 36 and 55	Over 56
Traffic accidents	62.1%	58.8%	44.2%
Catastrophes	56.3%	55.4%	39.8%
Wars	28.8%	29.9%	21.1%
Violence against women	63.1%	60.4%	42.5%
Terrorist attacks	50.6%	50.1%	29.6%
Suicides	93.6%	92.9%	84.5%

Source: authors' own.

Table 5. By age: in favour of using images without any ethical restriction

By age: in favour of using images without any ethical restriction			
	Up to 35	Between 36 and 55	Over 56
Traffic accidents	1.9%	4.4%	9.4%
Catastrophes	9%	10%	16%
Wars	19.4%	19.7%	33.9%
Violence against women	2.8%	6.4%	9.4%
Terrorist attacks	12%	13.3%	22.9%
Suicides	0.85%	1.8%	1.7%

Source: authors' own.

respondents stating that they are against the use of these images because the victim's right to privacy prevails over the citizens' right to information. In this case, the response given by television journalists is once again more demanding. The average approximate distance is ten points in the case of traffic accidents and catastrophes, seven points for wars and almost fifteen points in the case of violence against women and terrorist attacks.

Conclusions

There is a certain discrepancy in findings and nuances concerning the use of images of dead people in some of the cases we have asked about. The only general, common opinions are related to two types of event, wars and suicides, although with opposite opinions for these two cases.

Suicide arouses the greatest consensus in the survey, as the vast majority of respondents state that they are against showing any image of the dead person involved.

In the case of war, agreement is not so great but is very clear: three out of every four journalists would use the images. This consensus obscures a three-way position that, in simple terms, can be summarised as follows: 20% of journalists are in favour of always using images of dead people, 30% are against and the rest, half the journalists, alter the result because they would show these images in order to sensitise the population against the war, i.e. for non-informative reasons.

The rest of the situations in the survey - traffic accidents, violence against women and terrorist attacks - have a highly aligned series of majorities. These issues therefore express the points on which the profession is most divided in Catalonia.

With regard to terrorist attacks, the permissive stance wins by a narrow margin but, once again, this small majority is ultimately distorted because many of the journalists who answered that they would use the images use the argument of raising awareness.

Consequently, in the cases of victims killed by other people for political reason, war or terrorism, Catalan journalists prefer to sacrifice the victim's rights over their image for what they consider to be the greater or more advantageous good: educating the public against political violence.

This is reversed in the rest of the cases, although very small majorities continue. In the cases of violent death that can be attributed to fate or the negligence of someone, be it the victim or another driver but without any specific desire to kill, as in the case of traffic accidents, defence of the victim's right over their image just wins out.

However, if there is the desire to kill, as in the case of victims of violence against women, and there is a specific victim, the right to protect the person's images prevails. It might be thought that this is also the case of terrorism (individual victims killed), but we must remember that this has often produced tragedies that resemble war. There is no way of knowing whether journalists, in answering the question on terrorism, were thinking of the many victims of an attack, such as the one

Table 6. By medium: favour of using images without any ethical restriction

By medium: favour of using images without any ethical restriction		
	Television	Other media ¹⁵
Traffic accidents	0.8%	5.8%
Catastrophes	7.1%	7.9%
Wars	15.3%	25.4%
Violence against women	3.5%	6.8%
Terrorist attacks	10.2%	17.4%

Source: authors' own.

Table 7. By medium: against using images because the right to privacy prevails

By medium: against using images because the right to privacy prevails		
	Television	Other media
Traffic accidents	63.3%	54.5%
Catastrophes	59.4%	49.4%
Wars	33.7%	26.5%
Violence against women	66.3%	51.8%
Terrorist attacks	56.9%	42.3%

Source: authors' own.

in Madrid in 2004 or London in 2007, for example, or the steady flow of terrorist victims with a clearer identity, such as those killed by ETA. Whatever the situation, in the case of terrorism the positions defending the use of these images on the whole are based on the need to raise the awareness of the population, a point that does not appear in the case of violence against women.

On the whole, it is evident that the deontological stances regarding the use of images of dead people are, in general, restrictive, as already expressed in the in-depth interviews, although the nature of the answer changes when the option of an educational objective or raising awareness by informing is introduced. For wars and terrorism, the victims' privacy is sacrificed in exchange for a supposedly greater good, a point that does not happen in the case of violence against women or in traffic accidents.

The conditioning factors that seem to influence these answers are, firstly, gender and age and, at a secondary level, the medium in which (or for which) the journalist works. In this case, young journalists are seen to follow stricter criteria because they are the most reluctant of all the age sub-groups to show images of dead people in news items. On the other hand, older journalists are those who seem to be most permissive when showing such images. Deontology is a discipline systematically provided by university courses for several years now and young journalists have taken this on board, prepared to take on the commercial interests of large communication companies. Subsequent studies would need to confirm the nature and origin of this deontological strictness on the part of younger journalists.

The trend is repeated in the case of gender. Women seem to be more against showing images of dead people, while men are more collusive. It should also be noted that this trend by gender can be seen in all the age sub-groups and always in the same direction.

The factor of the medium where the journalists work also reveals a highly interesting situation. While attitudes are more permissive and in favour of showing images in the press, on the radio and at news agencies, on the television journalists are quite a lot more critical. Those working for television are seen to be against showing such images, perhaps because they are often embroiled in public debates that question their work and have therefore taken many of society's precautions on board. In this context, television is the medium that tends to have the strictest opinions and also where the most famous examples of excess with images have occurred, a polarity that also warrants further investigation. It can be concluded, however, that those who work in producing television news themselves expect the final product they are working on to have more deontological quality.

Notes

- 1 Article 9.
- 2 Article 4, developed afterwards in the recommendations "Recomendaciones acerca del tratamiento informativo de las situaciones catastróficas".
- 3 Article 2.8.A.
- 4 Paragraph eight.
- 5 Article 3.5.2.
- 6 Articles 1.1.c, 2.3.c i 3.2.
- 7 Article 1.2.11.a.
- 8 Article 6.
- 9 Article 12.
- 10 Article 6c.
- 11 Specifically, the question was: "Do you think that any special precaution should be taken in the treatment of victims of accidents, tragedies, wars, domestic violence, etc.?"
- 12 The methodological aspects of the survey were supervised by a specialist team from the College of Sociologists and Political Scientists of Catalonia, led by Lluís Sáez.
- 13 0.3 % of those answering did not identify their gender.
- 14 On page 16, it establishes that, in 2004, there were 62.9% male journalists compared with 37.1% female journalists in Catalonia. SOLER, P. (dir). *Llibre blanc de la professió periodística a Catalunya*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya - Departament de la Presidència, 2006.
- 15 These data are obtained by calculating the average of the percentages of journalists working for the press, radio and news agencies.

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Fame, the media and public opinion

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Abstract

The general hypothesis of the work is that fame generated by media plays a part in creating opinion by legitimising anthropomorphic icons which, as models, assist in structuring the present day's social hierarchies.

Based on a field study about television news and on a case study of Operación Triunfo, the article concludes that media fame, which plays a decisive role in the formation of public opinion, express the nature of the media. as creators of a virtual reality and synthesisers of actual reality.

Keywords

Fame, reality, media, public opinion, news, Operación Triunfo

Resum

L'autora parteix de la hipòtesi que la fama que es genera mitjançant l'acció dels mitjans de comunicació intervé en la creació d'opinió legitimant icones antropomorfes que actuen com a models i ajuden a estructurar les jerarquies socials del present.

Basant-se en un treball de camp sobre els teletinformatius i en una anàlisi de cas del programa Operación Triunfo, l'article conclou que la fama mediàtica, que té un valor decisiu en la formació d'opinió pública, expressa la naturalesa dels mitjans de comunicació com a creadors d'una realitat virtual i sintetitzadors de la realitat real.

Paraules clau

Fama, realitat, mitjans de comunicació, opinió pública, informatius, Operación Triunfo.

1. Origin and starting point: from the individual to the personality

During my long journalistic career, no less than forty years, I have wondered why an individual becomes a personality when they appear in the media. Why does appearing in the media have consequences such as fame, celebrity and recognition for those appearing? This was the question, filled with other questions such as the legitimisation and authority of public opinion, that had to be clarified, studied and resolved. And that's why it's necessary to contextualise this within its historical context and in the light of the various and wide-ranging studies available, without ignoring other decisive aspects in the chain of human knowledge. There was also a last question: by pulling on the thread of personalities, will we understand better the decisive force and social role of the media in general?

My generation remembers the first day we saw television and could see that, included among other, no lesser talents, it was a celebrity factory. Ours is a privileged generation that has experienced the accelerated change undergone by Spanish and Catalan society, especially regarding media transformations. This dual perspective from which the research is tackled has an advantage: as a journalist, I have direct insider knowledge of the habits and functioning of the media, and as a Spaniard and Catalan I've had the chance to experience the acceleration of changes that, in other societies, occur much more slowly.

A third perspective, that of sociology and its methods of analysis, were vital for me to clarify these questions, as Spain is well provided with studies on communication but we, including the Catalans, are rather limited in terms of a sociological view of communication phenomena. When I read what Émile Durkheim had written, in *Les formes elementals de la vida religiosa*, that "sociology is the science (that clarifies and studies) of opinion", I did not doubt at all the usefulness of the sociological perspective to support my own observations, taking from the reality of the communication fabric.

It's an invaluable experience to observe, within the media field, the opacity of the media; how they become social referees and carry out a process that goes from contributing (in certain cases) to the advent of democracy, to evolving in line with the overall capitalist trend. The Spanish media go quickly from being a counter-power to becoming an established power, capable of intervening in democracy and of establishing a monopoly of the new "media reality" in which they act as key actors and dictate the rules of play. The exclusion of those who do not follow these rules is evident.

This introduction has already put forward the dilemma of whether the media reproduce reality or recreate it producing a new "media reality", which opens up a whole range of questions, among which there is that of the fantasy-reality relationship through journalistic narrative. Also, how this situation relates to the change experienced by individuals through

media fame and the creation of public opinion. That the media are now an industry of fame leads to an investigation of how this system affects, directly or indirectly, the lives of contemporaries through creating opinion.

This is the general hypothesis of the work: when the media contribute to creating or modifying opinion, ideas, beliefs or social rituals, the manufacture of fame in this way plays a part in creating opinion by legitimising anthropomorphic icons which, as models, assist in structuring the present day's social hierarchies.

As a corollary, it is deduced that the religious structure *per se* of the current media system largely results from the media construction of fame, i.e. from the profane consecration of fame.

The aim below was to place this work within a theoretical context in sociological, historic and communication terms and to carry out the corresponding checks through four cases, selected from many different possibilities, which shine a light on the question posed. The cases chosen (see section 3) were two referring to the daily press and two from television, given that, obviously, the culture of image is directly related to the creation of personalities and celebrities, something which is also carried out by the press through photography and by valuing an issue's graphic appeal. These cases, as well as the whole research, are located in Catalonia, which does not mean we cannot generalise a phenomenon that, a long time ago, crossed all borders and territories and of which we have been speedy and privileged apprentices.

2. The social role of fame

A study of fame, understood as a communicative construct produced by human and social interrelation, must consider three levels of analysis: individual, social and media. The first two, in short, focus on the construction of fame on the part of each individual with their closest and most direct environment through face to face contact. My work focuses on the role of fame at the intermediated or media level.

Today, actual reality and media reality go to make up two parallel structures that compete for the hegemony to form opinions and ideas. Intermediated reality supposes a different kind of social activity that entails the production, transmission and reception of symbolic forms (Thompson).

This new media reality produces another kind of experience thanks to a revolution in the dimensions of time and space that affects actual reality. What moves this media reality is a communicative utopia (Breton) made reality, which promises to make man into a god, immersed in a world created for him, something which, of course, is not usually within the scope of actual reality. Contemporary media opulence (Mattelart) generates communicative misery whose main feature is a lack of communication but the delirium is also produced (Bourdieu) of homogenising, in communication terms, the whole planet in accordance with rules generated by the media system itself.

Given the essentially moral nature of society (Weber), this media reality functions and is organised in accordance with the model already tried out by religions, as described by Émile Durkheim, based on their being able to transform society. As a reflection of society, communication becomes sacred (gives meaning to the world) and is organised around beliefs and rituals. Fame is one of these media facts capable of symbolising, expressing and transmitting values via media rituals.

The legend-god-hero-celebrity sequence has a common thread that explains how religions operate in society as creators of beliefs and customs. This process celebrates the authority of social and also moral opinion that today symbolises public opinion (Lippmann). This situation is perceptible through the social fact that is fame: when fame intervenes, men are seen differently. Fame is, in this context, an experience full of social interrelation.

By means of fame, individuals become their representation, a fact related to prestige, reputation and the social concept of excellence. And also closely linked to the concepts of elites, of authority and social hierarchy (Mills, Bourdieu). It is a vital instrument in order to understand the dynamics of those socially excellent individuals who, today, compete in the market of public interest (Mills) created by the media reality.

There are certain decisive transformations in history that place the origins of the reality of the concept of fame, as we know it today, in the Renaissance. Individualism, competition/rivalry and appearance run through the history of this search for social excellence that is fame, as a prize and public recognition (Gracián). The way of charisma (Weber, Giner) is accompanied in the evolution of the concept by the way of merit (Young) to achieve excellence. The way of merit states that individuals are capable, by their own efforts, to access fame and social excellence. The next step in the concept's historical evolution is a model of communicative leadership, which I call the "Hamelin syndrome", capable of dragging along alien opinions and wills, that orientates the progressive transformation of society. It can be seen throughout history that what is consecrated as excellent in each era has survived and has served as a subsequent reference model, that's why our museums are full of "famous individuals from history".

