Paulo Serra
Eduardo J.M. Camilo
Gisela Gonçalves
(Editors)

Political Participation and Web 2.0

livros
LABCOM
books
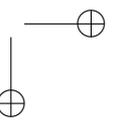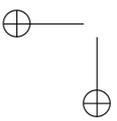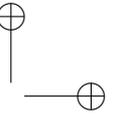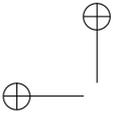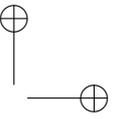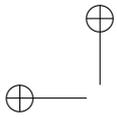
Edited by
PAULO SERRA, EDUARDO CAMILO
AND GISELA GONÇALVES

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION
AND WEB 2.0

livros
LABCOM
books

Contents

Introduction

Despite it being a debated issue in recent decades, there is in fact no consensus regarding the potentialities of the Internet for the strengthening of citizens' political participation and – by extension – of democracy itself. Nonetheless, this "new medium", and, in particular, its Web 2.0 version has become the cornerstone of communication strategies for both political parties and their candidates.

Several questions emerge from the debate about the impact of the internet on political participation. First of all, the very concept of political participation. Despite its importance in the theory of democracy, this concept is not always easy to define with rigor particularly when it comes to the form and boundaries of such participation. Actually, the ultimate issue is whether we are currently witnessing a "crisis of participation" or quite the contrary, the rise of alternative forms thereof. Secondly, the debate about the so-called "crisis of democracy" is also central when thinking about political participation in our times. Democratic societies are experiencing a democratic deficit, to a large extend a crisis of confidence in traditional political parties, by which citizens feel misrepresented and hence alienated from righteous participation in their political destiny.

These and similar questions are the pillars of an ongoing research project, entitled "New media and politics: citizen participation in the websites of Portuguese political parties". Developed by a team of researchers from Lab-Com – a communication sciences research center located at the University of Beira Interior, this 3-year research project is funded by FCT, the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology. We consider that in the new media context, political parties' websites might very well be a microcosm worthy of analysis. The websites have evolved through various stages and it is im-

portant to establish how these steps can be characterized and what the main differences to be found between them are. We anticipate to find that Web 2.0 contributed to a radical change of/in the structures and functioning of political parties' websites; nevertheless, the ultimate question is whether Web 2.0 did indeed change the way citizens use those websites and ultimately how we participate in the building of our political destiny.
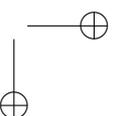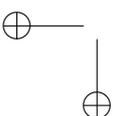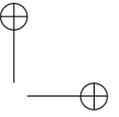
The main objectives, methodology and expected results of the project are presented in the very first chapter of this book, which gives the *motto* for the following 11 chapters. It is worth mentioning that the majority of the chapters have resulted from the international conference held at UBI, on the 11-12th of October 2012. With the selected papers in this volume, we attempt to keep alive the debate that began in that conference – a very important milestone in our research project –, and to foster the work of the LabCom research team as well.

"Political Participation and Web 2.0" is organized into four main parts. The first part of the book, "Citizenship and political participation", is divided into three chapters. António Fidalgo, from the University of Beira Interior/LabCom, reflects on the concept of "Freedom as Participation". In line with the thought of Isaiah Berlin, in particular, the concept of positive and negative freedom, the director of LabCom debates how under the banner of freedom, both right and left, liberalism and socialism, justify opposing political ideologies.

The following chapter, "From Brochureware to 'MyBo': An Overview of Online Elections and Campaigning", authored by Rachel Gibson from the University of Manchester, provides an overview of key findings and debates that have emerged in literature regarding online campaigning. In particular, whether modern-day electioneering is becoming a more participatory and grass-roots affair, and whether use of digital tools can actually affect the outcome of a race.

The citizenship and political participation theme is also central in the chapter of Giovandro Ferreira, from UFBA, the Federal University of Bahia. In his text, the Brazilian researcher discusses how Web 2.0 strengthens and increases the participation of citizens. He highlights how citizens, agents that go beyond the usual intellectuals and journalism professionals, participate in the "collective act" of constructing a journalistic event, in the current public space of media.
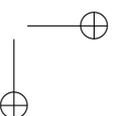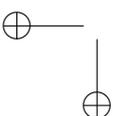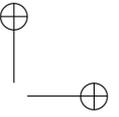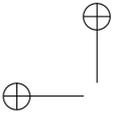
The second main part of the book focuses its attention on "Political parties and democracy". The first chapter, "Participation and alternative democracy", is authored by Peter Dahlgren, emeritus professor at Lund University (Sweden), who looks at some key contingencies of political economy, technology, and socio-cultural patterns and how they impact the spaces of online participation and the forms of identity that they foster. Dahlgren notes in particular the emergence of what he calls the "solo sphere" as a mode of participation that has debilitating consequences for alternative politics.

The following chapter explores the relationship between parties and new media, with a particular focus on Portugal. Carlos Jalali, from the University of Aveiro, argues that new media may constitute new means for parties to overcome their weakening social ties, but that is by no means an inevitable outcome. Rather, the usage of new media by political parties can also reproduce the types of interaction seen in other contexts, reflecting the supply-side constraints generated by contemporary party systems. While these strategies may be rational for political parties individually, the externalities in terms of the quality of democracy are far from positive.

The quality of democracy is also central to the chapter by Daniela Sampaio, from the University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro. In line with Robert Putnam's thesis that the greater the associative participation of citizens the stronger the Democracy is, the author presents a picture of Portuguese associativism – stressing its weak activity –, and discusses its relation with the phenomenon of the new social movements.

In the 3rd part of the book special attention is paid to "Political communication in the Internet Age". All three chapters included are authored by researchers from LabCom and are all both theoretically and empirically driven. Nuno Francisco presents a reflection about the "sound bite": an expression used to characterize a brief statement with an immediate and precise impact, created to fit perfectly as a newspaper title or headline or as the perfect measure to open the television news. The author wonders how new media contribute to a new era of political communication, without mediation from the journalistic sphere. Eduardo Camilo and Rudolfo Silva use a case-study approach to debate the existing relations between new media and traditional media with regard to how the opinion published in digital environments can transform itself into an opinion published in an editorial environment of the journalistic field. Elsa Simão and Rosália Rodrigues developed a content analysis of the

Livros LabCom
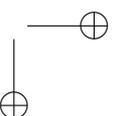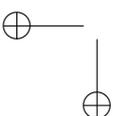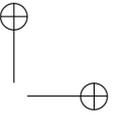
two main Portuguese party websites used in a campaign period in order to reflect about the new "2.0 communicative" possibilities and challenges.

Finally, the 4th and last part of this book presents two different "Models of analysis" on the Portuguese websites of political parties with parliamentary representation. By studying the political parties' websites in relation to the information, interaction, mobilization and sophistication dimensions, Catarina Silva, from the University of Aveiro, inferred a relationship in the use of online pages with a partisan typology. In the last chapter, Joaquin del Ramo, from the University of Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid, also presents a multiple dimensional analysis of the participatory tools available on websites. His preliminary findings show the existence of several participatory tools, which are generally simple to use, although their visibility could be significantly improved but also that the levels of user participation are low.

Overall, we consider that this book achieves our main goal: to enrich the debate and add knowledge to the study of political participation and Web 2.0. We have to thank all the contributors to this book that made this first output of our research project possible.

To conclude, some words of thanks are also due to the LabCom Editorial Team, who from the very beginning supported the edition of this book. The book is funded by the FCT – Foundation for Science and Technology, within the project PTDC/CCI-COM/122715/2010.

The Editors,
UBI, Covilhã, March 2014
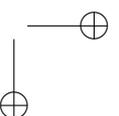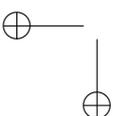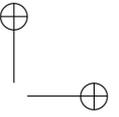
The research project "New media and politics: citizen participation in the websites of Portuguese political parties"

Research coordinator: Joaquim Paulo Serra

Research team: António Fidalgo, Anabela Gradim, Américo de Sousa, Eduardo Camilo, Gisela Gonçalves, Ivone Ferreira, João Canavilhas, Rosália Rodrigues & Tito Cardoso e Cunha.

Labcom, Universidade da Beira Interior, Covilhã, Portugal

1. Summary

The aim of this project is to investigate if the participation allowed to citizens by the websites of Portuguese political parties meets citizens' expectations. In fact, with the advent of the Web 2.0, the websites of the political parties started offering a wide range of tools and forms of participation that allow citizens to create and share contents, and get involved in social networks. As we should expect, there are citizens that correspond to this offer, especially during political campaigns. The problem, however, is to know if those tools and forms of participation: i) Are effectively at stake during the "normal"
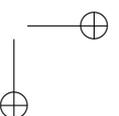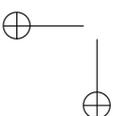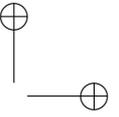
periods, i.e., the periods between electoral campaigns, which correspond to limited and specific occasions; ii) Consubstantiate a real political participation, with some impact and consequences on the political parties agenda (themes, activities) or, on the contrary, a mere simulation of participation with mere propagandistic intentions.

The ultimate goal of this project is to gather and provide knowledge, both theoretical and practical, allowing political parties and citizens to ameliorate political communication through the websites. Although the websites of the political parties have been adapting to web 2.0 demands, in reality, no one knows if that corresponds to what citizens want, and no one knows if they feel represented and satisfied with the tools available. This project aims to shed some light onto such questions, producing data which can, in turn, be used to sharpen the communication strategies of the parties. The specific objectives of this project are: (i) To analyse the tools and forms that the websites of Portuguese political parties offer to citizens' participation, namely in what refers to the creation and sharing of contents, and the involvement in social networks (Smith & Rainie, 2008);); ii) To pratically test the way political parties answer (or not) to citizens' use of those tools and forms of participation; (iii) To know the opinion of the Portuguese political leaders and the responsible for the websites of the political parties about such participation and, more specifically, if this participation leads to changes in the political party agenda (themes, activities); (iv) To know the Portuguese citizens' opinion about the tools and forms of participation that the websites of the political parties offer them.

Our main hypothesis is that there is a lack of correspondence between the participation the websites of the Portuguese political parties allow citizens and citizens' expectations about that. Pinpointing and describing that gap would provide new ways of bridging it. The reason to state this hypothesis is that, even if political parties give a greater importance to the citizens' participation than they did some years ago, when they privileged the informative function (Gibson, Ward & Lusoli, 2003; Gibson, Margolis, Resnick & Ward, 2003; Schweitzer, 2005), this participation is predominantly seen in an instrumental way, to project an image of credibility and/or arouse voters' sympathy, in a top-down logic (Rolfe, 2008).

The investigators of the Laboratory of On-line Communication (www. labcom.ubi.pt), a research centre financed by FCT and that is classified as
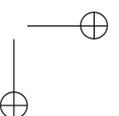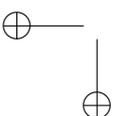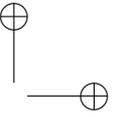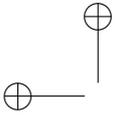
Very Good, have been studying the Internet and the Web since 2003, having published several woks about online journalism, online persuasion, blogs and online political communication.

To answer our problem we'll rely on a multi-method approach. The research will begin with an extensive literature review about the state of the art of the citizens' participation in the websites political parties. Based on that literature review, we'll do a content analysis to examine the tools and forms of citizens' participation available in the websites of the five Portuguese political parties with Parliamentary representation. This analysis will be supplemented by testing the efficacy of those tools and forms of participation, using them. To know the opinions of the main agents of the producers and users of the websites, we shall have semi-structured interviews with the leaders of the five political parties, as well as with the responsible for the management of the websites, namely to know if the citizens' participation influences the party agenda. In what refers to citizens, we shall conduct an online survey of a sample of users of the websites. These research methods and phases will allow us to know what citizens can do in the websites of the political parties, and to compare what citizens think about what they can do there with what the leaders and other responsible of the political parties think on the same matter.

As main result of the project, we'll have a deeper knowledge about the citizens' use of the tools and forms of participation offered by the websites of Portuguese political parties. This knowledge will may allow political parties to improve the relationship with citizens and, doing so, improving Portuguese democracy.

2. Literature review

Democracy is the realm not only of the Modern "negative liberty", but also of the Ancient "positive liberty" of citizen's participation in political decisions (Berlin, 1969). In modern western societies, this participation implies the existence of media, namely the press, and free speech (Tocqueville, 1835; Habermas, 1989; Serra, 2007).

Accepting Habermas' thesis that the advent of the mass media brought along a "re-feudalization" of the public sphere, some authors saw the birth of Internet as the rise of a "new public sphere" (Dahlgren & Sparks, 1997), a
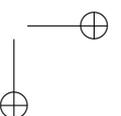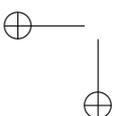
"new public space" (Ferry & Wolton, 1998). The Internet could be, in some way, the solution to the illnesses of democracy, allowing "the virtual community" (Rheingold, 1993), the "virtual democracy" (Scheer, 1994), and radical new ways of living (Dertouzos, 1997). Against these technophilic views, some critics of the "information society" saw it as the result of the ideology of communication that emerged in the post-War II (Breton & Proulx, 1991), an alleged a-political utopia (Breton, 1995) whose result would be the "cyberocracy" (Ronfeldt, 1992), or even the end of the *"lien social"* (Wolton, 1999). Bearing on this same critical perspective, other authors defended the "normalization thesis", the thesis that politics on the Internet is nothing but "politics as usual", dominated by the traditional, off-line players (Margolis & Resnick, 2000).

Whatever our perspective about the potentialities of Internet as a tool for enhancing democracy and citizens' political participation, the "new medium" has become central in the communicative strategies of political parties and candidates. In fact, according to Norris (2000), we may consider three different communication stages, namely during campaigns: Pre-modern (from the middle of the XIX century to the end of the decade of 1950), Modern (since the end of the eighties) and Post-modern (since the beginning of the decade of 1990). If the modern period political communication is dominated by television (Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999), the post-modern has seen the emergence of the Internet as a relevant, new player, contributing to transform the "mass media campaign" in a "hypermedia campaign" (Howard, 2006). In what refers to the USA, Internet begins to take a key role in the presidential campaign of 1996 (Clinton vs. Dole), whose campaign websites became a central, integrated tool (Williams, Trammell, Postelnicu, Landreville & Martin, 2005); outside USA, the move to the Internet took place more or less about the same time (Gibson, Ward & Lusoli, 2003).

In contrast with the "normalization thesis", several authors have stressed the novelty and democratic potentialities of the political parties communication on the Internet as a tool for enhancing political trust, pluralism and participation (Norris, 2003; Curtice & Norris, 2004; Gibson, Ward & Lusoli, 2003, 2005), and for the "horizontal communication" that is central in civic interaction (Dahlgren, 2005). However, one of the main conclusions of the comparative analysis that Gibson *et al.* (2003) made about the political parties' websites in the USA and in the UK was that providing information and
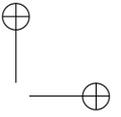
generating resources were predominant functions over promoting participation and the establishment of electronic networks inside and outside the party; and that the interactivity, when present, tended to be top-down, from the parties to the citizens. In a very similar way, Schweitzer (2005) mentioned that all studies about on-line campaigns emphasised the fact that the majority of political parties and candidates' websites privileged the informative function over the interactive and participative functions (on-line discussions, surveys, on-line petitions, etc.).

Did the Web 2.0 (O'Reilly, 2005), and the new tools it offers to citizens political participation, altered this situation? And, if that is the case, what were the main alterations? As it is generally admitted, the "political communication 2.0" began in the 2004 presidential campaign, when the candidates (e.g. Howard Dean) used the blogosphere "to raise money, mobilize volunteers, and spread their message" (Williams *et al.*, 2005), leading Williams and Tedesco (2006) to characterize this presidential campaign as the "Internet election". In 2007, Hilary Clinton and John Edwards announced their bids for the presidency of the USA on *YouTube* and through e-mail (Rolfe, 2008). However, it was in the presidential campaign of Obama, in 2008, that the Web 2.0 and its tools took a decisive role as a means for political campaigning. In fact, a report by the Pew Internet & American Life Project on this campaign indicated that the internet, email or SMS had been used by 46% of Americans to get news about the campaigns, share views and mobilize others, and – even more significant – that about one in ten Internet users had made an online donation to a candidate. According with the same report, the blogging, the involvement in social networks, and the viewing of YouTube videos had become important activities during the campaign (Smith & Rainie, 2008).

However, these and other studies don't tell us what is the degree of correspondence between citizens' expectations about their participation in the political parties' websites and the forms of participation they offer to them. They tell us mainly what are the new existing communicative possibilities (Canavilhas, 2009). In other words: do citizens get what they want when they participate in the political parties' websites? Or is that participation a mere "simulation" with persuasive – if not propagandistic – objectives?