The combination of bourgeois and capitalist society, industrialisation and extraordinary technical advances in the field of communications has progressively amplified this historical reality up to the contemporary era (Mattelart). A child of capitalism and bourgeoisie, grandchild of aristocracy and religion, at the beginning of the 20th century fame started to be an endless race: through celebrity, people believe they can obtain in this world what, in other times, was offered to them by legends, heroes and saints; a power that, in making itself felt among a large number of humans, seems to guarantee immortality. The hegemony of a communication industry will decide the future of fame as an essential requisite for the media business.

These new technical, economic and communicative conditions go to make up transformations that directly affect the sense of

existence of human beings (Meyer, Eco). The work of manufacturing fame and its media exploitation reinforces an evolution working in favour of homogeneity, compared with the actual plurality of society. Media reality today is configured as a new space in which visualisation, image and fame are the norm, transforming individuals into actors or spectators of a fascinating spectacle that operates independently from what is real.

3. Summary of two field studies related to television: news programmes and *Operación Triunfo*

3.1. Hell and paradise in TV news

- I see the TV scenario as a space in which advertising is the leit motiv and the programmes of all kinds, including the news, interrupt this advertising *continuum* that also links with other aspects of everyday media life.

- I observe that, in general, television news belong to what we might call the "black genre". The accumulation of bad news, horror and perpetual conflict express the undeniable fact only too well: actual reality is hell. On the other hand, advertising presents a creative, interesting, fun and accessible universe: the advertising paradise is the context that contrasts with the hell of what is real.

The reality of bad news is a primordial rule of today's media system as a whole and responds to the intention, in the case of television, of nailing viewers to their seats. The aim is to catch the attention of the audience, to which end fear, horror and the spectacle of evil seem to be vital, although this is still a convention that is self-imposed by the media system.

The horror of reality and the paradise of advertising/consumption are a context and a permanent structural system concerning the use of television according to the North American model. This system is universal and belongs to a global structure of the current use of television (which could be used in many different ways).

The consequence of this first approach is that a moral structure is formed for using the medium. Reality is a hell: consumption is paradise. That's how simple the general TV context is for any television news programme.

- Evidence: 14 TV news items. 400 advertisements. The content of the midday TV news programmes was analysed for one week from TVE and Antena 3 TV. It was observed how, at the time of the analysis (December 2003), the structure and themes were perfectly cloned and interchangeable. The reality of the sinking of the *Prestige* was narrated as a horror story, which a government, assailed by the catastrophe, was taking on with epic bravery. The treatment of images and the thematic hierarchy was very similar; themes were valued according to the interests of each medium at that time. These facts were verified in an extensive analysis of content (Jansen) and timings applied both to the information and to the advertising, in which we could observe an optimism and joy absent from the news analysed, as well as an undeniable tendency towards the

imperative and towards giving all kinds of instructions to viewers (including how to think).

Evident contagion can be observed in the advertising narrative treatment (impactful images and narration that presents the situation, develops it and then presents an outcome) and news narration. Formally, therefore (not in the intention, as I have mentioned) advertising images and news images tend to resemble each other and are therefore easier to understand and more direct.

- The protagonists. All characters that said something in all the news items were analysed. Political and football themes predominate; female characters hardly exist. We discovered three main types of protagonist. "Powerful" people (identified with positive or negative heroes, preferably politicians and male), "victims" (an excellent counterpoint for the protagonism of power) and "extras" (anonymous people who "humanise" the information, performing the function of a theatre set and including "experts"). These prototypes, which symbolise success and failure, complement each other and, repeated day after day, transmit a clear moral message to the millions of people watching the news.

- In conclusion:

1. Hell and paradise exist as a basic structure in television. Hell = reality / paradise = consumption.
2. Both form part of the world of spectacle, an effective platform from which their messages are issued.
3. This structure transmits a moral message that serves to guide the behaviour of audiences.
4. News and advertising share a common language in how they treat texts, images and narrative intent: coincidentally, the aim is sensory "impact" and a homogeneous public.
5. Information becomes an impactful "story" which leads to the falsification of reality.
6. The "saints" of television are its protagonists: heroes and victims symbolise success/failure. Who is good and who is bad. The contemporary nature and relevance of appearing in media reality bestows a degree of exemplarity on these protagonists.

3.2. Fame as a profession: the case of *Operación Triunfo*

- General points. Access to fame is the equivalent of a professional career, facilitated and controlled by the great industry of the media. A wealth of auxiliary industries (from stylists to heads of the press) goes to make up the context in which the phenomenon of media celebrity is developed.

In media terms, fame is understood as the merit of being able to attract audiences and the consequent benefits this brings. And it has only been a small step from this point to the media (and particularly television) setting themselves the none too small objective of creating professional celebrities: it's a question of the industrial production of "charisma".

The existence of this industry of fame is as real as the existence of a market of notoriety, embodied by icons (from sports people to singers, including writers, actors and politicians)

capable of becoming known through the media. There is a demand for and supply of famous people and the media make money from it. I therefore see famous people nowadays as employees - or hostages - of the media system, which they need to survive.

- The case of *Operación Triunfo* is paradigmatic of this reality moved by media fame. In my analysis we have observed the first three series of OT and data have been provided by the production company Gestmusic, which provided this analyst with direct insight into how the programme is made.

The programme is the centre of a complex set-up that takes place before (casting, academy known as a "high performance centre") and after (post-production and post-academy). A large number of industrial specialities are involved in this approach: technical, employment, stylistic, marketing and promotion, advertising, communication, logistical, merchandising, record production, among others. In the industrial organisation of this approach, Gestmusic has led the field in Spain and has managed to sell the OT format to more than thirty countries, with hundreds of millions of viewers. The profits far exceed the costs of organising the programme.

OT is a family show that can compete perfectly well at a global level and, right from the first series, had significant support from the Internet and the main contact channels with young people. The presentation of 100,000 young people at the casting sessions of the second series gives an idea of the social importance of the phenomenon: television can attract as much as a university degree. The programme has one singularity: it shows the audience the practices and customs required to become famous and teaches about the effort required in order to achieve this.

- In conclusion:

1. Fame here is a project for life, a school of competition that confirms the idea that anonymity is a punishment, rewarding the social recognition of individuality.
2. The real and accessible professionalisation of fame is a historic novelty that goes to make up an industry that is absolutely essential in the competition for audience ratings, to which assembly line celebrities are offered up.
3. The globalisation of the system / fame is confirmed and the singular fact that fame feeds on itself and is seen as an elite professional career.
4. Once again a clear moral message can be seen: fame is the reward for individualism, competition, communicative capacity. Anonymity is a punishment.

4. Main conclusions (brief summary)

- Fame plays a decisive role in the formation of public opinion. Media personalities, transformed into icons and celebrities, act as a symbol, ambassadors of values and social models and creators of opinion in all fields (from aesthetic to ethical). They also drive social change.

- Fame sets up a context/sign of identity that identifies a celebrity as an individual "product" about to be consumed (with all its symbolic load on top). Professionalisation and the industry of fame support this evolution and transformation of any individual into a brand / product.

- The phenomenon and dynamics of media fame express the nature of the media. These are creators of a virtual reality and synthesisers of actual reality: they therefore work with reality and fiction, with the risk of confusing these often (the tendency to convert famous people into "media saints" equivalent to a commercial brand is a good example of this), particularly when actual reality is used for a commercial purpose. The "forgotten" social function of the media seems evident.

- This media approach (similar to that of a religion in which celebrities are the new "saints" or icons) affects democracy. Are we moving towards a media democracy (Meyer)? In my opinion, this does not seem to be the case, due to the current structure of communication groups and their tendency to concentrate both finance and decision-making powers. Neither is the Internet any guarantee against sociological or hierarchical processes emerging that are similar to those we have seen in other historical eras.

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The first radio presenters in Catalonia, from the invention's beginning to the early days of Franco's regime

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Abstract

This article examines the major role of female radio presenters in Catalonia as pioneers in creating new programme formats: magazines. The study highlights the major influence of the way radio was presented by these women, who lived exclusively from their radio work and, in many cases, for example during the Civil War, were the only presenters that were heard. The history of radio in Catalonia has always been explicitly related to the names of certain individuals who were considered pioneers of the invention. The first radio entrepreneurs were men, as were the engineers that constructed the radio transmitters and receivers. But communication, the important element that linked radio to its audience, had many female voices, many of which had been long forgotten in Catalonia until they were reclaimed by this research, and these represented veritable bastions of their radio stations, especially in the Civil War period, when male announcers were fighting or in exile.

Key words

Radio presenter, history of radio, presenter, radio, magazine, radio presenters, radio stations.

Resum

Aquest article posa de manifest el paper preponderant que tingueren les locutores en les emissores de ràdio que operaven a Catalunya sota l'epígraf EAJ durant els anys vint i trenta del segle XX.

Les locutores foren les primeres professionals del mitjà que crearen programes (els femenins) amb un format que més endavant es coneixeria com a magazín, en un moment històric (anys vint) en el qual la ràdio estava plena de conferències i xerrades. La segona gran aportació de les dones a la història de la ràdio l'hem d'ubicar durant la Guerra Civil. Elles, en moltes estacions catalanes, foren les úniques veus que sortien en antena, a causa de l'exili i la incorporació a files de molts dels seus companys. La tercera clau que cal atribuir a les locutores per entendre bé el seu pes en la història de la ràdio de Catalunya és que per a elles aquesta feina era el seu únic modus vivendi, mentre que per a molts dels locutors la ràdio era un afegit a les seves feines principals d'advocats o professors.

Paraules clau

Locutor/a, història de la ràdio, presentador/a, ràdio, magazín, locutors, emissores.

The aim of this article is to reconstruct a fragment of our unknown past based on the contributions of female radio presenters concerning their work at the stations in operation in Catalonia from 1924 under known as EAJs, identifying local, commercial and limited range broadcasters operating in Catalonia until the end of the Civil War.

The work of female radio presenters, never before studied or acknowledged, shows that they were not a complement to male presenters, something that has very often been believed due to historical contamination coming from Franco's regime. The contribution of this research, which places female radio presenters of Catalonia in a central role at the start of radio broadcasting in Catalonia, undeniably means rewriting the Catalan history of radio as we have known it.

Female radio presenters were already significant for the history of radio in Catalonia at the very beginnings when, through Ràdio Barcelona, EAJ-1, the first professional station broadcast here, we could hear a programme with the format we would understand today as a *magazine programme*.

The first radio programme was for women by women

In the twenties of the last century, on the programming grids of the stations that operated very few hours in Catalonia, Ràdio Barcelona and Radio Catalana, we could only hear music, adverts and talks that were normally about science and technology or sports and the stock market. Radio was elite (Balsebre 2001), directed by a few wealthy people that invested in a new invention in order to please their peers, who would have to buy radios and pay the relevant duties to be able to listen to music programmes offered on the radio or broadcast from places related to Barcelona high culture, such as the Liceu opera house and the Palau de la Música.

The first business opportunity spotted by owners of Catalan radio stations with the wireless was related to the sales of receivers, as many radio station owners had exclusive commercial relations with radio brands sold at their establishments (Fernández Sande 2005-06). It is therefore quite logical that the first kind of programme on the radio in Catalonia was run

by an elite and aimed at another elite: a kind of audience that could afford a radio, paying the tax for owning one and appreciating the content that would hardly be appreciated by a textile worker in Terrassa, who couldn't even imagine the family expense involved in buying a radio and maintaining it.

In the midst of this scarce radio programming in the twenties, starring deep, male voices, when even a man, Joaquín Arraràs,¹ held talks aimed at women, a critic from the magazine published by Ràdio Barcelona, Salvador Raurich, asked in an article for female voices to be put on Ràdio Barcelona, something which, from his point of view, would help to embellish the broadcasts of the doyen station.

This is the launch pad for the reasons explaining why women started on radio, but it's not the only one. There is not a single reason that explains why women should have arrived on the radio during those early years. It was a natural process. In fact, on the radio stations operating in Europe and the United States during that period there were already female presenters working and, if programmes and even the technical broadcasting models from these foreign countries were copied in Catalonia,² it's logical to think that having female presenters was another of the foreign characteristics that also had to be imported here.

During the twenties, radio was mainly listened to at home (in the few homes that had a radio) and in some public places, such as casinos and radio listener clubs. At those times of the day when there were programmes, midday and evening to coincide with mealtimes, it was women who were mainly at home (the ladies of the house and maids) and, therefore, this early radio had a significant female audience that station owners wanted to please for two reasons: to have loyal listeners and open up an easily exploitable line of business. Listeners who had a radio at home had purchasing power and were also cultivated women who read women's magazines full of adverts for products that only they could buy. The maids didn't have the same purchasing power but they did have the enthusiasm and interest to mark their status within their field of employment. This economic motive helped, to a great extent, the inclusion of female presenters who, with their programmes, made a radio version of what their listeners were accustomed to reading: female content stuffed with adverts and advice of interest to the mistresses of the house.

With the change in decade, radio broadcasting was seen as a new field of employment for women in the Second Republic, who took advantage of the new political atmosphere to go to work in places where it had not previously been possible: the post office, prisons... and radio. At the beginning of the thirties, on Ràdio Barcelona, for example, there were more women than men working in the administrative area. It is therefore no surprise, with the creation of new EAJ stations, those covered by the decree of December 1932, that women should enter the world of radio presenting,³ which in the thirties already had a well-established precedent, that of Ràdio Barcelona and Maria Cinta Balagué.

Maria Cinta Balagué was a civil servant working for Barcelona

Council in the twenties and a member of the Institute of Culture and Popular Library for women. She arrived at EAJ-1 when the station asked this important and renowned women's institution to make a programme for women. In this way, and under the direction of Balagué, a journey started that would end with the creation, first, of a radio format, something which had not been customary until that time and, afterwards, with the consolidation of this format, which would go down in posterity as one of the emblems of radio: the magazine programme.

In 1926 on Ràdio Barcelona, in the evening programming period, the "section of fashion and useful themes" started. This was a choral space within a programming practically made up of monologues. It was presented by Maria Cinta Balagué, who was able to surround herself with a group of stable collaborators specialising in various female themes. Women of a high cultural and economic level who, moreover, used to write on the same themes they talked about on the radio in the magazines of the time: fashion, useful topics and "domestic science". It was a fixed programme, always on at the same time, identified with a name and with a similar structure for each broadcast, and would be the equivalent today of what we know as a *magazine programme* (Martí 1991).

These pioneers of *modern* radio programming included in their programme a novelty of undeniable interest. For the first time, listeners had the chance to become participants in a communication process, as Balagué and her aristocratic colleagues allowed listeners who were interested, and after a "prior voice test", to put their own writings or poems on the radio, something contained in the Ràdio Barcelona magazine. Thanks also to this smart move by a female programme, radio broadcasting in Catalonia started a process of relating with its audience that would make it grow (help make it popular) and would contribute to the fact that, in the thirties of the last century, we can already start to talk of a medium for mass communication.

Female voices on the radio during the war

The second great contribution of women to the history of radio we have placed in the Civil War, right in the decade of the thirties. Female radio presenters, on many Catalan stations, were the only voices that were broadcast because many of their colleagues were in exile or had joined up.

Although in Barcelona the financial capacity of the two stations operating, Ràdio Barcelona and Ràdio Associació de Catalunya, meant that they could have pairs of presenters to enhance the broadcast, in the rest of Catalonia it was normal to find only one person whose voice was on the air.

As the months passed, the Civil War became bloodier and when the Republican troops started to advance towards the French border, there were also related changes in the radio stations. The male presenters and also the directors of the stations⁴ abandoned their work, so that communication with listeners was left almost entirely in the hands of the female pre-

senders who kept the broadcasts going. Sometimes they had the support of a collaborator, from actors who would accompany them on the air, but very often it was the young female presenters who warned of bomb raids, called for blood donations on behalf of institutions and broadcast the council's announcements. They were the ones in charge of going to the Catalan government to read the announcements issued by the Propaganda Service and of broadcasting cries for help to find missing relatives.

At the stations outside Barcelona, female radio presenters had to find records to keep the broadcasts active, as the war made it difficult for couriers to come from the capital to their stations (branches) in the other counties of Catalonia, as they had done on a daily basis before the war, as explained to this researcher by the Republican presenter on Ràdio Lleida and Ràdio Girona, Maria Tersa.

Female radio presenters were the mainstay of their respective radio stations, in spite of the fear of being bombed, as the presenter from Ràdio Associació de Catalunya remembers, Francina Boris, when asked by the author. They were very young women. Few were over 30 by the time the war ended and they had got used to working in the midst of bombings without their voices trembling. Doing all these tasks helped to maintain a veneer of normality required by a society that depended on the radio to know what was happening. Towards the end of the Civil War, radio had become a hegemonic medium in Catalan society, as explained and justified in my thesis *Les locutores de ràdio a Catalunya 1923-1939*. It was even easy for many listeners to hear the radio on the sly, to be able to hear broadcasts by the other side and get a real picture of how the armed conflict was going. These clandestine listenings were banned by the Republican government but it is nonetheless easy to find, even now, Catalan citizens who used to listen to Radio Sevilla during the last few days of the war, who remember the inflammatory speeches by General Queipo de Llano.

Introducing records, presenting proclamations and warnings, introducing serious political speeches and reading the orders from the different governments went to make up the daily work of the female radio presenters on the Republican stations in Catalonia, especially in Barcelona, where Rosalia Rovira, Francina Boris and Carmen Espona worked at Ràdio Associació until the new directors from Franco's regime took over.

Female radio presenters also faced reprisals under Franco's regime

The best known case of reprisals under Franco's regime against a female radio presenter during this temporary period is certainly that of the *first presenter* of Ràdio Associació de Catalunya, Rosalia Rovira. Her status as a political figure (supporting the Catalan State) meant that Franco's supporters sent

her to jail for three months and ultimately removed her from the world of radio forever, so that she even had financial problems for the rest of her life. Until democracy was restored, and thanks to the efforts of Teodor Garriga, an old colleague of hers from Ràdio Associació who died recently, Rovira's name was not cleared.

Her peers at Ràdio Associació also suffered from the change in regime and got a taste of prison life, albeit sometimes just for a night. Francina Boris was relegated to working as a secretary for two years after the end of the war, after which she was allowed to present again but in her home town of Girona, something that cannot at all be seen as giving her back her previous employment status. Carmen Espona, who, because she was so young, had a tough time withstanding her "purge" and time in prison, moved away from presenting but not from radio. She dedicated herself to opera and went to radio stations to sing and take part in the numerous concerts that filled radio broadcasts in the early days of Franco's regime.

Things were different at Ràdio Barcelona because the station wasn't operating that winter early in 1939. At the end of the war, a bomb had forced Ràdio Barcelona out of its premises and one of the company's engineers, Joaquín Ruiz Golluri, took advantage of this time to dismantle part of the broadcasting centre. The staff at Ràdio Barcelona went to work at the studios of Ràdio Associació, as the Catalan government had confiscated all the radio stations. So Ràdio Barcelona stopped and its staff dispersed until they were told to *present themselves* once again with the start of the new regime. Before this happened, however, M. Carme Nicolau used to go, whenever necessary, to the offices of the Catalan government to read its proclamations and took turns with her colleagues at Ràdio Associació. Nicolau, the only female journalist working on Catalan radio before Franco's dictatorship, and Rosa Cotó, more moderate but also with a very different political profile from that of the new regime, had to avoid the order to *present themselves* at Ràdio Barcelona and couldn't return to the station for some time. M. Carme Nicolau had to go into exile and Rosa Cotó dedicated herself to the theatre. M. Carmen Martínez-Illescas, another presenter at Ràdio Barcelona, was the presenter who returned, but very soon she stopped being a presenter and became an actress and announcer, together with the soprano Enriqueta Benito, who in 1939 would be removed from the station by the new regime.

In Girona, the programming at the end of the Civil War was carried out by Maria Tersa, who also lived with her parents at the station as a war refugee. When Franco's forces entered the city, she left radio forever. In Vilanova, Núria Fraire and Candelària Simón took turns until the radio stopped broadcasting. In Lleida, the station was no longer in operation at the end of the conflict, as happened with Ràdio Reus after Antònia Sol, the first presenter, disappeared (the presenter, Enric Corretger, had to leave to do his military service) and left the microphones in the hands of Adelaida Òdena, who stayed there until the station stopped broadcasting in 1938 and returned when it start-

ed up again, after having been investigated by the new regime, which never took its eyes off her. In Sabadell, Merceneta Sorribas, the youngest female presenter in Catalonia in the 1930s, continued with her work even while the new regime was "purging" her colleagues; as happened at Ràdio Terrassa, where the presenter Antolina Boada continued to broadcast programmes and even provided technical support, as she was broadcasting on her own. Boada was the presenter for Ràdio Terrassa from 1932, when she took the tests held by the station to find presenters, until she retired in the 1970s.

In Manresa, Tarragona and Badalona there are some exceptions. Women didn't broadcast here during the war for quite different reasons. Ràdio Manresa was the only Catalan station that didn't have female presenters until well into Franco's regime. Broadcasts were by the station's male presenters who, together with other workers, also ran the station. The situation remained the same until well into 1938 when they closed because they could no longer afford to expense of running the station. In Badalona, the Barbosa brothers, who were the presenters, had already left their jobs when war broke out. The female presenter, Ana Badosa, once again became relevant in her town's society with the arrival of Franco's regime, as she was the opera singer invited by the new regime to inaugurate different social and civic centres in the town. So, without female presenters, the broadcasts by Ràdio Badalona at the end of the war were by the Vidal's (father and son), owners of the station, until it was broken up and re-established in January 1939 on the order of Franco's officials.

In Tarragona, the legendary presenter, Josep M. Tarrasa, worked alone as his broadcasting companion, Montserrat Parés, had left the station when the war had become particularly bloody and her family was severely persecuted and they had to hide. Tarrasa broadcast until the radio station was destroyed during the retreat, which he witnessed, as recalled in his memoirs (Tarrasa 1995).

Female radio presenters were veritable professionals of the radio and gender did not determine salary

The third key element to understanding the important role played by female radio presenters in the development of radio as a means of communication in Catalonia must be attributed, in my opinion, to the professional presenters' dedication to radio.

While this work was their only *modus vivendi* for many female presenters, for many male presenters who were their broadcasting colleagues at the time, radio was *in addition* and in many cases not their main job. Many male presenters working in Catalonia before the war, at stations outside Barcelona, had other jobs which provided them with their main income. They were lawyers, lecturers, shopkeepers, teachers and even soldiers, and their work on the radio was more a pastime than a full-time job, unlike the situation of the female radio presenters.

Many of the male presenters working for local stations ended up in such a position through theatrical links and often became presenters after being amateur dramatists due to their interest in the medium.

At the Barcelona radio stations, both male and female presenters were veritable radio professionals, in the sense that this was their only job. In the city, Ràdio Barcelona and Ràdio Associació de Catalunya had enough budget to pay presenters that *acted as couples* when the station wanted them to. To give just one example that highlights the economic power of radio at that time there is Ràdio Associació which, before the war, used to maintain an orchestra with 80 musicians, something totally incomparable with the trios or quartets maintained by some stations outside the city.

Female radio presenters at that time were not actresses; they were presenters of the programmes broadcast by their radio stations. There is one exception: Ràdio Barcelona, which had actresses (who joined the station when they were already established) who both acted and presented on the radio, but this did not happen at the rest of the Catalan stations. Female radio presenters only worked as anchor presenters and if they had been actresses before, such as Rosalia Rovira when she joined Ràdio Associació, the station turned them into presenters and they stopped working as actresses from that time on.

A female presenter in the 1930s was a professional voice who linked content and programmes in the broadcasts of her radio station. They never used to write scripts but were the guarantee of a text being read well, even when it contained foreign words. They were presenters, *speakerines* or *diceuses*, according to the publications of the time, who introduced social acts, music, talks, information, read poems or stories and ran the programmes for women. They earned a salary and their living from this work.

At this time, radio presenters had a salary according to the employment category the station had registered them under. The *first presenters* were more renowned and more prestigious and better paid, occupying the best time bands for broadcasting. The *second presenters* or substitutes were apprentice presenters. Normally they were being trained, were younger than the *first presenters* and did the less important shifts on the air.

Small stations only had one presenter on their staff, often female, as a woman was more versatile and therefore more profitable for the station than a male, because "for the same salary they would sweep up, if necessary", in the words of the former sound technician for Ràdio Vilanova, Enric Harris, remembering, on our request, the work of presenters at his station during the Second Republic. In fact, not with these words but with similar ones, many presenters of various stations interviewed agreed with this statement; female presenters were the workers at the station that, if necessary, put on the records, changed the needles and also answered the phone and opened the door, and male presenters were collaborators that weren't on the staff and didn't used to do all these jobs.

After studying this division of labour, we have established that

there were many female presenters who earned a higher salary than their colleagues, as they were *first presenters*. This is the case of Rosalia Rovira at Ràdio Associació, who earned more money than Teodor Garriga, who was not a *first presenter* even though, at the end of the thirties, he was the Catalan government's delegate at the station, and Maria Tersa at Ràdio Lleida. She was the first presenter and Maties Olivé was a collaborator from radio's the broadcasting staff who often used to work with her. At Ràdio Girona, the presenter Jacint Carreras, in addition to earning a salary as such, also carried out administrative tasks to be able to get a higher wage than his female colleague, the presenter M. Lluïsa Figa, who only worked as a presenter and lived off her salary for this.

These examples, which are not the only ones, illustrate a new field of employment, that of radio broadcasting, that paid without taking gender into account, a new and interesting aspect that places radio in a different dimension in labour terms than was customary in the 1930s. In spite of the policy of the Second Republic in Catalan society, men used to earn higher salaries than women, as it was considered that women's wages were in addition to men's, who were the head of the family. On radio in the thirties, gender was not taken into account when determining salaries, which were paid according to professional value and dedication. Neither was it taken into account if it was a male or female presenter talking on the radio, it was simply a professional voice, sometimes male and sometimes female, talking to the listeners.