May we conclude, with Gibson and Römmele (2008), that despite all the statements and forecasts about the potential of the Internet, "the actual impact of Web 2.0 [. . .] remains to be seen"?

Livros LabCom
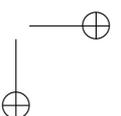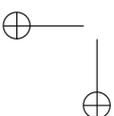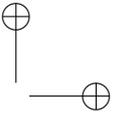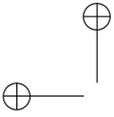
3. Research plan and methods

Starting from the central thesis of the uses and gratification theory that states that asking "what do people do with the media?" is more important than asking what do media do to the people (Katz, 1959), the problem we intend to investigate is what is the degree of correspondence between, on one side, the participation that the websites of the Portuguese political parties allow citizens and, on the other side, citizens' expectations about their participation.

In this context, and partly following Smith and Rainie (2008), we understand "participation" as the actions performed by citizens using the tools of the Internet, especially Web 2.0 (blogs, myspace, facebook, flickr, etc.), and through which they may create and share political content and get involved in social networks. Accordingly with the same authors, these two categories include activities such as: i) Political content sharing and creation: forwarding or posting someone else's political commentary or writing; signing an online petition of the political party; forwarding or posting someone else's political audio or video recordings; posting his own political commentary or writing to the political party website; creating tags for news, information, or photos about the political party; creating or posting his own political video or audio recordings; ii) Involvement in social networks: getting information about the political party; signing up as a friend of the political party; starting or joining a group supporting the political party.

However, and as shown in the literature review, if there is today a great amount of studies about the role of the websites of the political parties during electoral campaigns (for example the Obama presidential campaign), we know very little about what happens during the "normal" periods, i.e., the periods between campaigns – since campaigns, in spite of all their importance, correspond to very specific and limited periods of the life of the political parties. So, our study will focus in those "normal", between-campaigns periods.

To answer our problem, we must answer the following specific research questions:

1. What are the tools and forms of participation that the websites of Portuguese political parties provide to citizens in order they may create and share political content, and get involved in social networks? More specifically, we intend to answer questions like the next ones:
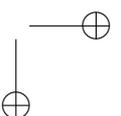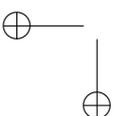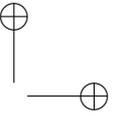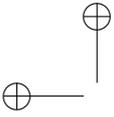
(i) What kind of contents do citizens create and share?

(ii) In what kind of communicative actions and social networks do they participate?

(iii) Does citizens' participation depend on the political-ideological orientation (right/left) of the parties?

(iv) What are the constraints and the opportunities – in what refers to tools, themes, activities, etc. – to the citizens' participation?

(v) Is citizens' participation determined by their previous, existing political attitudes (the "already convinced")?

(vi) What political attitudes and tendencies do the citizens (users) reveal about themselves through their participation?

2. What is the opinion of the leaders of Portuguese political parties and the responsible for the management of their websites about the citizens' participation in those websites? Does this participation involve any change in the political party agenda (themes, activities)?

3. What is the citizens' opinion about their own participation in the websites of the political parties? How do they evaluate that participation? Do they suggest alternative forms of participation?

Our problem, and the issues it entails, is relevant for three sets of reasons. The first is the growing importance that internet, and specially Web 2.0 environments, has on political parties' activities and strategies. The second is the fact that there is not yet a stabilized model of the websites of the political parties designed to allow the citizens' political participation. The third is that there is still a lack of knowledge about how the citizens explore the participation tools that the websites of the political parties offer them.

In what concerns the expected results, the main hypotheses that, in Popper's terms, we want to "falsify", are the following ones:

1. The citizens' participation tends to favor image based modalities of expression (videos, photos), to be predominantly supportive (not critic) of the political party, and not to depend on the political-ideological orientation of the party.

Livros LabCom
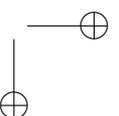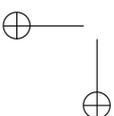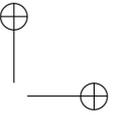
2. The leaders of the parties and the responsible for the management of their websites tend to see citizens' participation more as an instrument of delivering their own message than as a way of listening to citizens' messages.

3. The citizens expect that the websites of the political parties are more open (with less constraints) to their participation, and to have more impact on the agenda and program of the political parties.

It is impossible to test this set of hypotheses – and answer our questions – with a conventional, single method. In fact, the incorporation of the characteristics and tools of the social web – blogs, wikis, facebook, myspace, youtube, etc. – in political websites is making these more and more complex and difficult to study. They are becoming true "environments", a melting pot were one can find the convergence of all the several traditional media we knew: side by side with written word, we find speech, photographs, animation, infography, music, video; and all this can be produced, shared or manipulated by its own users – a process that is being described, in the literature, under the ambiguous name of "interactivity". The Barak Obama's site, in the past American presidential elections, offers a good example of what we're describing (www.barackobama.com/, accessed on November, 3, 2008). So, we'll use a multi-methodological approach, both quantitative and qualitative, that will allow us to cross-examine the results obtained with each method:

1. To examine what are the tools that the websites of the Portuguese political parties provide the citizens to create and share political content, and get involved in social networks (research question 1), we shall use content analysis. Based upon Gibson and Ward (2000), and Gibson, Margolis, Resnick and Ward (2003), we'll consider five main functions on the websites: Information Provision, Resource Generation, Participation, Networking Internal External and Campaign. In what specifically refers to Participation, we'll distinguish the five next levels: 1 – Simple Contact (e-mail, eventually with some kind of template); 2 – Sending Content (tools to send messages, links, videos, photos, etc.); 3 – Discussion (forums, chats, etc.); 4 – Mobilization and Volunteering (inscription to participate and/or participation in meetings, campaigns, actions, etc.); 5 – Adhesion (becoming a militant or party member). In
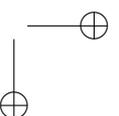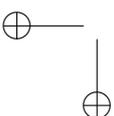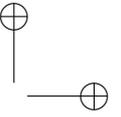
terms of the population and sample of this content analysis, we intend to examine the websites of the five Portuguese parties which have parliamentary representation (CDS-PP, PSD, PS, PCP-Verdes, BE).

2. To supplement the content analysis, we intend to verify if the tools for participation that the websites of the Portuguese political parties offer citizens are truly effective, and in what extent (for example: if we send an e-mail asking something, shall we receive an answer? And, if it is the case, how long after do we receive that answer?). So, during a semester, some of the members of the project will test those tools, using them.

3. To know the opinion of the leaders of the Portuguese political parties about the citizens' participation in their websites (research question 2) and, more specifically, if the agendas of the political parties (in what refers to themes and activities) integrate the citizens' participation on the websites – and, if so, how do they do this is this done -, we shall have semi-structured interviews with the leaders of the five political parties, as well as with and the responsible for the management of their websites (total of ten interviews). If possible, these interviews (or, at least, some of them) will be done using e-mail, Skype or video-conference.

4. To know the citizens' opinion about the citizens' participation on the websites of the Portuguese political parties, we shall rely on an Internet-based survey, using open source tools like Lime Survey (www.limesurvey.org/), addressed to a sample of five hundred Portuguese users of the political parties websites. The survey will comprehend some questions using Likert scales and some partially open questions.

5. The results of the work done in the previous phases will be summarized periodically, in meetings and conferences with the researchers and, at the end, in the Final Report of the project.

References

Berlin, I. (1969). Two concepts of liberty. In *Four essays on liberty* (pp. 118-172). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Livros LabCom
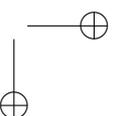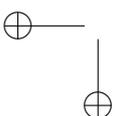
Blumler, J. G., & Kavanagh, D. (1999). The third age of political communication: Influences and features. *Political Communication*, 16 (3), 209-230.

Breton, P. (1995). *L'utopie de la communication*. Paris: La Découverte.

Breton, P. & Proulx, S. (1991). *L'explosion de la communication: La naissance d'une nouvelle idéologie*. Paris-Montréal: La Découverte-Boréal.

Canavilhas, J. (2009). A comunicação política na era da Internet. *Biblioteca Online de Ciências da Comunicação*. Retrieved from www.bocc.ubi.pt.

Curtice, J., & Norris, P. (2004). E-politics? The impact of the internet on political trust and participation. In Alison Park, John Curtice, Katarina Thomson, Catherine Bromley, & Miranda Philips (Eds.) (2004). *Britihs social attitudes: The 21st report* (pp. 99-118). London: Sage.

Dahlgren, P., & Sparks, C. (Eds.) (1997). *Communication and citizenship: Journalism and the public sphere in the new media age*. London: Routledge.

Dahlgren, P. (2005). The Internet, public spheres, and political communication: Dispersion and deliberation. *Political Communication*, 22, 147-162.

Dertouzos, M. L. (1997). *What will be: How the new world of information will change our lives*. New York: Harperedge.

Ferry, J.-M., & Wolton, D. (1998). *El nuevo espacio público*. Barcelona: Gedisa.

Gibson, R. K., & Römmele, A. (2008). Political communication. In D. Caramani (Ed.) (2008). *Comparative politics* (pp. 473-492). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gibson, R. K., Margolis, M., Resnick, D., & Ward, S. (2003). Election campaigning on the WWW in the US and UK: a comparative analysis. *Party Politics*, 9 (1), 47-75.

Gibson, R., Ward, S., & Lusoli, W. (2003). The Internet and political campaigning: The new medium comes of age? *Representation*, 39 (3), 166 – 180.
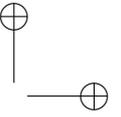
Gibson, R. K., Lusoli, W., & Ward, S. (2005). Online participation in the UK: Testing a 'contextualised' model of Internet effects. *BJPIR – British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 7, 561-583.

Habermas, J. (1989). *The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Howard, P. N. (2006). *New media campaigns and the managed citizen*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Katz, E. (1959). Mass communication research and the study of popular culture: An editorial note on a possible future for this journal. *Studies in Public Communication*, 2, 1-6.

Margolis, M., & Resnick, D. (2000). *Politics as usual: The cyberspace "revolution"*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Norris, P. (2000). *A virtuous circle? Political communications in post-industrial societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Norris, P. (2003). Preaching to the converted? Pluralism, participation and party websites. *Party Politics*, 1 (1), 21-45.

O'Reilly, T. (2005). What is Web 2.0: Design patterns and business models for the next generation of software. *O'Reilly*. Retrieved from www.oreilly-net.com.

Rheingold, H. (1993). *The virtual community: homesteading on the electronic frontier*. Reading: Addison-Wesley.

Rolfe, M. (2008). From big to little screens: Recurring images of democratic credibility and the net. *Scan Journal*, 5 (1), May 2008. Retrieved from http://scan.net.au.

Ronfeldt, D. (1992). Cyberocracy is coming. *The Information Society*, 8, 243-296.

Scheer, L. (1994). *La démocratie virtuelle*. Paris: Flammarion.
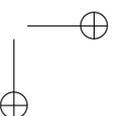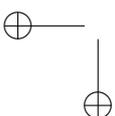
Schweitzer, E. J. (2005). Election campaigning online: German party websites in the 2002 national elections. *European Journal of Communication*, 20 (3), 327-351.

Serra, J. P. (2007). Community and mediation. *Estudos em Comunicação*, 1, 103-118.

Smith, A., & Rainie, L. (2008). *The internet and the 2008 election*. Pew Internet & American Life Project. Retrieved from www.pewinternet.org.

van Dijk, T. A. (1988). *News as discourse*. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Williams, A. P., & Tedesco, J. C. (Eds.) (2006). *The Internet election: Perspectives on the Web in campaign 2004*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Williams, A. P., Trammell, K. D., Postelnicu, M., Landreville, K. D., & Martin, J. D. (2005). Blogging and hyperlinking: Use of the Web to enhance viability during the 2004 US campaign. *Journalism Studies*, 6 (2), 177-186.

Wolton, D. (1999). *Internet et après? Une théorie critique des nouveaux médias*. Paris: Flammarion.
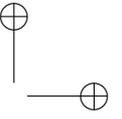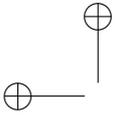
PART I
CITIZENSHIP AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION
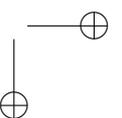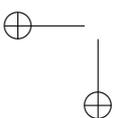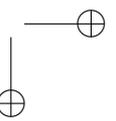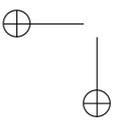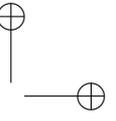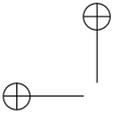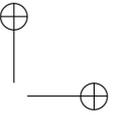
Freedom as participation in Isaiah Berlin

António Fidalgo

It is under the banner of freedom that both right and left, liberalism as socialism, justify opposing political ideologies. Isaiah Berlin shows how under the same name it is possible to harbour not only different concepts, but also distinct existential attitudes. Freedom means, in negative terms, the absence of coercion outside of thought and an individual's action. In positive terms, it is the ability to determine your own life. Freedom is also self-determination. The concept of social liberty is introduced to emphasize the social context in which freedom is exercised. Freedom is exercised among equals, between people whose ethnic, social, cultural and political status is recognized in equal value. Individual freedom is of little worth if nobody meddles with me, or if I am prohibited from participating in decisions that affect the group to which I belong. Here the degree of freedom is measured precisely by the level of public participation. Finally, in relation to plurality, diversity and incompatibility with ultimate ends, the pluralism of opinions is advocated. This diversity certainly gives rise to debate and conflict, but it is the price to pay for a free society.

1. The historical context of the essay

We lived in the midst of the cold war when Isaiah Berlin gave the inaugural conference at the University of Oxford on October 31, 1958, which served as the basis for the famous essay "Two Concepts of Liberty".[1] The United States of America and the Soviet Union divided the world into two very distinct fields, namely the capitalist world characterized by multiparty political regimes and a market economy and the socialist world characterized by single party regimes and a planned economy. The cold war meant not only a state of latent belligerence between the two fields, grouped militarily by NATO and the Warsaw Pact, but also the attempt to extend the respective zones of influence to

---

[1] The edition used is Berlin, 1997, where this essay is also included, pages 191-242.
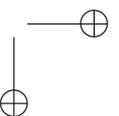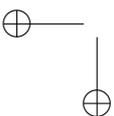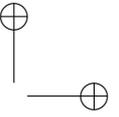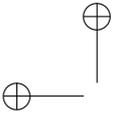
the rest of the world, in particular the new member states emerging from the ongoing decolonization process in the so called third world. The supremacy that each field searched for was not only of a military and political nature, but also technological and ideological. The launch of the Sputnik satellite by the Soviets on October 4, 1957, marked not only the beginning of the space era, but was also a valuable asset in scientific and technological competition with the regimes of bourgeois democracies. While bourgeois regimes privileged the technologies that served the market, especially consumer goods, the socialist regimes were betting on technology as a field of collective assertion, particularly in defence technologies.

But the cold war was also characterized by an ideological fight. As long as the west called upon freedom as a visible sign of its civilizational superiority over socialism, namely in the multiparty, freedom of speech and freedom of movement, the eastern European countries denounced these freedoms as prerogatives of those who had economic conditions to enjoy them. These were formal freedoms that had not taken into account the many, through economic and cultural shortcomings, that would not be able to enjoy them effectively. Socialist criticism on the little value of individual freedoms came from social and economic inequalities that existed in bourgeois societies which rendered the exercise and enjoyment of these freedoms as a privilege of a rich minority at the expense of the great majority who were poor. Furthermore, favouring these individual freedoms could only give rise to more social and economic inequalities. Real freedoms, according to the doctrine followed in socialist countries, had to have material, economic and cultural support in society so that they could be enjoyed by all and not just by some.

More than the individual dimension of freedom, specific to western democracies, socialist regimes privileged the collective dimension of freedom as the self-determination of peoples. This concept of freedom was especially attractive for the peoples of the third world who were struggling for self-determination and independence. In fact, the end of European decolonization in the southern hemisphere, Africa and Asia, meant the alignment of many young countries with the guidelines of internal and external policies advocated by socialist regimes in Eastern Europe.

Isaiah Berlin's purpose at this conference is then to clarify two meanings of freedom which were in some way confused in the cold war: the negative meaning as an absence of interference of a desire alien to the individual,
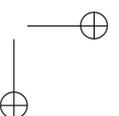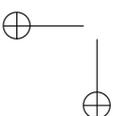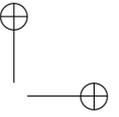
and the positive meaning understood as the capacity to act independently and spontaneously about one's destiny. This action is always made in context and hence Isaiah Berlin's introduction to the concept of social freedom. In this sense, the individual is free as a participant in his own destiny, both at the individual level and at the level of the communities to which he belongs.