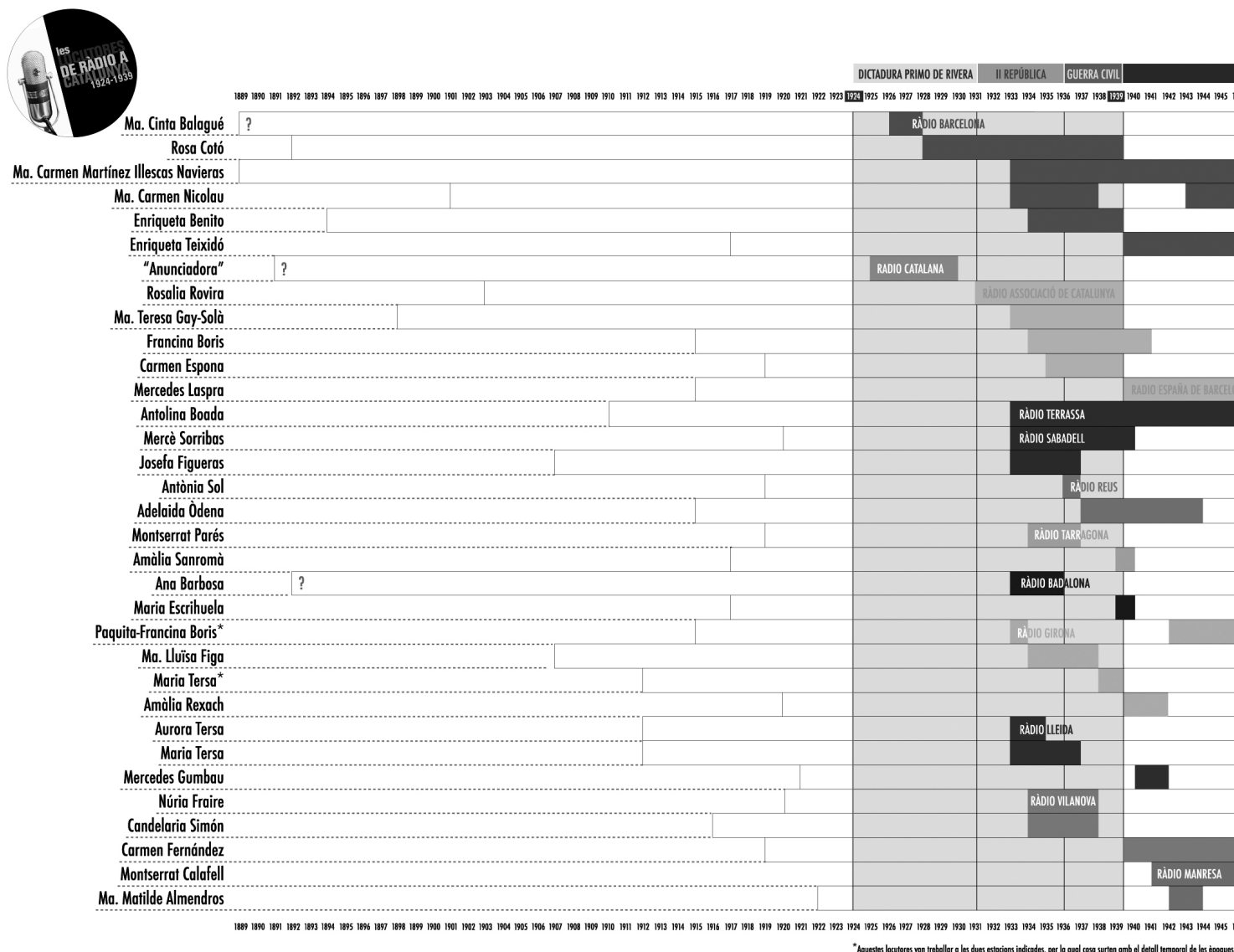
Based on a discussion group produced *ad hoc* from listeners of Catalan radio in the thirties, we observed that male and female presenters did exactly the same work on the radio, according to the perceptions of their listeners.

It's curious and symbolic to see how these former radio listeners from the years of the Republic found it hard to understand why the researcher thought it was relevant to ask about this point. Exactly the same surprise was shown by the former male and female radio presenters, sound technicians, secretaries, musicians and actors we were lucky enough to interview for this research, many of whom have died while my doctoral thesis was being produced. These radio professionals, veritable pioneers in shaping the radio we still have today in Catalonia, worked by creating formats and sub-genres that never managed to become established as they had been designed, as the unfortunate events of 1939 went about placing female radio presenters at a noticeably secondary rank and gave the lion's share of presenting to male presenters who, from the time Franco came into power, shaped the attributions and roles of the new society.

Notes

- 1 This journalist would become the war correspondent for the national side during the Civil War.
- 2 My doctoral thesis duly argues this statement.
<<http://www.tesisenxarxa.net/TDX-0331109-152709/>>
- 3 In the research carried out we have been able to confirm also that, on radio stations from other towns outside Barcelona, very often there was a single person responsible for presenting and it was a woman, as it was more profitable for the company because, apart from being a presenter, if necessary, she could also order the records and answer the telephone. In the thirties men were far more unlikely to offer such availability.
- 4 Many collaborators, musicians and actors who used to work on the radio, as with other positions and jobs in the most democratic society of that time in our history, some of which had had to go to the front and others who had died, had to hide or go into exile. It is also opportune to note that there were women who went through this same situation. The presenter and journalist for Ràdio Barcelona, Maria Carme Nicolau, also had to go into exile.

Table 1. The female radio presenters in Catalonia (1924-1939)



In this bar diagram can be observed the vital and professional paths of the diverse female radio presenters who worked at Catalonia from the beginning of the first emissions of 1924 until Franco's regime was fully consolidated (1942) and he could leave the microphones in the hands of relatives, friends and near to the regime people. Chronologically and categorized by radio stations, these are the professionals who works at the Catalan radio at those years of the 20th century

- RÀDIO BARCELONA: M. Cinta Balagué, Rosa Cotó, M. Carmen Martínez-Illescas Naveiras, M. Carme Nicolau, Enriqueta Benito, Enriqueta Teixidó.

- RÀDIO CATALANA. Va tenir una anunciadora que lamentablement no hem pogut trobar.

- RÀDIO ASSOCIACIÓ DE CATALUNYA: Rosalia Rovira, M. Teresa Gay-Solà, Francina Boris, Carmen Espona, Mercedes Laspra.

- RÀDIO TERRASSA. Antolina Boada.

- RÀDIO SABADELL. Mercè Sorribas, Josefina Figueras.

- RÀDIO REUS. Antònia Sol, Adelaida Òdena.

- RÀDIO TARRAGONA. Montserrat Parés, Amàlia Sanromà.

- RÀDIO BADALONA. Ana Barbosa, Maria Escrihuela.

- RÀDIO GIRONA. Paquita Boris, M. Lluïsa Figa, Maria Tèrsa, Amalia Rexach.



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- Quaderns del CAC 33, December 2009

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Critical book review

MEDINA, M. (coord.) *Series de televisión. El caso de "Médico de familia", "Cuéntame cómo pasó" y "Los Serrano"*.

Madrid: Ediciones Internacionales Universitarias, 2008, 200 pages.

ISBN: 978-987-601-028-3.

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Production and reception of family television series

In spite of the fluctuations characterising the television market, locally produced fictional series remain among the favourite options of audiences. However, their critical prestige is minimal and they are ignored both by detractors of the medium (who prefer to occupy themselves with other genres, such as the news and reality shows) as well as its advocates (who choose to deal with more prestigious, sophisticated products, such as North American fictional series). But this curious critical invisibility has a relevant exception in approaches focusing on economic and creative aspects, an aspect accredited by publications such as *La ficción televisiva popular* by Mario García de Castro (Gedisa, 2002), *¿Qué es eso del formato?* by Glòria Saló (Gedisa, 2003) and *La gestión de la creatividad en televisión: El caso de Globomedia* by Jaime Bardají and Santiago Gómez Amigo (EUNSA, 2004). This critical tendency is continued by a new publication that, although it avoids an in-depth analysis of the cultural repercussions of local series, at least resolutely continues to claim their force as a commercial product and as the central core of the audiovisual industry in Spain at a time when doubts have been raised as to the real use of protectionist measures and subsidies for the cinema, in contrast increasingly out on the margin. In this way, the study of the circumstances surrounding the creation, production, programming, commercial exploitation and reception of Spanish series is the main object of the collective work *Series de televisión. El caso de "Médico de familia", "Cuéntame cómo pasó" y "Los Serrano"*. As indicated by the title, the authors have focused on three series of notable popularity since private television arrived in Spain which, in turn, belong to one of the favourite genres of the medium, family series. The coordinator of the publication is Mercedes Medina, lecturer in the structure of audiovisual communication and audiovisual business at the Communication Faculty of the Universidad de Navarra. Medina has focused her research on the economic aspects regarding the creation and management of audiovisual content and has previously published the monographs

Calidad y contenidos audiovisuales (2006), *Estructura y Gestión de Empresas Audiovisuales* (2005), *European Television Production: Pluralism and Concentration* (2004) and *Valoración publicitaria de los programas de televisión* (1998). She has also been the director for the research project "Valors empresarials i temàtics en les sèries familiars de televisió a Espanya" (Business and thematic values in family television series in Spain), resulting in the book *Series de televisión. El caso de "Médico de familia", "Cuéntame cómo pasó" y "Los Serrano"*.

The fact that the publication originated as a research project is immediately evident in its strongly cohesive structure in which the different authors (from the Universidad de Navarra, the Universidad Católica San Antonio de Murcia and the Universitat Sant Pau-CEU) are concerned with the different areas of analysis without almost any interference between them throughout the six chapters that go to make up the book and also in the fact that, although they are not distributed as such, they could be catalogued into those focusing on economic foundations (M. Herrero/M. Medina), those concerning the circumstances of creation (P. Diego and A. Pardo/R. Gutiérrez) and those focusing on the reception of programmes from a qualitative and quantitative point of view (J. A. Cortés/M. Grandío). In the first, Mónica Herrero deals with the general economic foundations of the television products of family entertainment, the content of which, based on identification between fiction and everyday reality of the viewers, favours long life cycles, the repeated consumption of episodes and a constant popularity even after the programme has been taken off. The next chapter, written by Patricia Diego and Alejandro Pardo, analyses the development of the creation and production of the three programmes analysed. The chapter, the most outstanding contribution of the publication as a whole, is characterised by the wealth of information provided concerning the elements that condition the production of fiction programmes, such as contracts between production companies and channels, the distribution of tasks among the different teams and the importance of the actors as an essential economic (and not

just creative) element. The chapter by José Ángel Cortés concentrates on the programming aspects of family series, including elements such as their duration and narrative structure, and the audience, broken down into demographic profiles, achieved when each programme was originally aired.

Mercedes Medina also uses audience data to show, in the fourth chapter, the economic returns resulting from the series, including advertising revenue, agreements with brands to include products in the fiction of series and international sales. The chapter by María del Mar Grandío is an ethnographic study of reception analysing the opinions and impressions of regular viewers of the two most recent series, *Los Serrano* and *Cuéntame cómo pasó*, concluding that humour and nostalgia are, respectively, the fundamental elements in their audience appeal, above the realism in representing the family situations. The last chapter, by Ruth Gutiérrez, moves away from the economic approach that characterises the book as a whole to focus on a narrative analysis of the three series from the point of view of the way (false according to the author) in which the reality of the family is represented, where the most extreme case is that of *Los Serrano*, resulting in a denaturalisation of similarity to favour the comic effect.

Series de televisión. El caso de "Médico de familia", "Cuéntame cómo pasó" y "Los Serrano" takes three extraordinarily popular series as its object of study, with the security of these being fictional programmes produced locally with the highest audience ratings and therefore from which most economic benefit has been reaped. However, the book can be criticised for a notable lack of multidisciplinary approach with which it is presented to the reader, its lack of a cultural analysis of the programmes that takes into account, for example, the social and psychological problems of the series analysed, their relation to the changes undergone by Spanish society or their position in developing TV narrative in Spain. In this way, the link between the three series, their nature as a family product with regard to content, appears, to some degree, as a trivial element that has not really been taken advantage of from an analytical point of view. But this missed opportunity does not ultimately obscure the success of this interesting contribution to the development of television studies in Spain, which has already been translated into English under the title *Creating, producing and selling TV shows: The case of the most popular dramedies in Spain* (Formal Press, 2008).

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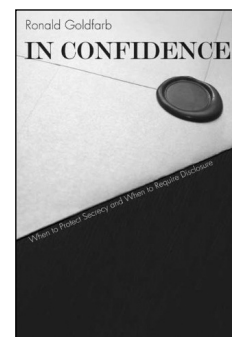
GOLDFARB, R. *In Confidence: What to Protect Secrecy and When to Require Disclosure*.

New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.

ISBN 978-0-300-12009-7

BY LORETO CORREDOIRA

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In Confidence: When to Protect Secrecy and When to Require Disclosure

Books such as this one by Ronald Goldfarb are not customary. A work that extensively, gratifyingly and rigorously describes one of the big legal themes of contemporary society, namely the "evanescent concept of privacy". A particularly controversial debate in the legal and journalistic spheres of the United States. Goldfarb is a prestigious veteran lawyer who worked with Robert F. Kennedy and is a specialist in the constant legal debate between justice and the media. His last important work was "TV or not TV, Television, Justice and the Courts", published in 1998 by the New York University Press.

The book, obviously focused on the United States, is divided into three broad questions that come under the title of confidentiality. The first is a study of the confidentiality of personal data, intimacy and the disclosure of private information. Here he distinguishes between confidentiality, privacy and professional secrets, a very interesting distinction analysed later on. In the field of professional secrets, the book deals with medical confidentiality, that of attorneys, clergy and also the so-called family or marriage privilege and business secrets. The work describes the recent cases of journalists charged with and convicted of "not revealing their sources" of information, as in the case of Judith Miller, a journalist with the New York Times who refused to reveal to a judge the person who had told her that the wife of an American diplomat was a member of the CIA. The second question tackled in the book is that of governmental and judicial secrets, although its study is somewhat less detailed. There is, however, an extensive description and application of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), a law passed in 1966 and amended in 1974 and 1986. Lastly, the third question refers to confidentiality in the field of new technologies and social networks, an issue that has been dealt with more frequently in recent bibliography, with a profusion of works from both sides of the Atlantic. The author analyses the control of Google, the identification of radio frequencies or mobiles, as well as the "re-use" of public information.

One of the significant contributions of this work is its comparison of the jurisprudence of the US Supreme Court since the 18th century through the different changes introduced in the Constitution, known as "amendments". In this respect, what is missing is an index of jurisprudence by theme and the trends in North American constitutional with regard to the areas in question.

Beyond a description of the content, if we analyse the first part of the book, which is the part that truly corresponds to its title, we can see how the author argues, from the legal point of view, that personal autonomy is what underlies both confidentiality in the legal sphere (lawyers, judges) and also privacy in the medical and religious sphere. A position I agree with. Less support and jurisprudence has been enjoyed by the proposed right to confidentiality claimed by companies and universities. In the United States there have been several legal cases that have ruled against scientific researchers who have refused to reveal their surveys, study data, etc. for reasons of confidentiality. Neither has this proposal prospered in the legislation, as Congress rejected the bill known as the "Researcher's Privilege Act" in 1999.

The book's main contribution is the distinction the author makes between 'privacy', 'confidentiality' and 'information privileges'. The basis of the concept of "privacy" is not specifically given either in the 3rd or 4th Amendment of the Constitution where, on the other hand, the freedom of domicile is recognised, as well as prohibiting interference with intimacy (for example, searches) and people are protected by the right not to have their personality sold. For Ronald Goldfarb, while privacy refers to freedom in the individual sphere, i.e. to free movement, control of one's own identity, self-determination, ownership of one's own personal data, including the right to be alone, on the other hand 'confidentiality' refers to keeping personal secrets and private information. So confidentiality, "rather than a personal right, is a principle of legal ethics that applies at the time when information must be disclosed or otherwise remain confidential" (p. 22). In Spain, we understand self-determination to be the ownership and use of data

of a personal nature as part of our information-related intimacy (art. 18 Spanish Constitution).

In addition to these two concepts, Goldfarb also believes that, in the public arena, there is another concept that must be taken into account, namely that of certain "privileges" of communication: "information privileges". There are several personal or professional statutes that can be invoked in a trial: the professional secret of journalists, doctors or the clergy. As we know, this is habitual practice in the US and also in the European Union, although with unequal recognition and guarantees in the different states and/or countries. Other groups have also asked for these same privileges that are still not recognised: for example, victims of crimes and social workers.

In fact, the Supreme Court is restrictive with regard to extending the list of privileges. For example, it refused this right of confidentiality to Pennsylvania University in a research case (Univ. of Pen vs. EOC 493 US, 182, 194 (1990)). In the US, the peer review of publication processes, as well as contests for seats, also generates confidential information that has been taken to the courts. In the case of Syposs vs. United States 63, F. Supp. 2d, 203 (1999), US justice ruled that scientific freedom does not include confidentiality and rejected the petition for a file to be kept secret.

The author maintains that exceptions in the use of information should be reduced or even eliminated, such as secrecy of the clergy, which does not have sufficient justification, while he believes that those cases where confidentiality must be protected have to improve. All this notwithstanding the fact that democracy is developed under the principle of public transparency.

To end the book, he proposes a series of legal reforms: the first that a federal law should be passed on the professional secrecy of journalists, as this type of "shield-law" only exists in some states of the US and several journalists and bloggers have gone to jail due to a lack of shield laws, which provide protection for journalists and thereby prevent them from being accused of not collaborating with justice. The second is that the occurrences of offences and misdemeanours should be clearly typified that are committed through ICTs and, lastly, also as a novelty not often heard in Spain, that the rights to confidentiality should be extended to educational institutions and families, due to the nature of the facts they carry out.

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BY DAVID FERNÁNDEZ QUIJADA

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How to be successful without dying in the attempt

The work signed by the lecturer from the Universidad de Navarra, Juan Pablo Artero Muñoz, offers a review of the history of Telecinco since it started up to 2005, the time when the TV channel had established itself as the leader in Spain both in terms of audience (22.3% share according to Sofres) and also in profit, achieving 290.3 million euros net profit that year (Telecinco, 2006). And it did so without dying in the attempt, as happened with La Cinq, the French Mediaset channel that, with a similar strategy to Telecinco (copied from the Italian Canale 5), succumbed after only a few years.

To date, this kind of bibliographical work on specific cases has not been very usual in academic spheres related to communication, although ever-growing number of agents in the communication sector will surely make them more customary in the future. This one in particular comes from the author's doctoral thesis, developed in the Department of Information Enterprise at the Universidad de Navarra, which unites a dual tradition incorporated perfectly into this volume: firstly, the one that gives the department its name, its specialisation in communication companies, and, secondly, case studies, which have been extensively applied to different works on other relevant companies in the area of communication, such as Globo Media and Canal Plus, to give a few most recent examples (Bardají, Gómez Amigo, 2004; Herrero, 2007). It also links with other contributions such as the one that, centred on the commercialisation of the Spanish television market, won the 2005 Audiovisual Communication Research Award given by CAC, by the UAB lecturer Laura Bergés (2005).

Case studies do not provide us with a view of the situation of a sector nor do they elaborate theories or states of the issue in this respect, but they do provide practical knowledge of the object of study which can be of great interest, not only to get to know the object itself but also to study its applicability to other similar objects of study.

The case of Telecinco is interesting because it is one of the main agents in the Spanish audiovisual scene. It should be

pointed out, however, that the author does not limit himself to studying Telecinco only as a "TV broadcaster" but also as a communication group, including divisions such as Publiespaña, responsible for the group's publishing, and Estudios Picasso, its audiovisual production arm, now called Telecinco Cinema. Moreover, references frequently appear to the context in which the channel is developing, with particular emphasis on its direct rivals, the private channel Antena 3 TV and the state-owned TVE-1, especially when talking about programming policy and audience ratings.

The almost 300 pages of this volume are divided into three broad sections, each one corresponding to a five-year period in its history. Five years that coincide with the three different CEO's for the channel: Valerio Lazarov (1990-1994), Maurizio Carloti (1995-1999) and Paolo Vasile (2000-2005).

A relatively comprehensive review of the different aspects is provided for each of these phases, attempting to interrelate them based on four broad factors: the corporate structure (shareholders), the editorial model (programming), the commercial model (advertising) and the financial model (the company's accounts).

The first of these factors explains all the movement of shareholders for the channel in this period until the Italian company Mediaset took over and the channel became listed in 2004. A story not exempt from internal convulsions and battles, such as the one that led to the exit of the company promoting the channel, the publisher Anaya, just after its phase had started, or the failure of the German group Kirch.

With regard to the editorial model, the different programming strategies followed by the channel are reviewed, from *Mamachicho* to *Gran Hermano*. Here is one of the most valuable contributions of this volume, which shows how, in the mid-1990s, the channel had to change its worn-out programming model for another, more innovative one, with the transformations this produced. It went from a model based on light programming full of variety and externally produced fiction to another that reinforced news and increased the channel's independence by, for example, producing its own fiction products.

Other changes related to the company's administration and finance were more gradual but also make themselves felt, as well as the relations to develop content with external suppliers, such as independent production companies, film production firms and North American majors. The author analyses the relative importance of each of these components at each moment, resulting from the programming model implemented in each phase.

In the section dedicated to the commercial model there is an analysis of the Publiespaña case, the first case of outsourcing advertising management in Spain, right from the word go. The tensions between the commercial and programming strategies, controlled by different people, are highlighted, as well as the resolution of these via a difficult balance achieved through a tough management strategy exhaustively described in this book. Also of great interest are the data provided by the author on the advertising rates for the channel and the commercial policy according to the broadcast band, information that is normally out of reach of researchers.

Finally, the financial section analyses the accounts and statements of the company and investigates the most relevant aspects at each moment, from the decapitalisation undertaken in the mid-1990s to the high profits achieved as from the turn of the century.

These four factors, present in the three chapters, offer the reader insight into the fate of a channel that, from the arrival of Maurizio Carlotti, adopted the maxim of "producing television to sell advertising" that could very well be the summary of the content of this monograph.

To carry out this work, the author has made use of a complete list of documentary sources, both from Telecinco and also general to the sector, as well as in-depth interviews and a survey of some of the decisive figures in the period analysed at the Mediaset channel, and has accomplished the most comprehensive study in existence to date on the channel. Among the virtues of this work we might highlight its applicability to other areas, as it gives us an image of each of the aspects that go to make up a communication company that is the benchmark for general television in Spain. The book is therefore useful for different approaches to the communicative object, be it programming, structure, company management or, obviously, a historical approach. The whole final volume therefore manages to summarise and provide an explanation of 15 years of a complex history that has evolved up to the present day and that, within the context of the digital switchover, promises to go on offering keys with which to interpret communication firms and the TV industry.

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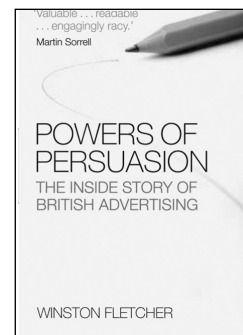
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A history for professional and academic reflection

Winston Fletcher is one of the great researchers of advertising in the United Kingdom and has been president of the prestigious Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA) and Advertising Association. He now teaches at the University of Westminster. A prolific author in addition to a successful professional, Fletcher has written 12 books, of particular note being *A Glittering Haze* (1992), the excellent *How to Capture the Advertising High Ground* (1994) and *Tantrums and Talent* (1999), a key book to understanding creative personalities in advertising. Professionalism, effectiveness and a suitable understanding of advertising creativity are constants in his work.

On this occasion, Fletcher has given us a delicious history of British advertising and its leading lights. During most of the second half of the 20th century, British advertising led the world. Its narrative focuses on the period 1950-2000. In a way these are the glory years of advertising, when it went to make up its highest proportion of gross domestic product.

Although some reference works are missing for the area of Spain, some international books have once again awoken interest in the genre. Of note are *Adland. A Global History of Advertising*, by Mark Tungate (already reviewed by us) and *The King of Madison Avenue*, which has just been published, by Kenneth Roman, an extensive biography of David Ogilvy, one of the stars of modern advertising. *Powers of Persuasion* is born to be another reference work. This book by Fletcher shares with the ones by Roman and Tungate the desire to learn lessons that can help professionals to improve their work. These books are not mere exercises in erudition but form part of a craving to explore the history of the best professional practices and extract applicable lessons of interest. Historical texts on advertising that appear in Spain talk to us of the past but are of little help to professionals wondering about the present and thinking about the future. Fletcher has published a book that is very well written and methodologically solid. The book's bibliography is also comprehensive.

Fletcher stresses the relevance of the seventies, when British creative work was at its most brilliant and its reputation had reached its peak. In a selection of the 100 best British ads of the 20th century that *Campaign* (a well-known trade magazine) published in 1999, more than 20% were from the seventies. This was when account planning was born at the agencies Boase Massimi Pollitt (BMP) and J. Walter Thompson (JWT). This British invention has two leading lights: the exceptional advertising strategist Stanley Pollitt, at BMP, and Stephen King, at JWT. The paradigm of account planning has something of notable interest: it is a fertile integration of market research with the creative process and is now used by agencies the world over. Between 1974 and 1975, the advertising industry was capable of giving finance and prestige to the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), a self-regulating body that is still in operation 30 years later. The ASA is a fair, fast and free channel for consumers that attends complaints, on average, within a month. For their part, advertisers realise that good self-regulation increases the public's trust and consequently improves the effectiveness of their campaigns.

At the end of the seventies, the advertising effectiveness awards arrived from the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA), created to complement the simply "creative" awards and show the effects of advertising on sales and, in general, their effectiveness. In this way, solid evaluation methods were provided for agencies and advertisers. The IPA awards were elevated to industry level and are a benchmark internationally. Moreover, they have given rise to 1,000 cases available in the IPA database and in the form of a book. Rewarding effectiveness is another British contribution to worldwide advertising that has been widely imitated.

At the beginning of the seventies, the agency of the brothers Charles and Maurice Saatchi started operating. By the end of the decade, these two singular advertisers of the City in London were the owners of one of the largest agencies in the world. Their memorable work for the British Conservative Party and British Airways ("Labour Isn't Working" and "The World's Favourite Airline" were the advertising themes of these great

campaigns) form part of world advertising history. Fletcher provides a fascinating description of the mix of ambition, opportunism, optimism and luck that took the Saatchi brothers to the top of their profession. He also explains how their talents complemented each other: Charles was passionate about achieving media coverage; for his part, Maurice was an exceptional salesman. Saatchi & Saatchi hired an incredibly important figure in business development: Martin Sorrell, a Brit who now directs WPP, currently the largest advertising group on the planet.

The advances in the eighties were related to three names and especially to two large firms. The names correspond to David Abbott, Frank Lowe and John Hegarty, leading creatives in the decade's advertising. David Abbott worked at Abbott Mead Vickers (AMV); Frank Lowe left CDP and launched Lowe Howard-Spink in May 1981 and John Hegarty founded Bartle Bogle Hegarty (BBH), after being one of the most brilliant collaborators at Saatchi. AMV, CDP and BBH are agencies with a privileged place in the history of advertising.

On the business front, after numerous take-overs Saatchi & Saatchi became the leading agency in the world. For his part, Martin Sorrell, who had been their financial director, turned a small engineering firm called Wire & Plastic Products into one of the great holdings of advertising. In that decade, the British went from being famous for their creativity to being famous for the size of their largest advertising firms. As pointed out by the cover of the Sunday supplement of *The New York Times* in 1989, the British were "Buying Up the Ad Business".

The nineties saw a drop in the percentage of advertising in the gross domestic product, which had reached its peak in 1989, and also a reduction both in the number of agencies and in the number of employees in these agencies. Between 1989 and 1993, the number of employees went from 15,400 to 11,100 and the number of agencies from 257 to 225. The golden age of British advertising was therefore coming to an end.