2. The negativity of freedom

In liberal tradition the individual is free when there is no outside coercion that prevents him from acting willingly. He will have more freedom if there is less outside interference in his field of action. In this sense, total freedom would be a total absence of restrictions by others to do and say everything that he sees fit and that is within reach of his capabilities. By itself, the physical or intellectual disabilities of an individual dictated by nature cannot be considered as restrictions on their freedom. No person will consider an individual as not free for the simple fact of not being able to jump as high as he desires or because he cannot understand a complex mathematical theorem. The limits of negative and individual freedom are deliberately placed by other individuals. From this point of view, the absolute monarch enjoys the highest degree of freedom. With no one being able to put any type of restriction on their action, their freedom would be unlimited.

The problem associated to this concept of freedom is the impossibility of the coexistence of unlimited freedoms. The holder of an unlimited freedom would necessarily restrict the freedom of others. The greater the freedom of one, the lesser the freedom of others. On the other hand, freedom is not the only value that controls social harmony. There are other values such as justice, happiness, culture and equity, which may come into conflict with individual freedom and require that this must be exercised within certain limits, imposed by pre-defined rules.

Thus, there has to be rules that clarify the degree of freedom of each person, precisely in order to safeguard the freedom of others. The problem that arises here is who establishes those rules and who imposes them. One of the criticisms that Berlin makes to J. S. Mill's formulation concerns the origin of the delimitation of individual freedom. For Mill what mattered was the radius of action that those rules would leave the individual, no matter what the source
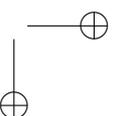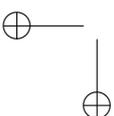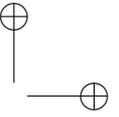
of control, that is, the type of instance to whom it would be appropriate to ensure compliance with the rules of confinement of individual freedoms. Isaiah Berlin draws attention to the fact that there are autocracies that give greater freedom to individuals than certain types of democracy. In fact, the power of the majority can lead to a higher restriction of the freedom of individuals and minorities than the power of an illuminated despot with a liberal character. At this point and following Mill's theory of freedom, centred on freedom as a space of non-interference on the individual's action, freedom is not related to democracy or self-determination. Now, there is a clear difference in the questions and respective answers about "Who governs me?" and "To which extent does the government interfere in my life?" From a radically liberal point of view, the first question is irrelevant. But if this issue is relevant, if we want to have a say about the government and participate in the decision-making process, then we have reached a conception that is different from freedom. It is a positive conception that may be so deeply rooted in human nature as freedom is in a negative direction. In addition to freedom as non-interference, there is freedom understood as a form of option by a certain way of life. Berlin (1997: p. 203) sees in this difference the origin of "the clash of ideologies that dominate our world", alluding most certainly to the ideologies underlying the clashing social and political models during the cold war.

3. Freedom as self-determination

The positive concept of freedom expresses itself in the desire of the individual to be his own lord, to decide about himself and the type of life he wants to lead and about the actions that he wants to practice. In this sense, the individual is assumed as a rational being capable of establishing goals to attain, to fight for them, in short, to be a subject and not an object. The distinguishing feature in this positive characterization of freedom is rationality. Free is he who is capable to think, that ponders, makes choices and acts in accordance with them and assumes the responsibilities arising from his decision.

Isaiah Berlin noted that at first sight there isn't much that distinguishes the two concepts of freedom, the right to self-determination and the absence of interference beyond the individual choices of each person. However, the distinction becomes clearer as the two have historically diverged from each
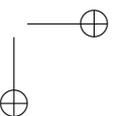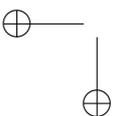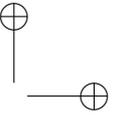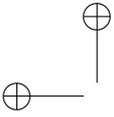
other until they came into conflict. What drives this divergence is the eminently rational character of the positive concept of freedom and the concrete forms in which that rationality was assumed.

Being the lord of oneself can also mean, in addition to not being anyone's slave or servant, being the lord of your own nature and respective passions. An individual can be politically and socially free, but may not be morally and intellectually free. He may be a slave to himself, of his instincts, passions and prejudices. It is in such cases that being free or a slave depends on the part of oneself that leads one to act. Freedom here means the domain of reason and the subjection of their own passions, i.e. the rational conduct of life.

The problem of freedom as rationality thickens when the rational part of the self is identified as a supra-individual entity, a social whole of which the individual is a part, be that entity a tribe, the State or the Church. In fact, it is often the case that the whole of society is obliged to intervene in the life of the individual for his own good, a good that he himself would choose if he had been more enlightened and less subject to the influence of inclinations and passions. The requirement to use the safety belt in the car or the prohibition of smoking in enclosed public places is made on behalf of their own interests and, as such, these are rational measures that are understood as limits to freedom by individuals who are less enlightened. If all behaved in a rational way these legal constraints would be superfluous. But if there is a need for them it is because there are individuals who are not rational enough and therefore have not yet reached the necessary degree of control over themselves in order to be truly free.

This division of man into two parts, the rational part and the instinctive part, as well as the identification of the rational part with an entity that is superior to the individual, leads to the paradox of positive freedom meaning imposition. In fact, when those entities, for example, the nation, class, State or Church, arrogate a knowledge of the real interests of citizens, of what is best for them, then they are in perfect condition to forcibly impose over them the pursuit of those interests. Such interests may be of various types: happiness, wisdom, social justice, or self-realization. But, they are always taken as objectives that an enlightened individual freedom would never cease to aspire. The imposition is justified precisely because there are individuals who, subjugated by passions or by petty and selfish interests, or alienated by misleading
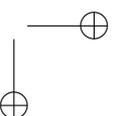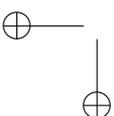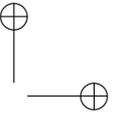
conceptions about their real interests, are not capable of exercising their true freedom and opt for that which is rationally of their own interest.

Berlin makes a crucial distinction on this paradox of positive freedom as an imposition. It is one thing to say that an individual is coerced for his own good, because he, for any circumstance or reason, is unable to see that good. It is another thing to say that, given that we are dealing with the individual's own welfare, this is not a real constraint, because the individual himself would make that option if he were dully clarified and free of any prejudices.

The paradox of the positive concept of freedom is based on the division of personality: on one side there is the rational part that is transcending and controlling, and on the other side the empirical set of desires and passions that first have to be disciplined. That is, in essence there is a substrate of ideas about man and personal identity in this conception of freedom. Thus, it is not difficult to manipulate the concept of positive freedom as long as those related concepts can be handled.

4. Liberation by reason

One of the most relevant points from Isaiah Berlin's essay is the exploitation of liberal roots which nourished modern totalitarian regimes, especially since the Enlightenment. In fact, the dream of the perfect society, in which all men could develop the higher potentials of his being in a full self-realization of himself, without ties or outside meddling, not only historically gave origin to despotism from the 19th and 20th centuries, but it also showed, in principle, that it would result in an authoritarian regime, which even under the tutelage of a good and wise Sarastro would still be despotism.

The idea that knowledge liberates, that recognizing the laws of nature as necessary laws is a liberating act of ignorance and superstition, leads to the understanding that the same should occur in the social and political sphere. A child may not understand why he is forced to go to school, but we do not say that their freedom is being called into question because of this obligation. On the contrary, we say that it is precisely their literacy and scientific training that helps them become more rational, more aware of themselves and the world around them, and thus become a more conscious citizen who is more responsible and free. In other words, it is not only the physical universe that
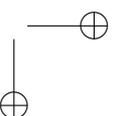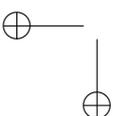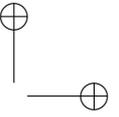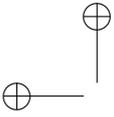
is governed by rules, but also human life in its many facets. Knowing these rules, accepting them and acting accordingly is the way to the individual's liberation. In practice, the path to liberation lies in education.

This is why the educational process of a people is of utmost importance in societies that claim rationality and science as their foundation. It is up to the social whole embodied in the figure of the State that has the task of imposing the universalization and standardization of education. Just as in the individual, the rational part has to impose itself over instincts and irrational passions. Thus, in society as well, the more enlightened elements should impose rationalization – precisely through education – over the elements trapped in the meshes of irrationality. Hegel, Fichte, Comte, are quoted by Berlin as thinkers that establish the modern thought that legitimized the defenders of public authority over the training of individuals, ranging from the strict schoolmasters of the Victorian era and colonial administrators up to nationalist and communist dictators. This is based on the assumption that only with liberal knowledge have dictatorships exerted the greatest oppression under the banner of educating people and the reeducation of recalcitrant people.

Berlin questions how it was possible that the liberal and individualistic principles from the Enlightenment could lead to despotism from collective regimes. Could it be that the error is in the assumption of the argument? The argument is structured in the following manner: all individuals have as their sole aim their own rational determination, i.e. to be masters of their own destiny and to be able to decide on their life; the goals of rational beings have to fit into a universal and harmonious standard that will be more perceptive and understandable to some than to others; the origin of conflicts and of consequent tragedies is due to the impact of reason with irrationality or the insufficiency of rationality, but these conflicts can be avoided and it is even impossible for them to arise between rational individuals who are fully enlightened; and, finally, when all men are rational, then they will all obey the rational laws of nature, which is the same for all, and will therefore be, simultaneously, full law-abiding citizens and completely free. The question that arises in relation to the soundness of the argument is that at its base there could be an error that dates back to the origins of western Socratic thought, namely the identification of virtue and knowledge and within that identification we would also include freedom.
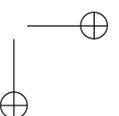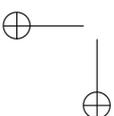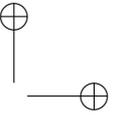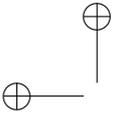
5. Social freedom

Before attempting to solve the paradox of positive freedom through the clarification of the relationship between virtue, rationality and freedom, Berlin approaches the problem from a new angle: that of the concept of the "individual". The notion of individual used by liberal thinkers in the 18th and 19th centuries is of an abstract, rootless individual who has no ethnic, social or cultural ties. However, the identity of an individual is something extremely complex that goes far beyond their individual rationality. Each individual depends on others and what he is as an individual and makes him unique also results from social, cultural, religious and political factors that in some way transcend him. The identity includes belonging to a people, a society, a religion, a nationality, even to a collectivity.

The lack of freedom that many complain about often consists of the absence of due recognition within the group or of the group itself in comparison to other, broader entities. Many complain about not the interference to which they are subject, nor about coercion, arbitrary arrest or tyranny, or even of the lack of a personal plan for self-realization, but of the lack of recognition by their peers. What afflicts many people is being ignored, despised, or suffering indifference from others around them. Here, freedom arises as recognition or social status.

And what is worth at the individual level also holds true for groups, whatever type they may be. What oppressed classes and nationalities claim is not simply a freedom of action for their members, nor social equality or economic opportunity, but recognition of their status as a class or nationality and, therefore, as an independent source of activity, that is, as recognition of themselves as an autonomous entity in itself that does not want to be governed, educated or guided by others.

Kant's affirmation that paternalism is the largest despotism imaginable gains here a much wider sense than is usual. Not because it is more brutal than an obtuse tyranny, but because it is a denial of my own conception of a human being that is autonomous and determined to live according to his own goals and, above all, it is a denial of my right to be recognized as such by others. I am determined to a large extent by that which I myself feel and think and this, in turn, is determined by the dominant feeling and thought of the society to which I belong. I can feel wounded in my freedom not only
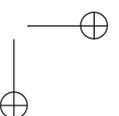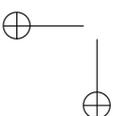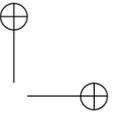
for not being recognized as an autonomous subject, but also by the fact that I am a member of a group that does not receive due recognition. If this is the case, then I want my group (class, community, nation, race or profession) to become emancipated and free itself from a lower status. And that desire may be so great as to justify the preference for being oppressed or poorly governed by members of my group, my ethnicity or social class, for those whom, in spite of everything, I am recognized as an equal or a rival, than to be well and tolerantly ruled by someone belonging to a higher or remote group, but that does not recognize me as his equal.

It is precisely this desire for recognition by both individuals and groups that often leads to a preference for suffering at the hand of members of their own community as opposed to living peacefully under the tutelage of a foreign authority. Even if they do not respect my negative freedom, they are members of my community, they understand me as I understand them, and it is this mutual understanding that makes me feel as someone in the world. The reason why the nationals of a newly decolonized country in Africa or Asia complain less about incompetence, arbitrariness and despotisms from their own government than fair and competent governance from external administrations is based on the fact that it is "my people" who govern and not others.

Isaiah Berlin introduces the problematic concept of social freedom to designate this desire for recognition and status that individually and collectively controls human action. Truly this is neither a negative freedom, nor a positive freedom, although it includes the group's negative freedom. Social freedom is more of a necessity for association between equals, related to solidarity and fraternity. While the essence of positive or negative freedom resides in independence from others, who may invade my field of action, social freedom as a desire for recognition has its foundation in the hope of a union, a greater understanding, an integration of interests, of a life of dependence and common sacrifice.

One may contest that this desire for recognition is not exactly freedom. However, it is indisputable that there are people willing to sacrifice themselves, and to sacrifice their own freedom, in favour of their group's status, and they do so not on behalf of safety or any other value, but in the name of freedom for the group. The notion of social freedom expresses the desire that individuals have to see their group affirm itself in relation to other groups. In
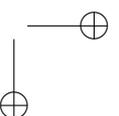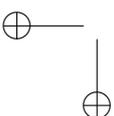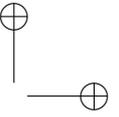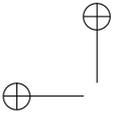
other words, to be a group that develops its own potential independently and that determines its mode of life and action against persons or entities considered extraneous to the group.

There is certainly a close relationship between the desire for social freedom by individuals and the question about the source of authority. This is not only about determining the district in which the authority is exercised, but also about those who exercise that authority. The possible responses to the question who, namely "the legitimately elected representatives", "the wisest men", "the leader", are both from a logical as well as social and political point of view, independent from the question about negative liberty. If the answer to the question is that those who govern me are one of mine, an entity to which I belong, then it is possible to see this not just as an act of solidarity and brotherhood, but also as a form of positive freedom, a "hybrid" form of freedom. The wars for liberation are fought in the name of this social freedom. From the outset, liberation is an achievement of independence, that is, removal of outside meddling and the winning of your own space for collective action (negative freedom). However, it is also self-determination of your own destiny, obtaining recognition from other groups as a specific entity of equal dignity.

6. Sovereignty and participation

It is not enough for the individual to be master of himself. He also wants to have a say in how the group to which he belongs is self-governed. Popular revolutions are not waged, in the majority of cases, on behalf of individual freedoms, but rather in the name of the sovereignty of a people, i.e., on behalf of the participation of all in directing the government.

The history of contemporary politics, initiated by American and French revolutions at the end of the 18th century, is mainly formed by two simultaneous battles: the struggle for the democratization of universal power, i.e. the participation of all in the determination of collective life, and the struggle for self-determination and independence of different peoples. The formation of many states along the 19th and 20th centuries, first in Europe and in Latin America, and then in Asia and in Africa, results from that double movement for the emancipation of individuals and peoples. If, on the one hand, the uni-

versalization of power at the individual level is established, then on the other hand, the power is particularized at the level of the peoples. However, in either case, it is on behalf of the participation of each and every one in the determination of collective life.
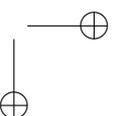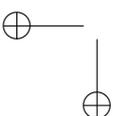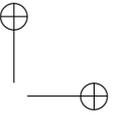
The merit and the strength of the essay "Two Concepts of Liberty" is in fact to elucidate on the centre of the dispute between capitalism and socialism in relation to respective claims for freedom. In fact, the confrontation between capitalism and socialism lies in the very notion of freedom, not as two interpretations of the same principle, but rather as two radically different, "divergent and irreconcilable", positions on the meaning of life. A liberal thinker like Isaiah Berlin saw that socialism also legitimately claims the status of a policy of freedom. The socialist ideal lies in the individual's commitment during the fight, including the sacrifice of his own freedom, for the freedom of the group, social class, people, nation or State to which he belongs. His goal consists in freeing his group of any domination that he is subject to in order to be able to autonomously determine his destination as a group.

The problem of the socialist ideal of freedom is that the sovereignty longed for can lead and often resulted in a popular tyranny in which individual freedoms are trampled upon. Worse still is that dictatorships of deception and illusion come into being in the name of popular sovereignty. "The triumph of despotism is to force the slaves to declare themselves free. It may need no force; the slaves may proclaim their freedom quite sincerely: but they are none the less slaves" (p. 236). The advantage of liberalism over socialism lies in the assumption that there is no single formula to unify all of man's goals into a perfect harmony. Liberalism gives way to variety, diversity and incompatibility of objectives for which men legitimately propose. No one has a miraculous recipe to subsume the multiplicity of desires and goals into a single purpose that is good for all. While socialism is founded on the stern belief of the goals to achieve – a conviction that is much stronger when done in the name of the group at the expense of their own personal interests – justifying, therefore, that the private interests be submitted to the ultimate goal, and in which all legitimate interests find their last satisfaction, liberalism assumes that it is impossible to harmonize the many legitimate interests of men, that human life is made of choices between equally valid but disparate and incompatible ends. That is, liberalism endorses a certain scepticism about options
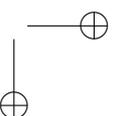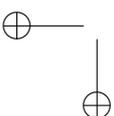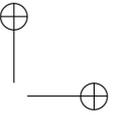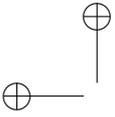
taken and those to be taken, a scepticism that is more in line with the pluralism and freedom of different opinions.

References

Berlin, I. (1997). *The proper study of mankind. An anthology of essays.* London. Chatto and Windus.
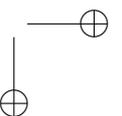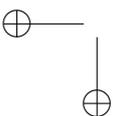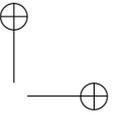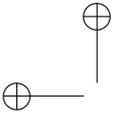
From brochureware to 'MyBo': an overview of online elections and campaigning

Rachel Gibson

Introduction[1]

The study of online campaigning occupies a small but increasingly important area of study for political science. Sitting at the intersection of the political communication, election campaigning and party change literatures it raises some new and provocative questions about whether modern-day electioneering is becoming a more participatory and grass-roots affair, and whether use of digital tools can actually affect the outcome of a race. In this short overview we aim to profile some of the key debates and findings that have emerged in relation to these and other questions posed in the literature. Specifically, we break our review down into three core areas: those studies that have focused on the "what" or contents of online campaigns; those that have examined the question of "why" in terms of explaining the adoption of the new digital tools; and finally those that examined the "so what" question, looking at voter effects. To a degree these focuses have also proceeded in a chronological fashion. Starting in the latter part of the 1990s, scholars in the US and UK began with a close examination of campaign websites in national elections, identifying a range of core functions that parties were transferring into cyberspace and comparing them on the performance of these functions. Soon afterwards, research expanded to focus on more causal questions of uptake and impact, shifting the lens down to online campaigning at the local level. Who was using the new digital tools, and more importantly perhaps, were they gaining any electoral benefits from doing so? Below we review these three areas of academic study and profile their key conclusions. Finally, we articulate some considerations for future studies of Internet campaigning to take into account.

---

[1] This article has originally been published at *Politics*, 2012, vol 32(2), 77–84.
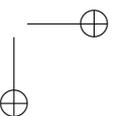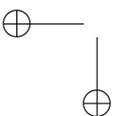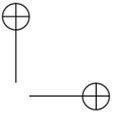
Online campaigning: content, style and organization

As noted, early studies of online campaigning tended to focus on more descriptive questions and sought to profile what the parties were doing with their websites. A series of key functions including information provision, participation, networking and resource generation were identified and measured with indices that mapped the presence of certain content items such as chat rooms, e-mail and online donation facilities (Gibson and Ward, 1998 and 2000). Beyond this practical goal, however, scholars were driven by a more analytical aim which has recurred across studies of the topic to date. Broadly summed up, this is the question of "normalisation vs. equalisation". Is the Internet an essentially levelling communication tool in that it elevates the profile of the smaller and more marginalized players in the political system? Or one that simply reinforces existing power and participatory biases? (Margolis and Resnick, 2000) Based on the findings of website contents and delivery it was possible to draw some tentative conclusions about the extent to which the Internet might offer a more level playing field than existing mainstream media outlets.Studies took place in a wide range of democratic contexts, moving outside the UK and US to a wide range of other European contexts including Germany, the Netherlands and France, Southern European and Scandinavian countries and down under to New Zealand and Australia. While cross-national differences emerged in timing of adoption and overall enthusiasm for online campaigning, conclusions were broadly similar in terms of failing to conclude any dramatic power redistribution taking place. The larger parties were seen as dominating their smaller and fringe counterparts in terms of richness in content and overall style and site design.

Within this picture a couple of interesting sub-trends of note emerged: first, that in between elections the differences between parties reduced somewhat. Rather than suggesting a "catch up" by the smaller parties, however, this was actually more the result of the major parties taking a more laissez-faire attitude to their web presence. Elections, therefore, appeared to act as a catalyst to this normalising trend. Second, and in contrast to this overall theme of "politics as usual", some exceptions to this rule were noted among individual parties. Green parties and those on the far right were generally seen as gaining some significant advantages from the use of the technology, primarily
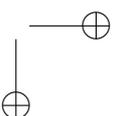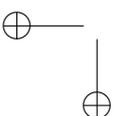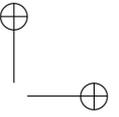
in terms of building up a virtual infrastructure and intensifying communication with and between activists.

More recent developments in the use of social media tools in the US and beyond have served to reopen the debate about whether the Internet can provide a more prominent platform for less well-known candidates and parties. The move towards the use of Web 2.0 applications such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter in elections opens up new possibilities for more interactive communication between party elites and voters, and more significantly perhaps between voters themselves to promote and organise on behalf of their preferred party. The use of these "free" third party platforms to organise and co-ordinate supporters and activists arguably extends the reach of smaller parties to disseminate their message and mobilise resources. Notably, evidence from Australia examining trends in web campaigning over time by minor and major party candidates confirms that it is the former that are more actively exploiting the Web 2.0 or social media channels by 2010, while candidates from the bigger parties continue to focus on building their own independent web presence (Gibson and McAllister, 2011b).

Taking this a step further, some parties and candidates have developed their own activist hub centres online (e.g. Obama's MyBO.com and the UK Conservative party's MyConservatives.com) where members and supporters are provided with the opportunity to canvass, fund-raise and raise awareness of the policy agenda. Again, while this appears to be the preserve of the larger well-resourced actors, these moves towards online activist mobilisation via the Net signal the potential for a deeper structural change in parties' campaign and wider overall organisation. As Manuel Castells (2009, p. 366) has pointed out in his recent analysis of the Obama 2008 presidential campaign, a crucial and unique element of his success was the way he transferred the "time-tested" principles of community organising in America into the online environment – creating the first networked campaign. Although on the one hand this new model of organisation further centralised fund-raising efforts, it also devolved considerable tactical authority at the local level to a vast "army" of volunteers, who operated outside formal structures. Building on and lending support to such arguments outside the political sphere is the work of Clay Shirky (2008), who in his publicised recent book *Here Comes Everybody* – subtitled *The Power of Organizing without Organizations* – talked of the "flattening" effects of the Net on traditional hierarchies and how it gave
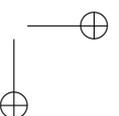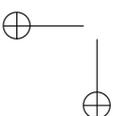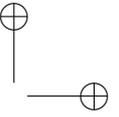
ordinary people the opportunity to challenge the monopoly of cultural institutions such as the Catholic Church and traditional media organisations such as the BBC.

In the political domain, the "reprogramming" efforts of Obama, as Castells notes, was of course prefigured by the efforts of another Democrat presidential contender, Howard Dean in 2004, who successfully exploited the "Meetup.com" website to establish a loose national organisational infrastructure. The incorporation and deployment of these "social networking technologies", or SNTs as David Iozzi and Lance Bennett (2005) term them, challenge the formal hierarchies of control that have typified campaign management within the US and more party-centred systems like the UK, moving them towards a more "decentralised network" model that gives supporters partial control over campaign messages. Campaigns are turned into a "space", as Andrew Chadwick (2007) put it, where loose collections of supporters with disparate interests gather. Taking the argument one step further, he suggests that adoption of these new techniques or digital repertoires may be transforming the nature of political organisations more generally, with parties and interest groups converging on the looser social movement-inspired model of collective action (Bennett, 2003; Chadwick, 2007).

Countering these expectations for organisational decentralisation and fragmentation, however, there are of course those who claim a "darker" side to the Internet's impact, in terms of the power it cedes to elites for censoring, surveillance and propaganda (Morozov, 2011). In the campaigns context one needs to consider the arguments of Philip Howard (2006) who conducted an in-depth analysis of US campaign elites' adaptation to new media technologies and identified a set of centralising tendencies as emerging. Essentially the move of campaigns to adopt the Internet, he concluded, was enhancing the powers of "hypermedia" consultants to conduct surveillance, data mining and targeting of voters, a trend not likely to promote higher levels of internal party democracy. The future direction of travel for party organisations – towards a more "managed" data-driven process or a more open "self-seeding" model in which supporters use social media tools to run campaigns at the local level – is not as yet clear. As parties continue to struggle to maintain their membership bases, however, incentives to employ the "outsourced" supporter-led approaches are likely to increase. The extent to which this new type of e-enabled campaign activism reshapes the role and profile of members, and traditional
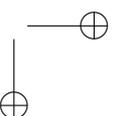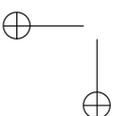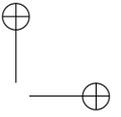
practices in terms of meetings and financing, is clearly one for future research to follow up.

Causes and consequences of online campaigning

Aside from questions about content of web campaigns and the implications for levels of inter-party competition, the study of the topic has widened and sharpened its lens to examine questions about causality both prior and posterior to the process: first, understanding the drivers behind the shift to online campaigning – who is engaging in it? And second, what is its impact for voters?

Uptake

The systematic study of uptake of online campaigning at the local level among candidates in a range of national contexts including the US, the UK, Germany, Finland, Ireland and Australia has shown that a variety of factors appear to be driving the phenomenon (Carlson, 2006; Gibson and McAllister, 2006; Gibson, Nixon and Ward, 2003; Herrnson, Stokes-Brown and Hindman, 2007; Klotz, 1997; Rackaway, 2007; Strandberg, 2009; Sudulich and Wall, 2010; Zittel, 2009). Chief among them has been party size, with the major parties generally fighting the most widespread online battle. The rise of Web 2.0 technologies and new external platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs that are "free to air" and dramatically increase possibilities for viral messaging, however, are seen as challenging this. Other variables deemed to be important have been largely contextual and relate to the competitiveness of the race. At the individual level, while some disagreement has emerged as to whether incumbents or challengers are most likely to establish a site, there has been little evidence of a digital divide, particularly on the grounds of gender. Age has been shown to matter but more in terms of cohort than overall age, with Thomas Zittel (2009) finding those born after 1965 being much more likely to adopt a website for campaigning than those born before. Finally, given the growth in the numbers of candidates running a web campaign, analysis of the 2008 Irish online election found support for a "domino" effect with the
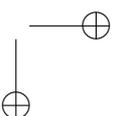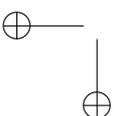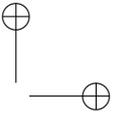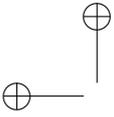
likelihood of having an election website being significantly increased if one's opponents did.

Mobilisation and effects of online campaigning on voters

Turning finally to voter effects, the evidence to date is rather more limited than that addressing the previous two questions; however, what has been done tells a surprisingly strong and consistent story of effects. Net of a range of other factors such as resources, party support and mainstream media exposure, a web campaign site is consistently and significantly linked to higher electoral support levels. One of the earliest studies of this question examined the variance in the success of candidates in the 1996 US Congressional elections and concluded that those who campaigned online enjoyed a significantly higher vote total, net of party affiliation and incumbency advantage (D'Alessio, 1997). This work was followed by more in-depth survey analysis of voter responses to websites in US presidential and state-level elections by Bruce Bimber and Richard Davis (2003). The authors did not find strong evidence of mobilisation effects, however. Subsequent work by Rachel Gibson and Ian McAllister (2006 and 2011a) on candidate aggregate vote shares in Australian elections and by Maria Laura Sudulich and Matthew Wall (2010) on Irish online electioneering using an extensive range of controls supported the D'Alessio conclusions, finding a strong and consistent association between website presence and a higher vote share.[2] While systematic study of the impact of the Obama campaign has not as yet been produced, survey evidence from the Dean Meetups has been analysed to show that their online outreach efforts did attract political novices and the "non-usual suspects" (Williams, Weinberg and Gordon, 2004). Assessing the evidence Matthew Hindman (2005, p. 126) concludes that at least the volunteer corps that the Dean team recruited "would have been significantly smaller" had they not had access to the Internet, as would the total funds raised.

---

[2]It is noted that Bimber and Davis's (2003) analysis of the 2000 election cycle using survey data found little evidence that candidates' e-campaigns were able to convert undecided voters to their cause.
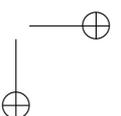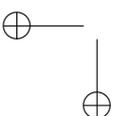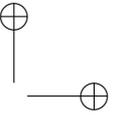
In explaining how the Internet may be mobilising voters, authors are somewhat sceptical of any direct effects occurring; that is, the candidate's website alone has moved those viewing it to go out and vote for the candidate. While this is a view based on the logic of self-selection that drives attention to campaign websites, it is underscored by the sheer facts about the size of the audience for such sites. While again the data are not widely available, the statistics on numbers accessing campaign material show that it is very much a minority activity. Even in the 2007 French presidential elections, for example, an event where the two main candidates waged high-profile online campaigns, only around one in five Internet users were reported to have accessed election sites (Vacari, 2008; Vedel and Michalska, 2007). Parliamentary elections elsewhere in Australia (2007) and the UK (2005) have pulled in much smaller audiences, with studies reporting around 3 per cent of voters to have accessed party or candidate sites (Gibson and McAllister, 2011a; Lusoli and Ward, 2005). In addition to this more specific evidence of campaign site audiences, most studies of online participation have proven highly cautious in assuming that it is bringing in a sizeable body of new or previously disengaged individuals (Anduiza et al., 2008; Bimber, 2001; Bimber and Davis, 2003; Davis, 1999; De Zuniga, Puig-l-Abril and Rojas, 2009; Gibson, Lusoli and Ward, 2005; Jensen, Danziger and Venkatesh, 2006; Krueger, 2002; Lupia and Philpot, 2005; Mossberger, Tolbert and McNeil, 2007; Moy et al., 2005; Norris, 2001; 2003; Quintelier and Vissers, 2008; Stanley and Weare, 2004).

Failing to find support for direct effects, speculation has turned to the more plausible idea of mediating factors that might account for the apparent impact of these sites, as well as possible methodological limitations of their studies. On the latter front, it is argued that a web campaign may be a proxy for a more intangible candidate or campaign staff quality or outlook that is not captured in the models so far tested. In terms of indirect effects and whether intervening variables may be at work here, a particularly intriguing explanation that has emerged from recent work within the UK and also Belgium is the possibility of an indirect or a two-step mobilisation effect whereby campaign sites activate the activists who then mobilise others in their offline networks (Norris and Curtice, 2008; Vissers, 2009). Certainly this seemed to be the lesson learned from the Dean campaign as the accounts referenced earlier attest. Here the lesson for parties and candidates would seem to be that web outreach efforts are best conceived of as resources for a committed base of activists/supporters
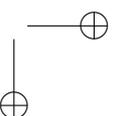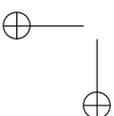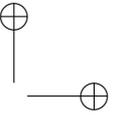
to go on and spread the word rather than to reach the wider electorate directly. The effect, as Sara Vissers (2009) has neatly summarised it, is campaigners "preaching through", rather than to, the converted.

While for the candidates the verdict at the ballot box undoubtedly remains the most important measure of any web campaign effects, from an academic perspective these studies suggest the need for a broadening of conceptual and empirical models of electoral outcomes and campaign effects. The use of Web 2.0 tools by campaigns and voters now means that the most significant and widespread changes in voters' outlooks and activities may be taking place well in advance of election day. The socially embedded and "always on" nature of new campaign technologies such as Facebook and Twitter mean that the "reach" of the campaign message may far exceed that taking place in the officially sponsored "old" media channels and may engage a new body of potential participants in a much more personalised manner. The receipt or sending of political jokes via e-mail or mobile phone, reading or posting to a blog or advertising support for a candidate or political cause on one's social networking profile constitute small but potentially meaningful new political acts that may energise the previously inactive (Shifman, Coleman andWard, 2007). Such developments may then require an expansion of traditional political science approaches and models for understanding voter behaviour.