Fletcher portrays, with agile aplomb and accuracy, the most outstanding figures of some prodigious decades as can only be done by a peer: he himself is a leader in the industry. On the other hand, neither the creativity nor the history of advertising can be understood without the great contributions made by the United Kingdom. That's why this fascinating history will interest those who wish to find out more about the role of advertising in business, the media and society. Solid knowledge of the profession's past in the United Kingdom is a source of ideas for professionals and vital information for academics.

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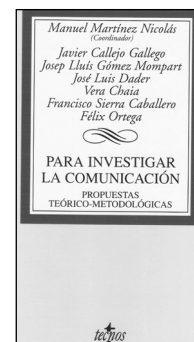
MARTÍNEZ NICOLÁS, M. (coord.) *Para investigar la comunicación. Propuestas teórico-metodológicas*.

Madrid: Editorial Tecnos, 2008. 244 pages.

ISBN: 978-84-309-4821-5

BY MIQUEL RODRIGO

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A little over 35 years ago, communication studies achieved university rank in Spain, specifically in the academic year of 1971-1972. Since then, and particularly as from the decade of the nineties, the proliferation of research and specialist journals has risen dramatically. However, it is possible that some epistemological consolidation is still required, i.e. that of the discipline's identity.

The book presented below will undoubtedly help to strengthen the disciplinary muscle of communication studies. This is a collective work that, although it does not pretend to represent the whole scientific community, does offer us an excellent panorama of the status of Spanish communication research. The text is made up of seven chapters whose authors (six Spanish lecturers and a Brazilian lecturer) deal with different aspects, fields and objects of study of communication research.

Manuel Martínez Nicolás, who has coordinated this work and lectures at the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos in Madrid, not only provides us with an overall introduction but is also the author of the first chapter, "La investigación sobre comunicación en España. Evolución histórica y retos actuales" (Communication research in Spain. Historical evolution and current challenges). This text contains a dense, summarised and well structured history of Spanish communication research, divided into three periods: from 1965 to 1980 (the emergence of the discipline), from 1980 to 1995 (consolidation and agitation of the field) and from 1995 to the present day (diversity, recognition and current challenges). For each of these periods the historical conditions, structure of the scientific community and general orientation of research are analysed. This is an excellent interpretation of Spanish communication research. As always happens with states of affairs that attempt to cover decades, some aspects could be developed further but on the whole it must be recognised that this is a highly illustrative review of the state of research.

The lecturer from the Universidad Nacional a Distancia (UNED), Javier Callejo Gallego, provides one of the classic objects of study for communication research: audiences.

However, the fact that this is one of the objects of study that has been developed since the start of the discipline does not mean that it is without its problems. The title of this second chapter is quite explicit in this respect: "Audiencias multimedia: múltiples problemas, múltiples intereses" (Multimedia audiences: multiple problems, multiple interests). Information and communication technologies have notably increased the complexity of the communication panorama in general and their investigation in particular. Studying audiences is not independent of these changes in the media system. These problems do not relate only to the quantification of audiences but also to the use made of the media. In this respect, and without belittling quantification, the text deals with reception studies. Callejo Gallego believes that the trend in research in this area is revealed in "the centrality acquired by media consumption and, in general, by the use of machines to communicate among consumption practices in general; and the unstoppable digital convergence of all media" (page 79).

The third chapter, "Historia de la comunicación e historia del periodismo: enfoques teóricos y metodologías para la investigación" (History of communication and history of journalism: theoretical focuses and methodologies for research), is by Josep Gómez Mompert, lecturer at the Universitat de València. The author makes an important distinction between the history of the media, the history of journalism and the history of communication, although he does admit that they do have some family resemblance. This is a chapter that should definitely be read by those who wish to study the world of communication from an historical perspective or, as the author says, those who wish to "historise communication" (page 116).

Another of the fields of study dealt with by the book is political communication. The text's author is lecturer José Luis Dader at the Universidad Complutense in Madrid. The title of this fourth chapter could not be more explicit: "La adolescente investigación en comunicación política: estructura del campo y tendencias prometedoras" (Adolescent research in political communication: structure of the field and promising trends). This text contains the different epistemic focuses for the study

of political communication (behavioural, structural-functional, interactional/constructivist and dialogue-based), as well as the preferred objects of research. He also provides a brief review of the research methods used. Finally, a very useful section of this chapter goes over the bibliographical landmarks that have shaped research in this field over the last few years.

"Investigación sobre comunicación política en Brasil" (Political communication research in Brazil) is the fifth chapter in the book and its author is lecturer Vera Chaia, from the Pontificia Universidade Católica de São Paulo. Without questioning the intrinsic interest of the text, it is perhaps a little out of place, as it deals with research in Brazil. This chapter and the seventh are perhaps those that result in the book losing a certain internal logic, albeit for different reasons. In any case, the text by Chaia is a brief, interesting state of affairs that contextualises the research and offers an illustrative view of Brazilian research, centres and researcher groups.

Francisco Sierra Caballero, from the Universidad de Sevilla, is the author of the sixth chapter in the book, entitled "Sociedad de la información y comunicología. Una crítica económico-política" (Information society and communication studies. An economic-political critique). The so-called information society is surely the most impactful political, communicative and social phenomenon we are experiencing today. As has been noted in another chapter of this book, information and communication technologies are significantly transforming the world of communication. Sometimes, however, these changes have not allowed a critical view of what is happening. In this chapter, from the perspective of political economics, an interesting critical approach is taken of how this emerging reality can be studied.

The seventh and last chapter of the book is called "Periodistas: entre la profesionalidad y el aventurismo" (Journalists: between professionalism and adventurism) and its author lectures at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid Félix Ortega. This chapter analyses the profession of journalism since the time of Franco's regime and different professional models are provided. What differentiates this chapter from the others is that, while they analyse research (Spanish or Brazilian), here the focus is not research into journalism but its different (self)-representations, thereby revealing the strong and weak points of the profession.

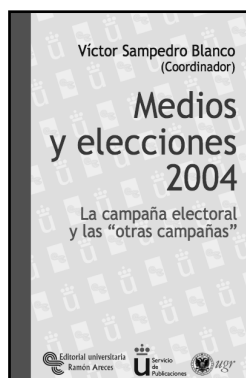
To end, we can state that this book is of great interest and use for communication researchers because, as stated by Martínez Nicolás in his introduction, the text offers "theoretical methodological proposals to investigate communication without risk" (page 11).

Books review

SAMPEDRO, V. (coord.) *Medios y elecciones 2004: La campaña electoral y las "otras campañas"*.

Madrid: Ed. Univ. Ramon Areces, 2008, 278 pages.

ISBN: 978-84-8004-849-1



As noted by Robert Fishman in the prologue to this volume, the 2004 general elections were not only the most passionate in the history of Spain since the Second Republic, as a consequence of the terrorist attacks on 11 March, but were also the first elections when the role played by the media and new information and communication technologies stood out prominently.

This study, coordinated by Víctor Sampedro, is divided into two volumes: an academic book and a didactic manual accompanied by some DVDs. The first volume analyses the pre-electoral agenda of the elections (the media construction of the *Carod* case), the political-editorial alignments, the information disseminated between 11 March and 14 March and an analysis of the websites and forums of parties in the campaign that shows that these served as a platform of expression and debate between voters and candidates in a very limited sense. Moreover, given the dissatisfaction generated by the information disseminated by the "central public sphere", more critical and mobilised citizens became producers of information, accessing and comparing information from both conventional and alternative sources of information. A shift could be observed towards digital media and platforms, in many cases alternative (the traffic on the internet multiplied by eight at this time), and it was the first time that discussion websites and blogs accessed the process of forming public opinion.

The second volume is a manual accompanied by two DVDs, designed to be used as a didactic resource in universities and secondary schools. Among others, images are offered of the news items on television, the electoral propaganda of state and autonomous community parties and interviews with political leaders.

COSTA, P.-O. (comp.). *Cómo ganar unas elecciones: Comunicación y movilización en las campañas electorales*.

Madrid: Ed- Paidós Ibérica, 2008, 373 pages.

ISBN: 978-84-493-2173-3

Under the general title of *Cómo ganar unas elecciones* (How to win some elections) we find this rigorous and systematic approach to the processes of electoral communication and mobilisation. Divided into three parts, the first tackles the planning and development of election campaigns. The second analyses the relationship with the media and the third describes demoscopic research techniques.



The second part, dedicated to the media in election campaigns and to the elements that a strategic communicator must take into account to ensure good interaction with the media (*publicity*), is made up of articles by Ramentol, Costa and Domingo. Santiago Ramentol analyses the relations between politicians, journalists and the media and gives advice on how to establish a good relationship with the latter. The article by Pere-Oriol Costa analyses the role of television in campaigns and describes the relationship between political discourse and television discourse; the objectives of strategic communication on television; political television in Europe and the United States, and their propaganda instruments: election debates. And finally, the article by David Domingo, "Irrupción de Internet en el panorama electoral", explores the specific characteristics of the internet as an electoral medium with a specific communication strategy. Domingo not only analyses the role of the internet in election campaigns but also its role as an instrument to improve how democracy works and a new means of participation generated for citizens.

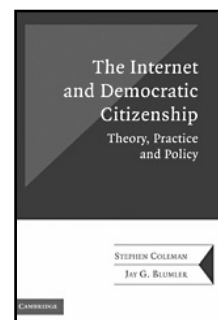
RENIU, J. M. (ed.) *E-voting: The Last Electoral Revolution*. Barcelona: Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials (ICPS) 2008, 156 pages.
ISBN: 978-84-608-0728-5



In this work we find articles about e-voting, i.e. the use of ICTs in the electoral process and specifically when voting electronically. We can find theoretical presentations on the downside of these tools in terms of transparency, possibility for fraud, etc. We can particularly highlight the chapters talking about voting via the internet. In this respect, the focus is

the fact that one of the main drawbacks of suffrage via internet is that it requires a minimum digital literacy that not everyone with a right to vote has acquired at present: while some of the main virtues would be that it adds security to the process, privacy and confidentiality, as well as making it easier for voters to exercise their right. One of the chapters provides the case of Estonia, which has been the first country in the world to use *i-voting* (the difference between *i-voting* and *e-voting* is that the first would be part of the second, only referring to the internet) with binding results, specifically for their 2005 local elections and the 2007 general elections. We might say that this book is an example of how the concept of *e-democracy* is not only linked to the internet but that so-called *i-democracy* is indeed a fundamental piece that is gaining in importance. In fact, in the final chapter, this is one of the conclusions of the editor of this compendium of articles, which provides us with a series of doubts and certainties regarding a theme that is seen as strategic, albeit still in its early stages.

COLEMAN, S.; BLUMLER, J. G. *The Internet and Democratic Citizenship: Theory, Practice and Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, 232 pages.
ISBN-13: 978-0-521-81752-3

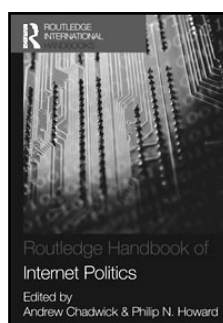


From a position of rigorous academicism we receive this work that aims to present the essential problems concerning the use of the internet for political participation in a broad sense. As must be the case, the first chapters of the book are dedicated to profiling a body of theory that explains the deficits of representative democracies as we know them and the role that new technologies could intuitively play in improving these imperfections. It therefore talks of the problem of public deliberation, theories about rational choice, as well as new cultural trends that accompany the introduction of the internet in politics: individualisation, secularisation, reactions of traditional actors in the media system such as journalists and media firms... Chapters 4 and 5 analyse various cases, of particular note being an analysis of the use of the internet for parliamentary politics to get nearer to citizens, with the question of whether this is only promoted from above. Then, and as a replica to the previous chapter, there is an explanation of the strength gained by movements aiming for greater political participation but in the opposite direction, i.e. from below. The book places a lot of emphasis precisely on the effective possibilities that can be strengthened by *e-democracy* based on an initiative of "classic" public policy, leaving open the debate regarding whether the internet will be enough to improve politics or if something else is needed.

CHADWICK, A.; HOWARD, P. N. (eds.). *Routledge Handbook of Internet Politics*.

New York: Routledge, 2009, 512 pages.

ISBN: 978-0-415-42914-6



This excellent manual dedicates its thirty-one chapters to the most important debates arising in the world of politics with the emergence of the internet. The volume is organised into four different sections: institutions, behaviour, identities, and law and politics. In the first part, Ward and Gibson suggest that ICTs are accelerating some of the trends from the pre-internet

era, such as individualisation. Also tackled is the dialectic relationship between technology and political institutions (Anstead and Chadwick), the theory of collective action within the context of the diversity of currently available strategies (Bimber *et al.*) and the relationship between parliamentary democracy and interactive technology (Coleman). In the section dedicated to behaviour, Brundidge and Rice deal with the territory-based fragmentation ("balkanisation") of opinion and citizen commitment to political issues. The article by Mossberger reminds us of the persistence of a digital divide and warns of the risk of creating much greater political imbalance (an issue that is also tackled later on by Dijk). Tewksbury and Rittenberg suggest that new online audiences are more fragmented, something that will have implications in the distribution of political knowledge and the importance of issues for the agenda in the future. From the third part, we can highlight the article by Papacharissi on the new hybrid model of public space, where consumerism and civic rhetoric exist side by side, and the article by van Doorn and van Zoonen, who analyse changes in gender representation. In the last part, dedicated to law and politics, we find quite critical articles, such as the one by Deibert, which underlines how states observe and control content, and the article by Phillips, which denounces the political instruments and controls found on all information networks. Really, this is one of the most complete manuals on politics and the internet.