References

Anduiza, E., Gallego, A., Cantijoch and San Martin, J. (2008). "Online Resources, Political Participation and Equality", Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, 28-31 August.

Bennett, L. (2003). Communicating Global Activism: Strengths and Vulnerabilities of Networked Politics. *Information, Communication and Society*, 6(2), pp. 143-168.

Bimber, B. (2001). Information and Political Engagement in America. *Political Research Quarterly*, 54(1), pp. 53–68.

Bimber, B. and Davis, R. (2003). *Campaigning Online: The Internet in US Elections*. New York: Oxford University Press.
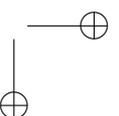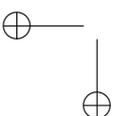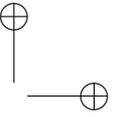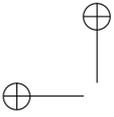
Carlson, T. (2006). 'It's a Man's World?' Male and Female Election Campaigning on the Internet. *Journal of Political Marketing*, 6 (1), pp. 41-67.

Castells, M. (2009). *Communication Power*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Chadwick, A. (2007). Digital Network Repertoires and Organizational Hybridity. *Political Communication*, 24, pp. 283-301.

D'Alessio, D.W. (1997). Use of the Web in the 1996 US Election. *Electoral Studies*, 16(4), pp. 489-501.

Davis, R. (1999). *The Web of Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

De Zuniga, H.G., Puig-l-Abril, E. and Rojas, H. (2009). Weblogs, Traditional Sources Online and Political Participation: An Assessment of how the Internet is Changing the Political Environment. *New Media and Society*, 11(4), pp. 553-574.

Gibson, R.K., Lusoli, W. and Ward, S.J. (2005). Online Participation in the UK: Testing a Contextualised Model of Internet Effects. *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 7(4), pp. 561-583.

Gibson, R., Nixon, P. and Ward, S. (eds.) (2003). *Net Gain? Political Parties and the Internet*. London: Routledge.

Gibson, R.K. and McAllister, I. (2006). Does Cybercampaigning Win Votes? Online Political Communication in the 2004 Australian Election. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, 16(3), pp. 243-264.

Gibson, R.K. and McAllister, I. (2011a). Do Online Election Campaigns Win Voters: The 2007 Australian "YouTube" Election. *Political Communication*, 28(2), pp. 227-244.

Gibson, R.K. and McAllister, I. (2011b). 'A Net Gain? The Electoral Benefits of Web 2.0 Campaigning in the Australian 2010 Federal Election', Paper presented at the 2011 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association. Seattle, WA.
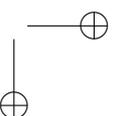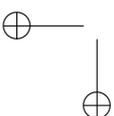
Gibson, R.K. and Ward, S.J. (1998). UK Political Parties and the Internet: Politics as Usual in the New Media?. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 3(3), pp. 14-38.

Gibson, R.K. and Ward, S. (2000). A Proposed Methodology for Measuring the Function and Effectiveness of Political Web-Sites. *Social Science Computer Review*, 18(3), pp. 301-319.

Herrnson, S., Stokes-Brown, A.K. and Hindman, M.(2007). Campaign Politics and the Digital Divide: Constituency Characteristics, Strategic Considerations, and Candidate Internet Use in State Legislative Elections. *Political Research Quarterly*, 60, pp. 31-42.

Hindman, M. (2005). The Real Lessons of Howard Dean: Reflections on the First Digital Campaign. *Perspectives on Politics*, 3(1), pp. 121-128.

Howard, P.N. (2006). *New Media Campaigns and the Managed Citizen*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Iozzi, D. and Bennett, L. (2005). Crossing the Campaign Divide: Dean Changes the Election Game. In K. Jagoda (ed.), *Crossing the River: The Coming of Age of the Internet in Politics and Advocacy*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Corporation.

Jensen, M.J., Danziger, J. and Venkatesh, A. (2006). Civil Society and Cyber Society: The Role of the Internet in Community Associations and Democratic Politics. *The Information Society*, 23(1), pp. 39-50.

Klotz, R. (1997). Positive Spin: Senate Campaigning on the Web. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 30(3), pp. 482-486.

Krueger, B.S. (2002). Assessing the Potential of Internet Political Participation in the United States. *American Politics Research*, 34(6), pp. 759-776.

Lupia, A. and Philpot, T.S. (2005). Views from Inside the Net: How Websites Affect Young Adults' Political Interest. *Journal of Politics*, 67, pp. 1122-1142.
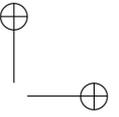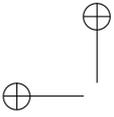
Lusoli, W. and Ward, S. (2005). Logging On or Switching Off? The Public and the Internet at the 2005 General Election. In S. Coleman and S. Ward (eds.), *Spinning the Web: Online Campaigning during the 2005 General Election*. London: Hansard Society.

Margolis, M. and Resnick, D. (2000). *Politics as Usual? The Cyberspace Revolution*. London: Sage.

Morozov, E. (2011). *The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom*. New York: Public Affairs.

Mossberger, K., Tolbert, C. and McNeil, R. (2007). *Digital Citizenship: The Internet, Society and Participation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Moy, P., Manosevitch, E., Stamm, K. and Dunsmore, K. (2005). Linking Dimensions of Internet Use and Civic Engagement. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 82(3), pp. 571-586.

Norris, P. (2001). *The Digital Divide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Norris, P. (2003). Preaching to the Converted? Pluralism, Participation and Party Websites. *Party Politics*, 9(1), pp. 21-46.

Norris, P. and Curtice, J. (2008). Getting the Message Out: A Two-Step Model of the Role of the Internet in Campaign Communication Flows during the 2005 British General Election. *The Journal of Information Technology and Politics*, 4(4), pp. 3-13.

Quintelier, E. and Vissers, S. (2008). The Effect of Internet Use on Political Participation. Social Science Computer Review, 26(4), pp. 411–427.

Rackaway, C. (2007). Trickle-Down Technology? The Use of Computing and Network Technology in State Legislative Campaigns. *Social Science Computer Review*, 25(4), pp. 466-483.

Shifman, L., Coleman, S. and Ward, S. J. (2007). Only Joking? Online Humour and the 2005 UK General Election. *Information, Communication and Society*, 10(4), pp. 465-487.
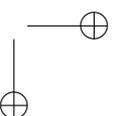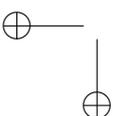
Shirky, C. (2008). *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing without Organizations*, New York: Penguin Press.

Stanley, J.W. and Weare, C. (2004). The effects of Internet Use of Political Participation. *Administration and Society*, 36(5), pp. 503-527.

Strandberg, K. (2009). Online Campaigning: An Opening for the Outsiders? An Analysis of Finnish Parliamentary Candidates' Websites in the 2003 Election Campaign. *New Media and Society*, 11(5), pp. 835-854.

Sudulich, M.L. and Wall, M. (2010). Every Little Helps: Cyber Campaigning in the 2007 Irish General Election. *Journal of Information Technology and Politics*, 7(4), pp. 340-355.

Vacari, C. (2008). Surfing to the Élysée: The Internet in the 2007 French Elections. *French Politics*, 6, pp. 1-22.

Vedel, T. and Michalska, K. (2007). 'Political Participation and the Internet: Evidence from the 2007 French Presidential Election', Paper presented at the International Conference on e-Government, Montreal, Canada.

Vissers, S. (2009). 'From Preaching to the Converted to Preaching through the Converted', Paper presented to ECPR Joint Research Workshops, Lisbon, 14-19 April.

Williams, C., Weinberg, B. and Gordon, J. (2004). 'When Online and Offline Politics "Meetup": An Examination of the Phenomenon, Presidential Campaign and Its Citizen Activists', Paper presented at the 2004 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, IL.

Zittel, T. (2009). Lost in Technology? Political Parties and Online Campaigning in Germany's Mixed Member Electoral System. *Journal of Information Technology and Politics*, 6 (3/4), pp. 298-311.
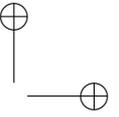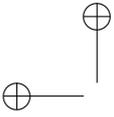
Notes on the construction of the journalistic event: from a politically active intellectual to the advent of Web 2.0

Giovandro Ferreira

1. On a politically active intellectual

As an event is also a fact about society, it arises as a reflection of the passions of social groups. The journalistic event, besides being a social fact, implies the functioning of media and in each period the event reveals fears, intolerance, the expectations of a given period and the means that enable a society to function.

The construction of the journalistic event and the search for citizenship at its core has been around for quite some time. Two of the most famous cases were the Calas Affair, back in the 18th century (1761-1765)[1], and the other was in the 19th century with the Dreyfus Affair (1894-1906).[2] In both cases, one can highlight the role of two renowned writers who were implicated in the development of the event as an important driving force, thus launching the roots of the *intellectuel engage* which was so present in the French scene during the 20th century.

The Calas and Dreyfus Affairs could occur today under our very eyes as they were two cases that were markedly nurtured by intolerance. They could be two occurrences, had it not been for Voltaire's and Zola's respective encroachment, among other things. Media coverage brings into the light of day the reigning intolerance in France, in the first case (Calas), which took place in the city of Toulouse. The malaise of the newly converted protestant minority and the way the process was handled by popular pressure, led to the execution of Jean Calas in 1762. Calas was a protestant and he was held responsible for hanging his son as a result of the latter's conversion to Catholicism.

---

[1] See Garrison, Janine. *L'affaire Calas – mirroir des passions françaises*, Paris, Fayard, 2004.

[2] See Zola, Émile. *La vérité em marche – l'affaire Dreyfus*, Paris, Flammarion, 1969.
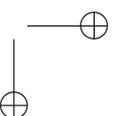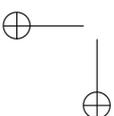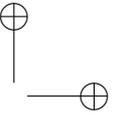
> This is why the Calas affair continues to set an example and will never end. Each period, each individual, looks at it and sees himself through it as a mirror that travels through centuries. The image in that mirror is never the same. Even today, the controversy runs and reaches generations charged by the passions of the moment, renewing crimes and torments from the stories lived by each.[3]

Voltaire gets involved in the case from his property in Ferney when he understands that the Calas affair represents one of those moments in which all the elements are put together and justify the rage in France that will lead to either the worst or best outcome. The injustice in the Calas case makes him "move heaven and earth" in order to agitate minds. Ferney becomes an information centre, a focal point of agitation, a Gazette editorial office where Voltaire would say: "I'm writing to act".

He published in the midst of the turbulence (1763) under the cloak of a pseudonym, but no one doubts the origin of the book entitled *Treatise on Tolerance*.[4] It is a work that attacks religious fanaticism based on the Calas affair. Thus, the case becomes a "famous cause" that illustrates the injustice of the court from that period while also illustrating a justice subjugated by religious reveries.

After some toing and froing and despite the hostility from the Parliament of Toulouse, March 12, 1765, marked the date when Calas was unanimously rehabilitated and his family was compensated by the king's council. This was the first time in history that the French monarchy admitted to making a mistake and then corrected it. In April 1778, the news spread concerning Voltaire's return to Paris, after a twenty year banishment and he is greeted by the crowd with the sonorous reminder: "Man... Calas, Calas, Calas".

In the following century, there is another event that is going to involve and divide France once again. It is the case of Officer Alfred Dreyfus, of Jewish origin, who is condemned for high treason in another fraudulent trial based on

---

[3] Garrison, Janine. Op. Cit., p. 09. All quotations that were not in English have been translated by Rui Vitorino Azevedo.

[4] The author has used the Portuguese translation. Voltaire, François Marie Arquet, *Tratado sobre a tolerância*, Porto Alegre, L&PM Editores, 2008.
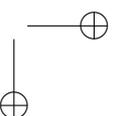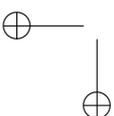
his cooperation with the Germans. The evidence of innocence allowed for a second trial in 1898, however, Dreyfus's condemnation was finally confirmed.

The result of this trial led to Émile Zola's and other intellectuals' indignation, including the writer Anatole France. A. France openly defends Dreyfus and the Jews in his book *L'Anneau d'améthyste*, which is filled with the descriptions of popular protests and the persecution of those who disagreed with the sentence. The case had already taken the proportion of a "big mistake" and was always followed by criticism on the French people's blind faith in relation to military institutions and the clergy.

The case occupies the public arena to new proportions on January 13, 1898, when Émile Zola publishes an open letter addressed to the President of the Republic in the newspaper *L'Aurore* with the title "J'accuse!" (I accuse!). The newspaper *L'Aurore* with a publication of 30,000 copies was sold out in a few hours, even if the circulation for that day was multiplied by 10, i.e., 300,000 sheets. Zola's goal wasn't a historical article, but a judicial report that bore in mind a raise of consciousness at a time when the Dreyfus case seemed to be a lost cause. Zola received more than 2,000 letters, half of which had been sent from abroad.

In an attempt to reanimate the debate on the case after Officer Dreyfus had been condemned twice, Zola was successful in his onslaught "The truth in action". However, Dreyfus is condemned with the maximum penalty (prison plus fine) and his assets are auctioned in order to cover the amount of the fine, having thus gone into exile in England. Dreyfus, in turn, was partially re-established in the army since the 5 years of incarceration were not taken into account in the reconstitution of his career.

The Calas' and Dreyfus' cases are illustrative of the events in the 18th and 19th centuries and gives particular attention to the role of the intellectual in leading, or rather, creating the event. He also serves as a mediator or resonance box of the anxieties implicated by public opinion. He therefore occupies a relevant position in the scene of the event.

With the development of the press and other means of communication throughout the 20th century, we bear witness to the constant presence of journalistic events: murders of politicians, impeachments, wars, accidents at nuclear power plants and many others. The event, traditionally the object of History, also becomes the object of studies in the field of communication, even if its origins are diverse as previously mentioned: the movement of May 68 in Paris
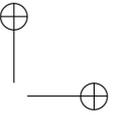
(Gouaze, 1979; Certeau, 1994), the fall of president Collor (Ferreira, 1994); the accident in the nuclear power plant at three mile island in the US (Veron, 1981); the death of president Tancredo Neves (Fausto Neto, 1988); the conflict in ex-Yugoslavia (Bonnafous, 1996); the big televised ceremonies (Dayan and Katz, 1996); the disturbances on the outskirts of large cities in France (Champagne, 1991), among many others.

In the 20th century the professional journalist acquires importance and begins to occupy a central place in the construction of the event. The Watergate case is probably emblematic, just as Clark Kent's complex, half super-man, half journalist. In the second part of this article, we will mainly adhere to the narrative construction of the journalistic event, i.e., that which leads the event to have its own characteristics, going far beyond the factual narrative that edifies ordinary news, such as the facts about citizenship that are lost on the corner of a newspaper page or in a few seconds in other media (radio, television).

2. On the narrative used to construct the journalistic event[5]

An event is almost always unpredictable or rather partially unpredictable that it can be called the level zero of the event. The unpredictable aspect arises in function of the routine, if you take into account the productive routines or the stereotype in the words of Walter Lippman.[6]

Methodologically, you can place the event at three levels: real, symbolic and imaginary.[7] In relation to the real, the representation highlights the institutions and actors that give consistency to representation in society. It figures the constitution of an institutional space which is recognized as legitimate – the real dimension of politics or rather the exercise of power and the constituent elements of the observable reality of the situation at hand.

---

[5] The author has already developed this reflection in other articles. See especially, Ferreira, Giovandro, "Pistas sobre instrumentos análíticos acerca da cobertura midiática do acontecimento-crise", in Ferreira, G. M., et al., *Mídia, Discurso e Sentido*, Salvador, EDUFBA, 2012.

[6] See Lippman, Walter, *Opinião pública*, Petrópolis, Vozes, 2008.

[7] See Lamizet, Bernard. *Sémiotique de l'événement*, Paris, Lavoisier, 2006.
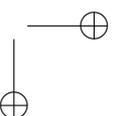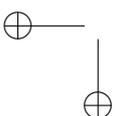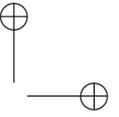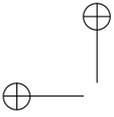
The symbolic (symbolic representation) means the choices, guidelines and views that in fact recognize the significance of a commitment to their choices and intentions. It is the symbolic dimension, that is, the set of forms of communication and representation – particularly in media – that give them meaning.

The imaginary presents itself in an immediate and phantasmagoric way for the actors, here structured in their practices, as well as in symbolic and imaginary ghosts of which they may be carriers. The imaginary dimension also represents the beliefs, utopias, and fears of a given era.

In general, the event with socio-political repercussions suspends the recognition of mediation in a public space, as well as the identities and the subject (institutional legitimacy). The actors of sociability do not recognize the legitimacy of institutions, hence, they do not recognize the integrity of the institutional fact. A crisis reaches the social link and the representation of sociability that founded the identity. In other words, it is the social link that is questioned (highlighted as antagonism which often resorts to history).[8]

The situation generated by the event leads the time of speeches and the representations that may be followed by acts, which in certain cases may be violent. There is a migration at the scene of the institutional crisis, from mediation to action, and then to the determination of the actors. One way of breaking from the act of saying to doing, which is accompanied by or rather sustained by questions about the institution and the subject, has to do with the legitimacy of institutions and their desires for representativeness being called into question which takes root in the historical foundation of the institution.

The role of media in the construction of the event has to be confronted with a dual requirement that may seem contradictory: (1) critical distance of objectivity in relation to the social link; (2) seeking an institutional model of mediation and sociability for their readers, listeners, viewers, etc. Initially, the media give meaning to the rupture of the sociability that generally constitutes the event, in particular the event-crisis, its historical thickness, its multiple dimensions, the contradictions of sociability, etc., critical dimensions in relation to institutions and social actors. They involve the readers in this confusion of identity. To think, then, about the construction of the event-crisis in its three

---

[8] *Idem ibidem.*
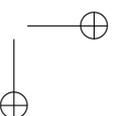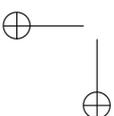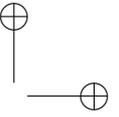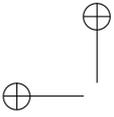
dimensions, means thinking, in a way, about the contradictions of the social link.

The construction of the scene of the event or of the scenes involves the early stage of focus, but progresses to a cognitive determination through a framework that should be interpreted in the light of a type of problem that it symbolizes. It is the stage of *framing* or of the propositions of interpretative frameworks in relation to the event that is being intensively covered.[9]

Consequently, the description of the constructed scenes from the framework offered by journalism professionals can be fomented in the light of support relations with its public, via the regularity of discursive positioning over time (contractual relationship). It also has guidelines on the concept of the thematic path that allows you to analyse the corpus according to the principle of the order of the archive material in correlation with how the event was historically constructed and received by the public. It is a way to look at history in terms of its path; an event in the public arena. Today, it has been facilitated by the offer of virtual archives and of collections which are often made up of different communication products (newspapers, magazines, etc.).

> We would add, to that which we are attempting to put in evidence by this means, that it is the articulation of the event as it is understood and received within a given time, with a practical field, in other words, with a set of collective actions and public interventions that govern the situation of the moment ... This reflexive movement that connects the determination of the public event to collective action has the specific status of an event.[10]

In this perspective, there is an articulation, an order of discursive reality and practice which in turn implies the discursive positioning of the means of communication (each media or vehicle of communication can be considered as an expectation of an event). This was indicated above, but there are also the signs of a horizon of common experience that already projected a certain form of action.

---

[9] Wolf, Mauro, *Teorias da Comunicação*, Lisboa, Editorial Presença, 1987.

[10] Barthélémy, Michel, "Événement et espace public: l'affaire Carpentras", in revue *Quaderni*, n. 18, 1992, p. 129-130.
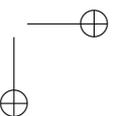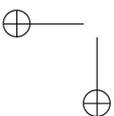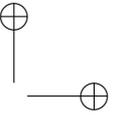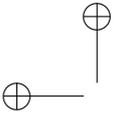
To understand the event is to know how it falls within social, political and historical memory. Such an investment demands an understanding of the present, based on an understanding and description of the event itself. However, the event did not come from nothing. It is the result of an articulation with a past that is charged with meaning and offers its current perception.

The event is seen from a historical background which in turn raises two problems: (1) on the one hand, as an eventual occurrence becomes information, and on the other hand (2) the attribution of value, as an event, which results in information endowed with value, importance and significance that makes it come out from the flow of information, making it an event, with human (and journalistic) involvement, under the aegis of temporality.

As for the temporal structure of the event, there is a call for the narration of information that has become an event, assuming that he who narrates has identified the event, its circumstances, its duration, its rhythm and its actors. The narrator must know, according to Paul Ricoeur, the structures of the intelligibility of the event, and consequently, position the event in a given context in which the various parameters interact and make reference to history. Ricoeur explores here the relationship between discourse and experience. (An experience of the socio-historical context of the event and information production requirements).

There is a narrative requirement for the event to be controlled by the socio-historical context. Control of the historical memory, or rather, a narration that plunges its roots into the past, enhances and gives density to a fact that occurred in the present. The temporality of the narration of the event, according to Paul Ricoeur is the result of this triple present, conceived by intrigue and implying a fact, its circumstances and its actors.

The triple present, which Ricoeur bases on the reflections by Saint Augustine, involves the present of things past (updated version and reinvested), the present of things present (the fact itself) and present of things future (influences of the event in the future).

> What is important is the way this everyday praxis sorts one in relation to the other, the present of the future, the present of the past, and the present of the present. It is, therefore, this prac-

tical articulation that constitutes the most elementary inducer of narration.[11]
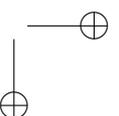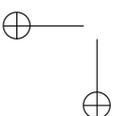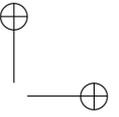
The event is a complex of three presents, with such a complex being modified and relearned by speech. The event has a beginning, but it also has a development, a duration over which things present become past and future things become present. The "sliding" presents and the meaning of the event evolve in this temporal overlap. The informative speech marks this sliding and this evolution.

The idea of a triple present is tied to the temporality of the development of the event and its narration. This, in turn, is dependent on our concerns and leads to an allocation of a certain informative value in the withdrawal of the fact, or on the condition of mere occurrence and information flow.

> The present day and latency articulate then a complex temporality of the constitution of the event. This temporality echoes the triple present of narration, which allows a description of not only the restricted present, but also of that which "frames" the present. Latency is the time in which the event acquires its definitive meaning. It makes the existence of an interpretative distance possible.[12]

The relevance acquired by the event is primarily an appeal to its symbolic charge by which the narration makes symbols emerge that are inherent to the event in question, and may therefore induce different readings of what is produced: the event is recorded in a symbolic "world" (historical plot) in function of which it can be identified and interpreted. Each piece of information asks for a reading that should take into account the symbols in relation to history and memory in order to be significant. Information cannot be "made" into an event if we do not perform a relationship with the historical context which, in turn, makes a sufficiently symbolic charge emerge. It must relate these symbols with the historical memory – the similarity with other events, the repetition or rupture of present information in relation to this memory.

---

[11] Ricoeur, Paul, *Temps et récit*, tome I, Paris, Seuil, 1983, p. 119.

[12] Garcin-Marrou, Isabelle, "L'événement dans l'information sur l'Irlande du Nord", in *Reseuax*, Paris, n. 76 (mars-avril), 1996, p. 59.
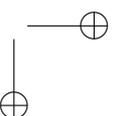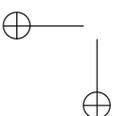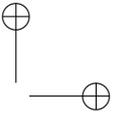
The narration mobilizes a triple present, which can account for the transformation of an occurrence that is happening. But this transformation also points towards a different temporality: it rests on what is called the "latency", which offers a necessary temporal frame to interpret the event. Latency is fixed on duration, outside the urgency of today. It (latency) gives time for journalists to acquire control (*maîtrise*) of the socio-historical context, allowing them to understand the event and therefore assign it a symbolic meaning. The dual temporality latency-present is a fundamental characteristic of the journalistic event and latency determines the thickness of its temporal structure.

Another important aspect in the construction of the event is the horizon of expectations, which can be part of latency. Although it is not part of the present, it participates in the attribution of meaning. The notion of horizon of expectations, may approach the notion of "thematic path", carried out between the media and public space. It enables readjustments of interpretation of the event that builds its identity and its meaning along this path.

The processing of information of an event is nourished by the tension between latency-present, by which the event is never reduced to the present or latency; but this dual temporality is mobilised to assign a valuable meaning to information.

3. On the construction of the journalistic event with the advent of Web 2.0

If in the first part of this article, focus was placed on the personalities that contributed to the construction of the event, followed by the importance mainly portrayed by journalism professionals through the narrative, in this last part, emphasis will be given to the participation of amateurs in the edification of the event, i.e. the new created context using, as an example, actions linked to events that are relevant for citizenship as suggested in the title of this article.

With the advent of Web 2.0, a new device of expression and public debate arises with a new configuration of communication, whose journalistic event is also here created throughout its construction. In this space where a private and public opinion coexist, there is a kind of "extime", that is to say, to externalize something that is traditionally spoken or written in an intimate way, where the "I" acquires relevance, such as in a private speech even if directed to a
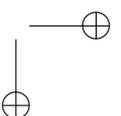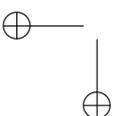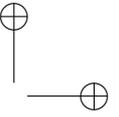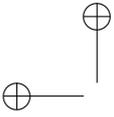
larger audience. It is a space where the announcer addresses him or herself to a restricted public of more or less known receptors through a device that is accessible to all.[13]

Thus, the "extime" space is marked by the touch of emotion, intimacy, or passion. Such characteristics are perceived in the normal blogs of countless strangers who manifest their views about daily live regarding more striking events, as well as the so-called reputable blogs, in general, by journalists who are known in other media. For instance, there is a difference between statements by such journalism professionals in their blogs or in columns in magazines and newspapers.

Intertwining this with a case linked to the construction of citizenship in Brazil, one is reminded of the case of Paulo Cesar, a young black man who was in prison for at least 30 days and was placed at the disposal of the press to be interviewed, or rather, humiliated by a male (Uzziel) and female (Mirella) presenter in the TV program "In Mira" by the Bandeirantes network.

The exposure of this young man demonstrates an incestuous connection between media and the police in Brazil. This is the case in regard to certain television programs that indecently and unseemly exploit people from the popular, poor, and black classes, who are left unattended and neglected by the Brazilian state.

The CCDC – Center for Communication, Democracy and Citizenship, a supplementary component of the School of Communication of the Federal University of Bahia, together with the NGOs Cipó and Intervozes, have monitored these TV programs that are nourished from the misery of the poor population of the State of Bahia. This monitoring encompasses two television programs – "In Mira" and "Bocão" and three print newspapers: "A Tarde", "Correio" and "Massa!". The research in question is funded by the *Ford Foundation* since 2008 and reports on the monitoring of these television programs and newspapers are periodically released in an attempt to bring awareness and mobilization about citizenship and communication rights.

---

[13] See Flichy, Patrice, *Le sacre de l'amateur*, Paris, Seuil, 2010.
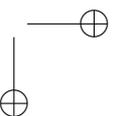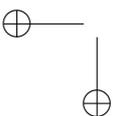
Based on the implication in monitoring the program "Na Mira" it was possible to mobilize people concerning the case of the young man quoted above. At the address given below, you can see the demeaning exhibition to which the young Paulo Cesar was subjected.

www.geledes.org.br

After this exposure there was a reaction in social networks in which you can observe the first person reaction, a place of "relative truth", personal points of view, and a controversial speech that is typical of a representative (parliamentary) democracy which in this digital space is often characterized as an interactive monologue.[14]

In this space, there is usually some driving action that comes from a certain consensus. The petition is one of the initiatives that is most referred to in an event such as that occurred.

Note that there are protests of the actors who occupy such a space which is another form of engagement in relation to traditional and known forms. There is a detachment from the "affiliated engagement" that, in general, preceded some type of protest. In other words, the protest was coming from a form of membership, be it a political party, a trade union or any other type of institution. The "free engagement", if it can be called as such, distances political identity from individual identity. The first ceases to be decisive for the second. There are, in many cases, an engagement in various causes, according

---

[14] See Cardon, Dominique, *La démocratie Internet*, Paris, Seuil, 2010.

to their interest and their identity – intense and limited. You can characterize the action as "extime" to a kind of public space that is articulated with collective opinions, at the time that different actions are being conducted and, consequently, structuring such a space in a more diverse and thick manner.

The strategy of CCDC and other entities, can characterize activities at different levels: (1) monitoring and collection of information; (2) monitoring and evaluation (denouncing) of the world (local and global), (3) collection of information and mediation (circulate, filter and comment), (4) intellectual and technical contribution (treatment of information).[15]

Notícias da Câmara   DF e Entorno   Homeopautas   Brasil   Mundo   Colunistas   Vídeos   Imagens

A força das Redes Sociais: MPF abre representação e Band vai demitir repórter

Escrito por Daniela Novais 18:21:00 23/05/2012

Tweetar 10   Curtir 195   Enviar

Parece que a primeira parte do questionamento feito por Câmara em Pauta quanto à repórter Mirella Cunha é procedente e a jornalista da edição baiana do programa Brasil Urgente deve ser o Cristo da vez, servindo para "redimir" o jornalismo sensacionalista brasileiro (+aqui). O Ministério Público Federal da Bahia (MPF-BA) entrou, nesta quarta (23) com representação contra a repórter que debochou de um preso durante entrevista já há algum tempo, mas só agora o caso repercutiu nas mídias sociais (1 aqui, aqui e aqui). O Caso deve culminar ainda na

Crédito : Reprodução

4. By way of conclusion

This article aimed to characterize the event (journalistic) as a collective act, with increasing participation of authors that go beyond the intellectuals and

---

[15] Flichy, Patrice, op. cit.
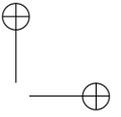
journalism professionals who until recently were taken as their great architects.

Web 2.0 strengthens and renews an action from the public, i.e., the amateur in a public scene, through political actions by highlighting the so-called citizen actions as an important factor to consider the construction of the journalistic event in the current public space of media coverage.

Thus, this brief article has, in a methodological way, stressed the construction of the journalistic event at different levels and times. At the beginning, emphasis was given to the role of someone with recognition in society (intellectual) and his action as a reinforcement for an occurrence to acquire the status of an event. Then, attention was directed towards the narrative that constitutes the journalistic event, be it in its synchronic aspect as well as its diachronic aspect. In a certain way, in this second section focus was, ad intra, concerned with the distinction, the special features of the narrative of the event in relation to the factual occurrence that dominates daily news. In the third and last part, focus turned to amateur participation in the construction of the event, with its presence in social networks with the advent of Web 2.0.

In this participation of new actors, especially through the bias of social networks, it is not yet known what the strength and size of weak cooperation will be in the context of a broader scenario. Can this type of cooperation one day become strong, endowed with such instruments of action as we have seen in the so-called real world? During this brief analysis, we observed that the actions of entities, and consequently, the events that encompass ad intra and ad extra actions, i.e. on the internet (monitoring, evaluation, petitions, etc.) and outside of it (protests, marches, meetings, etc.), have been shown to be more robust and have increasing visibility in society.

Can the new way to construct the journalistic event with the emergence of amateurs, under the point of view of P. Flichy[16], also demonstrate the emergence of a cooperative democracy in detriment of a representative one, characterized (in the construction of the event) by intellectuals or even by journalism professionals?

By raising these and other questions, one believes in the wealth offered by the study of the journalistic event, as a privileged place to think about the present dilated from a certain society (triple present), and bringing to the fore

---

[16] Flichy, P., op. cit.
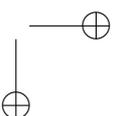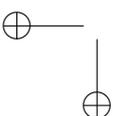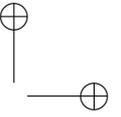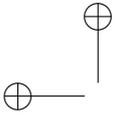
its implications with the past (latency) and future (horizon of expectations).
It is an intriguing web (semiosis) in which the "*event is built with a thousand
ways of bricolage*", (Michel de Certeau), offering different *fronts* of research,
among others, on the actors, the complex narrative and connection with de-
mocracy and ongoing citizenship.

References

Barthélémy, Michel (1992). Événement et espace public: l'affaire Carpentras.
     Quaderni, n. 18: 125-140.

Bonnafous, Simone et al. (1996). Dossiê "Les médias dans le conflit Yougos-
     lave". *Mots*, n. 47, Paris, juin.

Cardon, Dominique (2010). *La démocratie Internet*. Paris: Seuil

Certeau, Michel de (1994). *La prise de parole et autres écrist politiques*.
     Paris: Éditions du Seuil.

Champagne, Patrick (1991). La construction médiatique des "malaises soci-
     aux". *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, nº 90, Paris, Maison
     des Sciences de l'Homme, pgs. 64-75.