INSTITUTE FOR POLITICS, DEMOCRACY AND THE INTERNET. *Best Practices for Political Advertising Online*. Washington DC: George Washington University, 2008, 62 pages.

This is a manual distributed free of charge by the Institute for Politics, Democracy and the Internet (IPDI) from its website. The IPDI is a think tank aimed at different stakeholders related to the world of politics and the internet, translated into the production of materials such as this book. As indicated by its title, it is a useful guide for directors of election campaigns and other professionals to the tools to plan the internet component of their policy. Different experts produce the content that, in the first part of the book, is related to the profile of voters that move around the internet, how to attract them towards the desired political position and general trends today in the area of political communication. In the book's second section, specific instruments are presented that need to be taken into account when the aim is to disseminate electoral and political propaganda on the internet. It also analyses the role of search engines on the internet in order to be better placed in the different rankings and thereby increase the probability of users accessing the sites you wish to promote. In this respect, they also explain strategies to improve conventional advertising on the internet by means of social networks, platforms such as YouTube, among others; and, finally, it talks about how to get sympathisers with leadership capacity (*lead generation*) who wish to get involved voluntarily in political mobilisation. As a whole, this is a highly practical document but a bit behind the times.



Version available online:

<<http://www.ipdi.org/Publications/default.aspx>>

Other books of interest

RUSSELL, A.; ECHCHAIBI, N. *International Blogging*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2009, 201 pages.

MOSSBERGER, K.; TOLBERT, C.J.; McNEAL, R. *Digital Citizenship*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2008, 221 pages.
ISBN: 978-0-262-13285-9

NEGRINE, R. *The Transformation of Political Communication: Continuities and Changes in Media and Politics*. New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2008, 226 pages.
ISBN: 978-0-230-00030-8

REY MORATÓ, J. *Comunicación política, Internet y campañas electorales: De la teledemocracia a la ciberdemocr@cia*. Madrid: Tecnos, 2007, 346 pages.
ISBN: 978-84-309-4506-1

Journals review

TELOS. Cuadernos de Comunicación, Tecnología y Sociedad. La investigación en comunicación política: tendencias actuales, retos y problemas

Madrid: Editorial Fundesco.

No. 74, January-March 2008

ISSN: 0213-084X



Under the coordination of Professor María José Canel, the central Dossier of this edition of *TELOS*

analyses the current trends, challenges and problems in political communication research. Among other articles, of note is the one by Javier del Rey on the challenges of the internet in political communication, questioning the social and intellectual environment that should be promoted by the internet in today's society. In his article, Víctor Sampedro tackles the ambivalent effects of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) on political communication, highlighting the fracturing of the common public sphere, the internationalisation of content and audiences and the techno-political empowerment of citizens. Maarek describes the international evolution of research into political communication and Pere-Oriol Costa describes the route taken by Spanish academics, noting some ideas that go beyond the "voluntarism" that has developed to date, driving research in political communication. The article by Bouza provides a methodological approach to research into political communication. And, to finish, John B. Thompson provides an interesting introduction to the perils of "mediated visibility" that has transformed relations between visibility and power. Outside the *Dossier*, we can also find an article by Manuel Castells on relations between communication and power in online society and an article by Richeri on the new challenges of communication research.

Version available online:

<<http://info.telefonica.es/index/revistatelos.html>>

**Réseaux. Communication - Technologie - Société
Parler politique en ligne**

Vol. 26, no. 150, 2008

ISSN: 0751-7971



In this edition of the French journal *Réseaux* we find a monograph dedicated to the new forms of politics related to new information and communication technologies (ICTs), especially the internet, and the challenges arising with a new kind of participatory or deliberative democracy. The monograph starts with a bibliographical review of studies on political discussion online, noting the need to research further into the reasons that lead citizens to take part in online discussions. Based on a specific case, Benvegna and Brugidou analyse the resources that facilitate the transformation of a series of individual discourses into public political proposals that can be considered collectively acceptable. The article by Mathieu Chaput proposes an alternative theory to the Habermas model of participation that serves to analyse the characteristics of online discussions, the model of critical discussion produced by the pragmatic-dialectic theory. The articles by Desquinabo and Kies analyse, from different perspectives, the discussion forums of political parties, such as the French *Jeunes populaires* and *Désirs d'avenir*, the latter by socialist Ségolène Royal, or the forum of a small Italian political party, Radicali Italiani. Finally, Patrice Flichy invites us to reflect on the relationship between democracy and internet and the need for media literacy in traditional political parties.

Version available online:

<<http://reseaux.revuesonline.com/>>

**European Journal of ePractice
E-Participation**
No. 7, March 2009
ISSN: 1988-625X



The seventh edition of the *European Journal of ePractice*, a journal financed by the European Commission, takes advantage of the elections for the European Parliament in June 2009 to tackle the new forms of political participation encouraged by new technologies and outlines, throughout eight articles, the state of democracy and participation in the European continent. Among the different articles that go to make up this monograph, we can highlight the one by Smith and Dalakouridov, where the authors provide a historical and theoretical review of the challenges and benefits of e-participation. Continuing along these descriptive lines, Panopoulou, Tambouris and Tarabanis analyse the progress and current trends of e-participation in Europe, concluding that most activities have focused on areas such as providing information, deliberation and consultation. We can also find an evaluation of projects on e-participation in the article by Aichholzer and Hilmar, and an analysis of specific cases, such as e-consultation, in an article by Tomkova that questions whether e-consultation, rather than being an e-participation practice used to improve civic commitment in drawing up public policy, is not more useful as a façade for political correction in a new space. Other articles analyse e-participatory budgets ("Beyond Theory: e-Participatory Budgeting and its Promises for eParticipation") and e-voting, describing the objectives, measures, procedures and technology used and the results obtained by an e-voting experience in the Swiss canton of Neuchâtel.

Version available online:
<<http://www.epractice.eu/journal/volume/7>>

Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication (JCMC)
Vol. 14, no. 2, January 2009
ISSN: 1083-6101



Of the journals that have communication via the internet as one of their main areas of interest, the JCMC is one of the oldest. Since 1995, promoted by the International Communication Association, we can find some reviews of research on the role of the internet in political and electoral campaigns. In the last edition of January 2009 two articles actually stand out concerning this theme. On the one hand, Sonja Utz presents us with a study of the role of the main social network on the internet in Holland (Hyves) in the last election campaign. By means of observation and a basic statistical treatment of interactivity between users and political candidates within the "virtual world", the author arrives at an interesting preliminary conclusion: based on online interaction, voters with *a priori* different points of view can end up rating certain candidates highly. On the other hand, in the same journal we can find a collective article by Marko M. Skoric, Deborah Ying and Ying Ng that questions the relationship between citizens' levels of political participation and their online social capital. By carrying out telephone surveys, they suppose that the more people use the internet, the more they will tend to participate in politics. Although the findings are not definitive, they conclude that the trend does not refute the hypothesis and that, in any case, it can be said that political participation via the internet is a growing form of sociability.

Version available online:
<<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/117979306/home?CRETRY=1&SRETRY=0>>

Social Science Computer Review

Vol. 26, no. 3, autumn 2008

ISSN: 0894-4393



Since 1983 SAGE, as part of its range of journals on the media and new technology, has offered this journal with a clear interdisciplinary approach. Although initially it focused on the world of computation, since the appearance of the internet this has been one of its most relevant themes. In the last edition of autumn 2008,

we can find two articles directly related to aspects of electoral political communication on the internet. Firstly, we have an enterprising article by Kevin A. Pirch that places us in the setting of the primary elections for the Democrat candidature to the US Senate for the state of Connecticut. In this work, the aim is to show the potential for success of a network of blogs, where opinions were given concerning an unknown hopeful, who at first started off with few possibilities compared with another candidate with a recognised track record. In the same edition of the journal, of particular note is the article by Vassia Gueorguieva on the impact of online social networks such as MySpace and YouTube in the full electoral year that was 2006 in the US. According to the author, in this period there was an accelerated increase in internet use by all candidates but especially those representing the Democrat party, which meant that, shortly afterwards, Republican candidates also gave in to these new practices. The author attempts to argue that there is a gradual displacement of the strategic centrality of electoral campaigns to the world of online social networks.

Version available online (under licence):

<<http://www.sagepub.com/journalsProdDesc.nav?prodId=Journal200948>>

Journal of Elections, Public Opinion & Parties
Internet Surveys and National Election Studies:
A Symposium

Vol. 18, no. 4, 2008. ISSN: 1745-7289

This edition of the *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* is particularly interesting because it is a monograph focusing on the dimension known as *Internet polling*, i.e. surveys of election behaviour online. This edition is a summary compendium of the results arising from a prior symposium held in Essex (England) on this area. It contains general considerations on the potential of online surveys which, well optimised, would overtake traditional face to face and telephone surveys in terms of quantity, costs, speed and even possibilities for experimentation. Within this corollary of experiences, of note are the methodological contributions such as that by Vavreck and Rivers, who explain the improvements that online surveys are meant to bring compared with some characteristics of more conventional polling; as well as the article by Atkeson and Tafoya, which shows how a combination of polls via ordinary post and online can have certain advantages in guaranteeing representative results in general, although online respondents had features of higher social status. Also of interest is the article by Gibson and McAllister, who discuss the epistemological deficiencies of online surveys carried out during the Australian general elections. In general, this edition allows us to examine a highly specific area of research and its most recent lines of investigation.



Version available online (under licence):

<<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713727959~db=all>>

Websites review

Junta Electoral Central

<<http://www.juntaelectoralcentral.es>>

The Junta Electoral Central (Central Electoral Board) has an informative website with electoral legislation at a state, autonomous community and local level (regulations, doctrines, etc.), as well as historical information and the results of different elections (local, state and autonomous community) since they started. You can also consult the current administrative situation regarding any electoral processes underway, the electoral calendar and any candidatures announced, as well as news items concerning modifications in candidatures, objections, affairs related to the electoral register, etc. It is surprising that it does not monitor any possible referendums or popular municipal consultations that may be taking place in Spain, and that there is no mention of e-democracy experiences in general. On the other hand, it does highlight specific regulations with regard to popular legislative initiatives.

YouGov. What the world thinks

<<http://www.yougov.com>>

YouGov is a service company installed on the internet, a dot.com. It provides services for different entities, such as the media and policymakers. Principally it specialises in supplying data on audiences on the internet and opinion polls of all kinds based on samples of users online. In this respect, a large part of its surveys function using the active participation of respondents who, providing they live in the country where the corresponding YouGov delegation is located, can answer the different questionnaires with the benefit of entering a prize draw and other compensation. It is believed that one reason respondents are motivated to take part is the chance to have an effect on the reports on public opinion that other institutions will use to guide their actions.

Internet and Democracy Project

<<http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/research/internetdemocracy?page=1>>

Internet and Democracy is a project by the Berkman Center for Internet and Society, of Harvard University, focusing principally on the Middle East, examining how the internet influences the norms and modes of democracy, including its impact on civil society, citizen resources, governmental transparency and laws. Its website contains different international studies on the relation between the internet and democracy, from studies on blogs in Iran to the role of the internet in the Burma saffron revolt or the role of digital networks in the orange revolution in the Ukraine.

Observatori de la Comunicació Local (OCL)

<<http://www.portalcomunicacion.com/ocl>>

The Observatori de la Comunicació Local (Observatory of Local Communication) is an initiative by the Institut de la Comunicació (InCom-UAB), the Organisme Autònom Flor de Maig, the Comissionat de la Presidència per a la Societat del Coneixement (provincial government of Barcelona), and the Consorci Comunicació Local. The aim of the Observatory is to create a permanent structure dedicated to research, dissemination and training in subjects related to communication at a local and county level, taking Catalonia as its main area of reference, although it also pays attention to the situation of other autonomous communities in Spain and to the experiences of other regions and states in Europe. Through its website you can access documents and periodic reports produced by the Observatory on local communication in Catalonia, as well as different online texts that deal with and reflect on local communication in the press, on radio, television, the internet, etc.

i-pol: A portal on Internet and politics

<<http://www.esri.salford.ac.uk/ESRCResearchproject/index.html>>

Researchers from the British universities of Oxford, Leicester and Chester, Stephen Ward, Rachel Gibson and Wainer Lusoli, created this portal on the internet and politics that provides academic resources on this area. Their site provides access to research, publications and research projects carried out by these researchers on the internet's relationship with issues such as political representation, participation, elections, political activism, etc.

Demo-part. European foundation for participatory democracy

<<http://www.demo-part.org>>

This website is the window on an initiative promoted across Europe by the Catalan government, the authority of the Tuscany region in Italy and the French Région Poitou Charentes. The project became a branch of the European Foundation for Participative Democracy and specifically its website format started in autumn 2007 as a space for contact between the different institutional collaborators and other agents. In this respect, its content includes descriptions of the different initiatives and meetings that have been promoted, especially in the area of youth and the practice of various e-democracy tools, as well as other experiences closely related to participative budget policies. There is also a section on studies and research with publications and announcements of seminars and congresses on the area.

Observatori de Polítiques de Comunicació (OPC)

<<http://www.portalcomunicacion.com/opc/cat/home.asp>>

Through the Communication Portal (InCom-UAB) we can access the Observatori de Polítiques de Comunicació (Communication Policy Observatory). The Observatory monitors the events and news related to political intervention in the communication industry (media and telecommunications, essentially) and also promotes research into and activities to disseminate communication policy. The initial geographical scope of the Observatory's work is Spain and particularly Catalonia, although it also pays special attention to general trends recorded at a European level and in Latin America. The Observatory's portal provides access to different resources, such as a list of reference publications related to the study of communication policies (books, scientific journals, websites on current affairs), and various websites of interest (international and national policy centres, international observatories and institutes and international associations of researchers).