Fausto Neto, Antônio (1988). *O corpo falado*. Belo Horizonte: PUCMC/
     FUMARC.

Ferreira, Giovandro. (2012). Pistas sobre instrumentos analíticos acerca da
     cobertura midiática do acontecimento-crise. In G. Ferreira et al., *Mídia,
     Discurso e Sentido*, Salvador: EDUFBA.

Ferreira, Giovandro (1994). L'étude du contrat de lecture: une démarche
     méthodologique sur le posicionnement des supports presse. L'événement
     de la chute du président du Brésil comme révélateur des traces du contrat
     de lecture des quotidiens. *Le Monde et Libération*, mémoire de D. E. A.,
     Institut Français de Presse, Université Paris 2.

Ferreira, Giovandro (1999). Do círculo semiológico ao círculo hermenêutico:
     Contribuições de Paul Ricoeur à análise de discurso. *Interface*, n. 5,
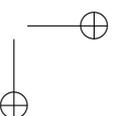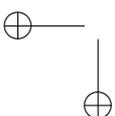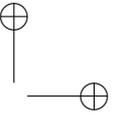
Vitória, CCJE – Centro de Ciências Jurídicas e Econômicas da Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo, p. 81-93.

Flichy, Patrice (2010). *Le sacre de l'amateur*, Paris: Seuil.

Garcin-Marrou, Isabelle (1996). L'événement dans l'information sur l'Irlande du Nord. *Reseuax*, Paris, n. 76 (mars-avril).

Garrison, Janine (2004). *Láffaire Calas – mirroir des passions françaises*. Paris: Fayard.

Gouaze, Jean et al. (1979). *Stratégies de la presse et du droit*. Lyon: PUL.

Lamizet, Bernard (2006). *Sémiotique de l'événement*. Paris: Hermes / Lavoisier.

Lippmann, Walter (2008). *Opinião pública*. Petrópolis: Vozes.

Mouillaud, Maurice and Porto, Sérgio Dayrell (org.) (1997). *O jornal – da forma ao sentido*. Brasília: Paralelo 15.

Ricoeur, Paul (1983). *Temps et récit*, tomo I. Paris: Seuil.

Sodré, Muniz (2009). *A narração do fato*. Petrópolis: Editora Vozes.

Veron, Eliseo (1988). *Construire l'événement – les médias et l'accident de three mile island*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit.

Voltaire, François Marie Arquet (2008). *Tratado sobre a tolerância*, Porto Alegre: L&PM Editores.

Wolf, Mauro (1987). *Teorias da Comunicação*. Lisboa: Editorial Presença.

Zola, Émile (1969). *La vérité em marche – l'affaire Dreyfus*. Paris: Flammarion.
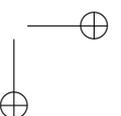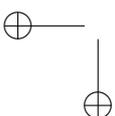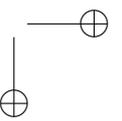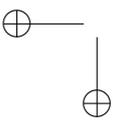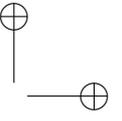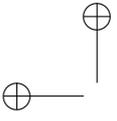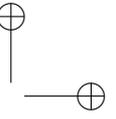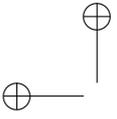
PART II
POLITICAL PARTIES AND DEMOCRACY
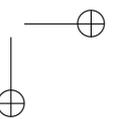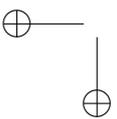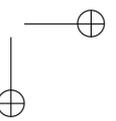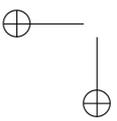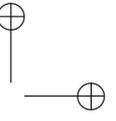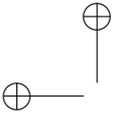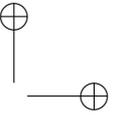
Participation and alternative democracy: social media and their contingencies

Peter Dahlgren

Introduction

At present Europe – as indeed much of the world, in a variety of ways – is struggling with its democracy. There are forces that strive to protect, extend and deepen it, while others function – sometimes explicitly, other times implicitly – to weaken it, to undermine it. This holds true at the local, national and regional levels; not least, the difficulties of the EU, which are most often framed in terms of economics and finance, are most profoundly manifest a crisis of democracy as well. Democracy is a complex, intricate order, with many requisites that need to be filled, from accountability of elected officials to the functioning of the judiciary, from the fulfillment of the principles of equality and universality to the basic welfare and protection of its citizens. One key requisite for the life of democracy is the participation of its citizens. Democracy is somewhat like a social event: if nobody shows up, it does not really take place. Exactly how much and what kind of participation has been and will be continued to be debated, since at bottom, democracy remains a contested term, with a variety of models circulating in political philosophy and many existing states today of quite different political character calling themselves "democratic".

Yet the participation of citizens remains central; even dictatorships will orchestrate throngs of cheering subjects in order to help maintain an illusion of legitimate popular support. In the West, we have become accustomed over the past two decades or so to a growing sense that our democracies are not working well, and among the key indices of this evaluation is a decline in political participation. There are a number of complex factors involved here, as I will discuss, but the civic retreat from the public sphere and established political parties in particular has become a dominant motif in contemporary political analysis. Yet, this is not quite the whole story, for at the same time
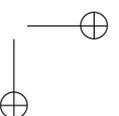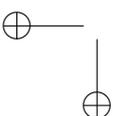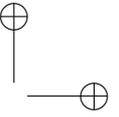
we have also been witnessing an upswing in participation, mostly outside the party context, that has taken a variety of forms.

This re-politicisation – if we might call it that – manifests not only diverse political persuasions, but also new ways of doing politics, new modes of political involvement, which may signal some transformations in political culture itself. While some of these extra-parliamentarian political expressions are decidedly anti-democratic and even racist and/or fascist in some cases, most are aimed at broadening and deepening democracy. The French political scholar Pierre Rosanvallon (2008) has coined the term 'counter-democracy' to refer to the efforts of heterogeneous groups, networks, organisations and movements that strive in various ways to exercise indirect democratic power by bypassing the formal structures of representative democracy – which has for a variety of reasons has become stuck in an impasse. I follow his thinking in this regard, but prefer the term alternative democracy, (which avoids the lack of clarity of 'counter', which can be interpreted as 'being against')

All the various groups, networks, organisations and social movements involved make use of ICTs (information and communication technologies) in various ways. Indeed, one could say that ICTs, especially in the form of social media, have become the common denominator of the new heterogeneous political landscape. Social media, have quickly emerged as public sphere sites and tools for democratic participation, evoking considerable discussion and debate. Some observers strongly assert the positive role that these media can play, while others are less sanguine. We recognize here the lines of pessimism and optimism that have been with us since the internet's democratic role began to be debated almost as soon as it had emerged as a societal phenomenon in the mid-1990s. The media's significance for democracy, central from the very beginning with the spread of the press and mass literacy, has only continued to grow, and today these technologies, in their phase of Web 2.0 and not least in the form of social media, comprise a decisive feature in the character and dynamics of political life.

In this presentation I will explore the notion of political participation, and I angle it from the perspective of ICTs generally and social media more specifically. My aim is to elucidate some of main arguments and evidence that speak both for and against the wisdom of putting our faith in these media as vehicles that can help serve democracy. My argument rests on the notion of contingency: to understand a specific phenomenon we have to examine the
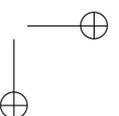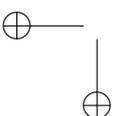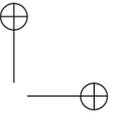
factors that make it possible, that shape and delimit it, under a particular set of circumstances. Thus, we need to look at factors that impact on social media, both as technologies and as socio-cultural resources that define much of the web environment, which in turn has become a major dimension of our everyday lives. It is not the case that we should expect to arrive at an ultimate evaluation, universally valid, positive or negative, regarding the relationship between social media and democratic participation. Rather, we should see this common-sense question as a springboard for continual analysis of media's evolving role in democracies which are also in transition. Optimally we should strive for provisional conclusions relevant to concrete, ever-shifting circumstances.

In what follows I look at two sets of contingencies in regard to social media. I first sketch some key aspects concerning the concept of participation, against a background of democracy's dilemmas. From there I take up the general conceptual terrain and debates regarding ICTs and democracy. Thereafter I address two sets of contingencies of the social media: the first has to do with the political economy and technological architecture of the web, while the second concerns socio-cultural dimensions of their use – which have to do with patterns of meaning and affect having political import. I offer a short conclusion in the final section.

Participation: repertoires of civic practices

The concept of participation derives from a number of different fields and discourses in the social sciences, and its meaning can thus be a bit slippery. In media and communication studies, especially where social and political engagement is on the research agenda, a lack of clarity or fixity is notable (see Carpentier, 2011). On the other hand, its ubiquity can easily lead to it being taken for granted, with its significance remaining bland and uncontroversial. I will not attempt to offer a once-and-for-all definition, nor provide an inventory of possible usages. Rather, I will offer what I take to be some key features of participation in the realm of civil society and politics that I find analytically useful.

Firstly, inspired by Carpentier (2011) I would posit that it is important to distinguish between participation and a few associated terms. In particular, it
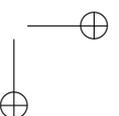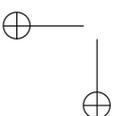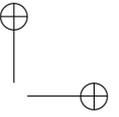
should not be confused with mere access to the media; access is a necessary element but not sufficient in for genuine participation. Likewise, interaction, often lauded in the context of the web as two-way communication structure, is also necessary, but does not fully capture the essence of participation. What is it that these two terms lack? Basically they avoid the issue of power relations. Today, we find all too many settings in which participation is rhetorically evoked, but remains at the level of access or interaction ('Go online and express your views to the city council – participate in local government!'). Democratic participation must at some point and in some way actualize power relations, however weak or remote they may seem. Formalised representation and voting – assuming validity and transparency – embody participation, as do innumerable more micro-contexts of citizen input. Participation is ultimately about power sharing, and if this is structurally absent or systematically undermined, then whatever is being called participation must be seen with utmost skepticism, or indeed labeled fraudulent. This may seem like a severe criterion, but fundamentally this is what democracy is about.

Following this line of argument, we can also say that participation manifests citizenship, it becomes fundamentally an expression of civic agency. Concretely, participation is no one specific thing, but is rather a summary term that captures what must inevitably be a wide range of practices, which evolve, shift, disappear, and re-emerge in different settings. Voting is the most obvious and prevalent form of civic practice, but hardly the only one. Organising, mobilizing, recruiting, running a meeting, debating, lobbying, petitioning, demonstrating, contacting one's representatives – these are just some of the many forms of civic practices, and each can one can be enacted in many ways, depending on circumstances (and we should note that all of them require communication skills). Thus, the increasing use if ICTs by citizens, for example, is leading to many innovations in civic practices. Civic practices emerge and develop in the interplay with relevant knowledge, values, trust, and not least civic identities –subjective positions whereby people see themselves as political actors sufficiently empowered to involve themselves in political life. These elements comprise what I call civic cultures. These can be seen as resources available in everyday life for democratic political engagement; the character and extent of democratic engagement in any particular context can be analysed to a great extent via civic cultures (for a fuller discussion of this theme, see Dahlgren, 2009).
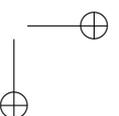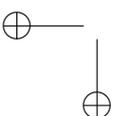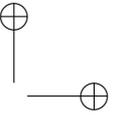
Thus, participation is a particular mode of civic practices, a part of the larger horizons of civic cultures. Conceptually one could opt for a very broad notion of participation and say that all forms of civic practice constitute participation. Alternatively, one could be more restrictive and define participation as only those practices that that have to do in some way with decision-making. A case could be made for both; I lean more towards the broader understanding, since this locates participation deep in the informal micro-meshes of the everyday life of democracy, including informal political conversation. However, it is not always clear where politics or the civic become actualized, or where the political emerges; we have no absolute boundaries between the personal and private and the public, between the cultural and the political, between the consumer and the citizen.

This porousness has partly to do with the general fact that the political has no ontological status, but arises, often de facto, in particular contexts, as antagonistic interests become perceived. Also, it has to do with the historically changing notions of politics and modes of engagement that I referred to above. We have also an element of ambiguity in regard to the definitional distinction between politics and civil society, which in an international context, is linked to specific national histories and political culture. Should involvement in a sports club (which would be seen in many countries as belonging to civil society) be counted as democratic participation? It is difficult to say, a priori, though my inspiration on theories of civil society is much inspired by Cohen and Arato's (1992) classic work. Participation, in the sense of power sharing in some form can certainly arise in the context of civil society activities: it may have to do with the conflicts around selecting the chairperson of a volunteer association, the kinds of music that a network of enthusiasts want to include as part of its public identity, or how the rules for an online game should be codified. In other words, the political – and the issue of power – can emerge anywhere in organized social life. Ultimately it becomes a question of which contexts one feels are important to have in one's analytical sight. On that score we will simply have to continue to live with some degree of conceptual and perhaps even empirical ambivalence, but the point is that participation is linked to civic practices and thus lies at the very heart of democracy, not just as a formalized system, but as a way of life.
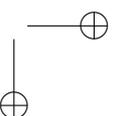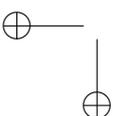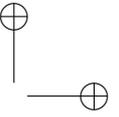
Debates over social media and democracy

At a general level, the web and its ancillary technologies such as mobile telephony have come to engender an ever more ubiquitous web environment, where more and more people spend much of their time for an array of purposes. Especially people in the younger age cohorts are using the various affordances of those communication technologies in active and creative ways. The present online media landscape, often summarised under the rubric of Web 2.0, provides opportunities not only to send written and spoken words, but also to produce, upload, remix, link and share materials, in increasingly collaborative and complex ways. The new cultural terrain is exciting but can also be quite confusing (see Lovink, 2011), as daily practices, identities, and relationships are transmuted. The net is not just something people 'visit' on occasion in order to seek something special, it is increasingly part of the terrain of their daily lives. From social interaction with friends to gossip blogging, from music perusals to news, from shopping to finding a partner, the web environment is becoming a taken-for-granted site where people's lives are increasingly embedded. It impacts on the strategies and tactics of everyday life and the frames of reference that provide them with meaning.

Diverse social media and shared network logic

Turning specifically to social media, we should note that the term encompasses a variety of forms. Without claiming to be exhaustive, I can mention the most common forms, each of which has specific attributes and utilities: *blogs*, which are online journals, whose purposes, content, duration, and impact can vary enormously; *microblogs* inolve blogging with small scale content('updates') , distributed online and via mobile phone networks, with Twitter as the obvious leader here; *social networks* like Facebook are built on sites that allow people to generate personal web pages and to connect with others to share content and communication; *content networks* organise and share particular kinds of content (legal as well as illegal) – the largest is of course YouTube; wikis are websites where people to add and modify content collectively, generating a communal database, and the best known is Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia; *forums* are areas for online discussion, usually focused on specific topics and interests; *podcasts* make audio and video files
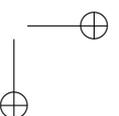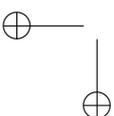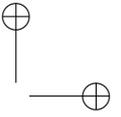
available by subscription, through services like Spotify and Apple iTunes. I offer this little list with a rhetorical rather than informational intent: to strongly emphasise that when we analyse social media, we must be quite specific – and very careful about drawing conclusions about one form based on evidence from another.

In regard to democracy, an important attribute that all these forms share is a capacity to facilitate horizontal communication: people and organizations can directly link up with each other for purposes of sharing information as well as affect, for providing mutual support, organizing, mobilizing, or solidifying collective identities. This feature makes them ideally suited as civic media – and of course reflects their network character. The notion of network has become a central theme is social theory generally, and has of course been intensified recently in the light of the growth of ICTs (Castells continues to develop his hopeful analyses digital networks from the 1990s; see Castells 2010, 2012. See also; Kadushin, 2012; Rainie and Wellman, 2012; Papacharissi, 2011). Mediated social networks take the form of polycentric nodes, thus offering a communication structure which can foster democratic social relations. Van Dijk, 2012 underscores that enhanced connectivity via communicative speed and social dispersion amplifies the general logics of social networks, for example in the mechanisms of 'contagion' and 'going viral') – while also intensifying the competition for attention. Tese developments impact on the character of civic practices and the modes of participation. It is important to underscore the social character of such activity: the networking involved helps to avoid the debilitating consequences of isolation, promotes social (and political) capital, and helps to forge collective identities. This digital lubrication of the social is also essential for the emergence of the political, for people to step into their identities as political agents.