Ad Hoc Committee on e-democracy (CAHDE)

<http://www.coe.int/t/e/integrated_projects/democracy/02_activities/002_e-democracy/>

The Ad Hoc Committee on E-democracy of the Council of Europe (CAHDE) was set up in 2006 as an intergovernmental body whose members are delegated by the 47 Member States of the Council of Europe, and by relevant international organisations. Among the CAHDE's objectives we can find the aim to "examine developments on e-democracy/e-participation at European and international level", "measure the effectiveness and impact of e-democracy initiatives and devices and their complementarity and interoperability with non-electronic forms of democratic engagement and participation" and "prepare appropriate reports and documentation with a view to making recommendations to the Committee of Ministers on possible further action in the field of e-democracy, in the framework of the Council of Europe's agenda on strengthening democracy and good governance". Its portal contains the documents setting up the CAHDE, information on its meetings, working documents and other resources.

Momentum E-participation

<<http://www.ep-momentum.eu/>>

This is the specific action project to support the e-participation programme of the European Commission. It contains a whole series of initiatives concerning a generic concept of "participation" (political, social, cultural...) within the reality of the European Union. Its content therefore includes links to projects such as *Lexipation* (www.lexipation.org) which aims to bring the legislative process closer to Europeans; *demos@twork* (www.demosatwork.org), starting up a pilot test of dialogue between citizens and representatives against tobacco; and *Empower* (www.ep-empower.eu) aimed at NGOs and individuals to channel participation in environmental issues.

Institute for Politics, Democracy & the Internet

<<http://ipdi.org/>>

The Institute for Politics, Democracy & the Internet (IPDI), created in 1998, belongs to the North American George Washington University and has the aim of promoting the use of the internet and new communication technologies in the political field and of enhancing democratic values and government and encouraging citizen participation; to "democratize democracy". The IPDI carries out research, publishes studies and guides on how to use new technologies better, aimed at candidates, civil servants and activists. It also organises seminars and congresses on good practices and on the democratisation of the use of the internet and other technologies. At its website you can download multimedia resources and the research carried out by the Institute, as well as obtain information on congresses, seminars and activities related to new technologies and democracy.

Access2Democracy.org (A2D)

<<http://www.access2democracy.org/content/mission-statement>>

Access2Democracy is a non-governmental organisation that functions as an international civil society organization and a research centre establishing strong links and a long-term cooperation between civil society, governmental authorities, academic community and the private sector. This organisation's main aim is the study and analysis of e-democracy issues and the involvement of citizens in this field. It also promotes the principles and practice of participatory e-democracy within the global arena. Its website provides access to resources of international research centres and institutes and different projects, articles and studies related to e-democracy and other new terms appearing with new technologies, such as *e-vote*, *e-participation*, *e-government*, *e-citizen*...

Democràcia.Web

<<http://www.democraciaweb.org>>

Democràcia.web is an internet site promoted by the Jaume Bofill Foundation with the support and collaboration of the Catalan parliament and in close collaboration with the project promoted by the Open University of Catalonia, *Parlament Obert* (<http://www.uoc.edu/parlamentobert/>). The different sections of the website aim to exploit the possibilities offered by the internet to enhance democracy. Along these lines, there is a section of letters to the parliament and also links to the website of this institution, as well as an interesting collection of applications presented as games of political simulation where users can do exercises to calculate seats, tests to evaluate your ideological profile and emulate parliament votes to see which party they would coincide with.

Politics Online

<<http://www.politicsonline.com/>>

The *Politics Online* website has a wide range of content on the campaign strategies and public relations used in the US electoral campaigns. Politics Online is a project by Phil Nobel and Associates, a political and public affairs consulting firm that has taken part in online election campaigns for the last 10 years. It is therefore a website to promote the company but there are also many different resources and information that provide us with a view of the current situation of what is called e-democracy or digital politics: research reports, press cuttings, agenda of activities, newsletters, etc.

E-democracy Centre (e-DC)

<<http://edc.unige.ch/>>

The E-Democracy Centre has the support of the Research Centre on Direct Democracy (c2d) of the University of Zurich, the European University Institute (EUI) of Florence and Oxford Internet Institute (OII) of Oxford University. One of its objectives is to improve understanding of how new information and communication technologies (ICTs) are interacting with our institutions of democratic governance, and to study the outcomes that are produced as a result. Its website provides access to research and publications on methodologies that measures the use of ICTs in the new forms of participation and deliberation, *e-voting*, *e-governance*, electronic participation, online forums and the relationship between political parties and the internet.

Presupuestos Participativos TV of Seville Council

<<http://www.presupuestosparticipativos.tv>>

This website is a broadcasting platform, using the webTV format, for experiences of participatory budgets at Seville council. It contains all the information in audiovisual format for this e-democracy project that has been in operation since 2004. Specifically, the website contains specific information on each district, with a summary of the development of projects with participatory budget and with interviews with local residents taking part in the initiative. There are also other resources, such as training videos explaining how to speak in public, the budget cycle and a section where citizens can provide videos illustrating their ideas or proposals, to put them to debate.

Election Services Corporation

<<http://www.electionservicescorp.com>>

This is the website of a firm specialising in organising electoral processes for associations, companies, universities, trade unions, political parties, etc. Of particular note among the services it offers are the logistics for online voting. This product is presented precisely as a strategy to attempt to increase the electoral participation of the members of each organisation. Apart from a detailed description of the services offered and the team, the website also has some results of finished processes, with a clear favourable trend towards the use of online voting, although without the disappearance of voting in person.

Internet & Politics (ECPR)

<<http://intradociep.upmf-grenoble.fr/Spip/>>

At the start of 2009, the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) created an academic group on the internet and politics with the aim of serving as a link at an international level between the different researchers dealing with this area, creating a consolidated network and exchange for Internet research, promoting comparative and cross-national study and expanding the geographic focus of research in Europe. The research group focuses principally on the fields of e-democracy and e-governance. Its website has information on research, conferences and events related to e-democracy, as well as reviews of books, monographic journals on politics and the internet and links to institutions, projects and other websites of interest.

E-petitioner of the Scottish parliament

<<http://epetitions.scottish.parliament.uk/>>

Awarded for eGovernment Good Practice in 2005, this initiative by the Scottish parliament is dedicated to being a channel to receive citizen proposals via the internet. The project consists of different petition initiatives started up and published on the website, so that citizens can support them by adding their signature. The evolution of the petitions is quite systemised, as once the period for gathering signatures is over, the petition enters a parliamentary administrative circuit that studies its viability by asking for reports, etc., until it can be turned into some kind of parliamentary bill.

Blogs

eDemocracia blogspot

<<http://edemocracia.blogspot.com/>>

eDemocracia is a space set up in 2003 and promoted by Antoni Gutiérrez-Rubí (political consultant) and David Casacuberta (lecturer in Philosophy at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) that aims to be a space of political and media reference on e-democracy and serves as a space to reflect on democratic systems, to enhance democracy, reform the electoral system, citizen participation processes, action, participation and political representation, within the framework of the new possibilities offered by new technologies, within the so-called cyberdemocracy, digital or e-democracy.

Other websites of interest

Channels for political parties and institutions on YouTube:

CiU: <<http://www.youtube.com/ciutv>>

PSC: <<http://www.youtube.com/psctv>>

ERC: <<http://www.youtube.com/esquerratv>>

ICV: <<http://www.youtube.com/iniciativaverds>>

PP: <<http://www.youtube.com/partidopopular>>

C's: <<http://es.youtube.com/ciudadanos>>

Blogs of members of the Catalan parliament

<<http://www.parlament.cat/portal/page/portal/pcat/IE07>>

National Centre for Digital Government (UMassAmherst)

<<http://www.umass.edu/digitalcenter/index.html>>

Information Society Project (Yale Law School)

<<http://www.law.yale.edu/intellectuallife/informationssocietyproject.htm>>

Pew Internet & American Life Project

<<http://www.pewinternet.org/topics/Politics.aspx>>

Center for the Digital Future (University of Southern California)

<<http://www.digitalcenter.org/>>

Democracies Online Newswire

<<http://www.dowire.org/>>

Manuscript submissions guidelines

Presentation of the articles

The article must be presented in electronic support (PC and Word format preferred). Every page must be 30 lines approx. and body size 12. The maximum length is about 6.000 words, notes and references not included. The cover sheet has to be provided only giving the title, the name of the author(s) and position, postal and e-mail addresses. The article has to include an abstract of 90-100 words and five keywords.

Articles will be accepted in Catalan, Spanish and English, the languages of diffusion of the journal.

Copyright clearance

Every author whose article has passed the blind review and has been accepted for publication must send to CAC a signed letter accepting the text publication by CAC in its journals and website (www.cac.cat) and confirming that the article is original, unpublished and is not assessed in other publications, being the author responsible of any reclaim due to the nonfulfilment of this warranty.

Articles should be addressed at:

Sylvia Montilla

General coordinator of *Quaderns del CAC*

C/ Entença, 321

08029 Barcelona

E-mail: smontilla.cac@gencat.cat

Bibliography and reference notes

The list of references and end notes has to be placed at the end of every article. References in the text must appear into brackets with the name of the author, the year of edition and the pages. For example: (Buckingham 2007, 35-43).

Exemples:

• Books

DE MORAGAS, M.; PRADO, E. *La televisió pública a l'era digital*. 1st ed. Barcelona: Pòrtic, 2000. (Centre d'Investigació de la Comunicació; 4) ISBN 84-7306-617-0

El régimen jurídico del audiovisual. Madrid - Barcelona: Marcial Pons - Institut d'Estudis Autònoms, Generalitat de Catalunya, 2000.

• Articles in journals

HOFFNER, C. [et al.] "The Third-Person Effect in Perceptions of the Influence of Television Violence". In: *Journal of Communication*. Cary [United Kingdom]: Oxford University Press, June 2001, vol. 51, no 2, p. 283-299.

ISSN 0021-9916

• Contributions to books

CAMAUËR L. "Women's Movements, Public Spheres and the Media: A Research Strategy for Studying Women's Movements". In: SREVERNY, A; VAN ZONEN, L., eds. *Gender Politics and Communication*. 1st ed. Cresskill [New Jersey, USA]: Hampton Press, 2000, p. 161-182.

ISBN 1-57273-241-5

• Online documents

CONSELL DE L'AUDIOVISUAL DE CATALUNYA. *Informe sobre l'observança del pluralisme a la televisió i a la ràdio*. Febrer de 2007. [En línia]. Barcelona: CAC, 2007.

<http://www.cac.cat/pfw_files/cma/actuacions/Continguts/Informe_mensual_Febrer_2007.pdf> [Consulta el 22 de març de 2007]

Tables and figures

Tables and figures have to be provided with short, descriptive titles and also be numbered in Arabic numbers. All footnotes to tables and their source(s) should be placed under the tables. They must be inserted not as an image but in an editable format (e.g. in Excel) and in greyscale.

Book reviews guidelines

1. The aim of the section 'Critical books review' is to review the most important new publications in the world of communication and particularly in the field of broadcasting.

2. Reviews must be original and previously unpublished.

3. Reviews must be adequate for readers to get a general idea of the content of the book under review, as well as providing a personal assessment of its interest. The review must therefore contain a description and analysis of the book, as well as some conclusions indicating its value and importance to readers.

4. The recommended length for reviews is around 1,000 words, not exceeding 1,300 words in any case.

5. Reviewed books must be contemporary, i.e. they must have been published during the last two full calendar years, although an earlier book may be included if duly justified.

6. The review must be given a title that summarises its content, with the bibliographical details and the author of the review below, including his or her position and the institution to which he or she belongs.

7. The model used for citing the bibliography must follow the criteria given by TERMCAT, which may be consulted at: <http://www.termcat.cat/productes/documents/citaciobiblio.pdf>

Exemple:

DE MORAGAS, M.; PRADO, E. *La televisió pública a l'era digital*. 1a ed. Barcelona: Pòrtic, 2000. (Col·lecció Centre d'Investigació de la Comunicació; 4). 350 p. ISBN 84-7306-617-0

8. The author should be introduced briefly by commenting on his or her background or most recent work.

9. The most important part of the review is the summary and analysis of the content. Here it is necessary to explain the field in which the book is placed, the perspective adopted by the author, the goals the author sets him or herself and the fundamental thesis of the book and how it is developed.

10. The critical evaluation should be generally positive but negative comments can also be included, in both cases suitable arguments being required. Readers must be informed regarding the value, interest and usefulness of the book under review. If relevant, other details can also be included, such as the use of sources, documentation, the bibliography used by the author, the book's formal presentation, etc.

11. Any possible references to text from the book under review must be written in inverted commas, with the page number afterwards, in brackets.

Exemple: "Xxxx xxx xxxx xxxx" (p. 45).

12. Bibliographical references to third parties cited in the text of the book under review must use the following model: (Surname year, p. for page number)

Exemple: (Hunt 1997, p. 251).

13. Bibliographical references from other works quoted in the review must be contained in full at the end, using the same format as the initial bibliographical reference but excluding the ISBN.

14. The review must be sent digitally, in Word or Word RTF, to the following email address: critica.cac@gencat.cat

15. The book review editor will evaluate every submitted review, in order to approve it publication or ask for some modification for his definitive publication

16. Reviews may be written in Catalan, Spanish, English or French. However, they will be published on paper in Catalan and, in PDF format, in English and Spanish on the CAC website.

17. After a review has been accepted, the author must authorise the CAC to publish his or her review in any of its written publications and on its website, by means of a signed letter sent by post.

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