People continue to develop their civic practices in online settings as they find new ways to use these evolving communication technologies. The tools are more and more effective, less expensive, and easier to use than in the past; access and collaboration are increasing, and we are evolving from being mostly media consumers to include many media producers – or 'produsers', as the current jargon calls it. In short, one could say that social media in particular are very good in helping to promote a subjective civic empowerment, an enhanced sense of agency that can make use of many kinds of practices for political participation.
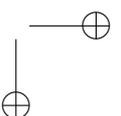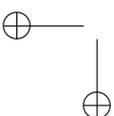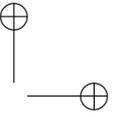
Contested views

The newer digital media are of course a part of the larger social and cultural world, intertwined with the offline lives of individuals as well as with the functioning of groups, organisations, and institutions (see Couldry, 2012, for an integrated sociological perspective).

As ICTs began making their impact on political life, discussions quickly emerged regarding their implications for democracy. (Some recent works in this extensive literature include; Benkler, 2006; Fuchs, 2011b; Goldberg, 2010; Hindman, 2009; Marden, 2011; Margolis and Moreno-Riano, 2009; and Song, 2009). At times differing conclusions become very apparent: at one extreme, Morozov (2011) argues that the democratic possibilities of the web have been seriously oversold, and that internet technology is not only failing to democratise the world, but is used by authoritarian regimes to control its citizens and suppress dissent. Castells (2010, 2012) takes a more positive view, updating his paradigm of 'the network society established in his trilogy from the 1990s. If there is an ambivalence in all this literature, it nonetheless offers many ports of entry that should alert us to the basic reality that ICTs and the web do not operate in a social vacuum, and that social media should not be seen as some simple solution to democracy's problems. Such arguments emerge with clarity in the recent collections by Loader and Mercea (2009) and by Feenberg and Freisen (2012). We must avoid reductionist thinking; policy discourses and journalistic commentary at times lead us astray in this regard, for example when the uprisings during the Arab Spring become simplistically framed as 'Twitter revolutions' (see more analytic views, see for instance, *Communication Review*, 2011 and *Journal of Communication*, 2012.

The views that derive from this extensive literature compel us to see social media in their social contexts and thereby invite us to take a nuanced view. For one thing, research indicates that using the web for political purposes (at least defined in traditional terms) comes quite far down on the list of activities, far behind consumption, entertainment, social connections, pornography, and so on. Today the opportunities for involvement in consumption and entertainment are overwhelmingly more numerous, more accessible, and more enticing for most people, compared to civic or political activities. Even in public sphere contexts, we should bear in mind that the density of the web environment in the contemporary media landscape results in an enormous com-

petition for attention, not least in regard to political affairs, that all web-based actors face; getting and holding an audience is no easy matter for most actors on the web. Also, while the net is an impressive tool of historic dimensions, it does not, by itself, politically mobilise citizens who may lack engagement.
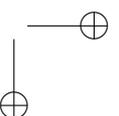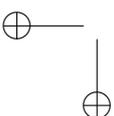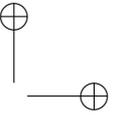
On an even more fundamental level, while many proponents enthuse about how this new world of information is having an immensely positive impact on everything from personal development to the character of our civilization, other voices, such as Carr (2010), argue that it undermining our capacity to think, read and remember. If many observers side with Sunstein (2008) in regard to how the participatory 'wisdom of the many' and 'crowdsourcing' (as manifested, for example in Wikipedia and the blogosphere) is producing new and better forms of knowledge, other such as Keen (2008) warn of the dangers of participatory Web 2.0, arguing that it erodes our values, standards, and creativity, as well as undermines our cultural institutions.

And yet: if current discussions avoid any neat hi-tech help for democracy, they still largely continued to underscore the vision of the internet's potential for facilitating democratic involvement. The internet can clearly make a difference: in contributing to massive transformations of contemporary society at all levels, it has also dramatically altered the premises and infrastructure of the public sphere in a variety of ways. In making available vast amounts of information, fostering decentralisation and diversity, enhancing interactivity and individual communication, while not least providing seemingly limitless communicative space for whoever wants it, at speeds that are instantaneous, it has redefined the premises and character of political participation. Also, while politics remains a minor net usage, the vast universe of the web makes it easier for the political to emerge in online communication. Politics can 'break out' even unexpectedly and go viral, especially the new kinds of post-party politics that is on the rise. Who would have thought a few years ago that materials from political demonstrations would be uploaded on YouTube, and that it, Facebook, and Twitter would become important institutions of the public sphere, facilitating debates and opinion formation?
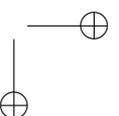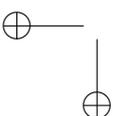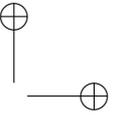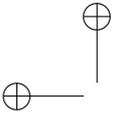
The horizons of political economy

When we are involved with social media, we are leaving all sorts of electronic traces behind us; this kind of surveillance, together with the analysis, packaging and selling of such private data, is a largely unseen – or at least often ignored – danger for democracy. It has troublesome implications not just for normative principles, but also for power relations: many dangers are involved here. These contingencies are, so to speak, built into the present architecture of the web, its financial logic, and its interfaces with contemporary social life. In other words, under the present arrangements, these features are part of the 'deal'; we can't have the web and social media without these aspects. These media both facilitate participation – and render it problematic. This trajectory of analysis is not making essentialist arguments about internet as a technology per se, but rather about how it is socially organised, financed, controlled, and used. The empowerment that the net does offer citizens is thus confronted by other relations of power in which citizens are rendered subordinate. These contradictions suggest continuous tensions of power and interests, an aspect we need to keep in view to understand the links between the web and democracy.

As politics in society generally takes on a larger presence online, the prevailing structures of established power in society are increasingly mediated, solidified, negotiated and challenged via these media. A full-scale analysis of the situation is beyond the limits of this discussion (for a recent conceptual and empirical overview, see Fuchs, 2011b), but I will exemplify the arguments by highlighting a few key elements in regard to the political economy of Google, then the surveillance and marketing mechanisms of Facebook.

Google: good guys?

Google is not a part of social media, but it is such a behemoth on the web that the functioning of social media – and so much else – is profoundly affected by its activities, as Vaidhyanatha (2011) shows. It has in a few short years become a decisive force in shaping how the web operates and what we can do with it (see Cleland and Brodsky, 2011). Moreover it has become the largest holder of information in world history, shaping not only how we search for information, but also what information is available, how we organize, store, and
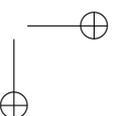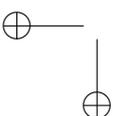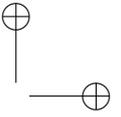
use it. In many ways it is an utterly astounding development and has become a completely decisive feature of the net's architecture. For the year 2010, over 85 percent of all searches worldwide were carried out by Google; by comparison, its nearest competitor, Yahoo, accounted for just over six percent, as Fuchs (2011a) indicates. Perhaps not surprisingly, Google has also become a verb.

Further, given the logic of personal profiling – the filtering of results to 'fit your known locality, interests, obsessions, fetishes, and points of view' (Vaidhyanatha, 2011:183) – the answers that two people will receive based on the same search words may well differ significantly. This can wreak havoc with the whole concept of public knowledge. Members of insular groups can well get their biases reinforced instead of challenged (Pariser, 2011), in the long potentially undermining the democratic culture of debate between differing points of view.

Locked into fierce competition with its competitors, especially Microsoft, on a number of fronts, it has taken major steps in establishing its premier position on the web. The company has grown into an enormous concentration of power that is largely unaccountable, hidden behind the cheery corporate motto 'Don't be Evil' and built on the considerable trust that it has managed to generate. But increasingly very serious questions are being raised, about copyrights and privacy, about how it is using its information, about Google's own agenda in striving to organize knowledge on a global scale, about its role in democracy. All this is not to detract from its truly impressive accomplishments; rather, the issue is that the position it has attained, and the activities it pursues (which are quite logical given its position), raise questions about information, democracy, accountability, and power in regard to the web.

Fuchs (2011a) looks at the political economy of Google and underscores its overwhelming monopolization of the search engine market. Google's global dominance is now spreading into other areas such as academic books, and is posing a threat to the democratic nature of knowledge. Google is also involved in what he calls reality distortion and stratified attention: the company tends to prioritise certain sites at the expense of others, particularly favouring those that are backed by wealthy and powerful interests, thereby jeoparadising the public and democratic character of the web. Further, Google engages in surveillance and privacy violation of citizens in the gathering of consumer-related data, while at the same time denying transparency in regard to, for
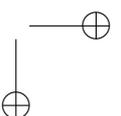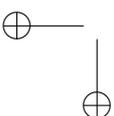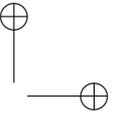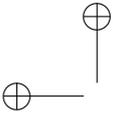
example, its PageRank algorithm and Googlescholar search process. And while Google presents an image of itself as a flat, decentralized organization, it acts as an extreme force for centralization, ideologically camouflaged by a techno-determinist discourse that asserts that the solution to society's problems lies in information technology – and not in, for example, in dealing with unaccountable power in the private sector. Its cooperation with the Chinese government between 2005 and 2010 in censoring politically sensitive search words also puts in question its commitments to democracy (see also Beer, 2009).

The surveillance business in which Google is involved is of particular importance: with its complex system for ranking search results, it matches ads to the search parameters, gathers private, sellable databases, and auctions them to the highest bidder. This selling of personal information is done with our formal consent, but often via strategies that exclude any other options. If we refuse to comply, we effectively cut ourselves off from the major utilities of the web. As Goldberg (2010) suggests, all participation on the net, even the most radical political kind, feeds data into the commercial system that is its infrastructure. This enhances the viability and profitability of Google (and a number of other net companies), who make profits by selling the data to advertisers who use it for strategic, increasingly personally customized, marketing. The more people spend time online, the more Google's economic power is enhanced. One can of course respond that this is merely a minor irritation; we can put up with silly commercial pop-ups and even the gathering of our commercial data if that is the price we have to pay to use the web and social media. However, the dilemma is more profound than that.

Society benefits immensely from what Google has accomplished, but these problematic costs to democracy must be challenged. The prevailing neoliberal climate has made it harder to confront this private enterprise with demands about the public good, and the global character of its operations renders all the more difficult any attempts at national regulation. What happens with all the surveillance data routinely gathered on us? On the most immediate level, Turow (2011) shows how new kinds of high tech marketing and adverting firms integrate and analyse personal data from many sources in order to develop individual and household profiling and media customization – much of it channeled through social media. This not only undermines much the rhetoric about consumer power and initiative – we are decidedly not in the drivers'
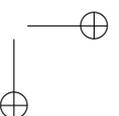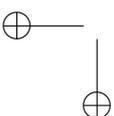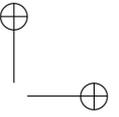
seat here, but rather at the receiving end of carefully planned strategies to offer us products and services the marketers think we should have, based on our profiles.

On a deeper level, this kind of profiling has of course more troubling ramifications, since it erodes large segments of our personal privacy, and could, with only a slight change in circumstances, have consequences for our political freedom as well. While the personal information is not of the political kind, but rather packaged for commercial use, its relevance can easily change under altered circumstances, and become, in the hands of other actors, significant for social and political purposes beyond consumption patterns – and can be terribly damaging. Much information about a person deserves to be forgotten – details about the past that only make sense in their context. Yet such digital information is not forgotten; it is archived, and can be retrieved and inserted into new contexts of a person's life. It may seem to have been trivial and irrelevant, but many cases have shown its destructive potential. What is ultimately required, as MacKinnon (2012) argues, is a global policy that can push regulation of the web such that it will be treated like a democratic, digital commons; we have a long way to go.

Facebook: a friend?

It may well be that the daily socialisation to *not* reflect on these issues that can prove to be most significant in the long term. Discipline works largely by establishing patterns of thought and behavior, and can be seen as a power-driven form of socialization. While we cooperate indirectly with Google in providing personal information, with Facebook it becomes much more explicit, and here we should no doubt be more even concerned in regard to what kind of information about ourselves we are making available to whom.

As noted above, social media sites such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter have became incorporated into political communication. They have become important outlets and sources for journalism, and are increasingly a part of the public sphere of political discussion; they are used for both parliamentarian and alternative politics, blending the political and the social with the personal, with consumption and pleasure. Not least they have obviously become the sites for massive marketing efforts, as Dwyer (2010) underscores.
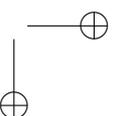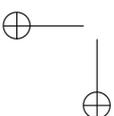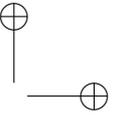
In Facebook's role as a site for political discussion, one can reflect on the familiar mechanism of 'like': one clicks to be friend people who are 'like' oneself, generating and cementing networks of like-mindedness. There is, significantly, no 'dislike' button. As time passes, and people increasingly habituate themselves to encountering mostly people who think like they do, we can postulate on the danger – indeed the costs – to democracy where citizens lose the capacity to discursively encounter different views, where the art of argument erodes, and where deep differences to one's own views ultimately become seen as expressions of the irrational. Time will tell; meanwhile we have the very immediate issues of surveillance and privacy on Facebook.

Facebook, with now over one billion users, compiles massive amounts of data on individuals, largely freely given (in this discussion I borrow considerably from Grimmelmann, 2008). A full Facebook profile contains about 40 pieces of personal information, with a variety of tools available for users to search out and add potential contacts. The so-called Wall posts can convey personal information about the poster. The payment mechanisms for Gifts generates strong links between a profile and offline identities. To upload and tag a Photo of yourself documents your appearance; it also documents that the photographer knows the person photographed. And there is more: each game of Scrabulous one plays gives some a sense of one's vocabulary; one's list of Causes tells others what principles are meaningful to you; answering a Quiz reveals one's knowledge, beliefs, and preferences. And so on.

The interesting question sociologically is why so many people trust Facebook with so much personal information. Basically it has to do with the fact that people have very *social* reasons for joining *social* network sites. They gain social connections, and the sites become forums for developing identities and social capital. These are strong motivations and can explain at least in part why so many users tend to ignore the rather well-known risks to their privacy. The sense of collective identity suggests that we are basically alike and thus we are in this together. An element of group think may say that since everyone else is doing it, it must be safe, and if collectively define this as private, well then, it *must* be private. This can be seen as a case of misplaced trust.

As with Google, the data gathered is for commercial purposes, but again, changing social contexts can generate new uses and meanings of personal information. With Facebook, the spill-over from private to public is much easier (many examples are now part of urban folklore), resulting in embarrassment,
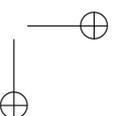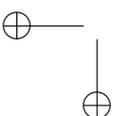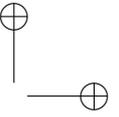
entanglements, defamation, or even in some cases, death (by suicide). Data theft is also easier, and has apparently been accomplished a number of times; hackers today are very clever, whether they are motivated by amusement, a political cause, or simple nastiness. These digital storage systems are simply not fail-safe, as witnessed when hackers today have even entered high-security military databases. Thus, to participate in Facebook and similar social media is to expose oneself to surveillance and to have one's privacy put at risk. These in themselves become issues for democracy; as Facebook and other media become sites for political participation, we must draw the conclusion that the contingencies requiring personal information for online civic engagement result in a high cost for democracy.

Aside from the dangers to participation posed by these particular features of the web, there are other, social and cultural factors, at work, contingencies that impact on how social media become appropriated for political participation. Let us look at these in more detail.

Socio-Cultural Currents

Social imaginaries

Castoriadis (1997) makes use of the notion of the social imaginary, which he takes to be overarching collective meanings in society anchored in repetitive representations, affect, intentions and will. One could also call them ideological motifs, or hegemonic discourses, depending on which theoretic tradition one prefers, but the basic idea is that social imaginaries permeate society, providing frameworks for making sense of the world and one's place in it. They thus serve to adjust not only our perceptions of external reality but also our inner subjective dispositions. They have political import. Straume (2011) uses the concept to map the elements that comprise the key ideational vistas of neoliberal global economic system from the standpoint of the social world. Not surprisingly, she pinpoints such themes as a sense of never-ending economic growth, freedom, rationality, an absence of serious environmental concern, consumerism, a sense of privatized fulfillment, and a stance of non-interference in market mechanisms. A basic feature of the relationship of the individual to economic society is depoliticisation. A number of these themes are familiar from the discussions above, and no doubt from other directions as
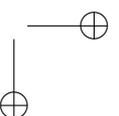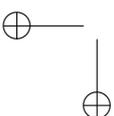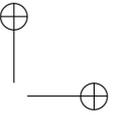
well: they comprise much of the prevailing discursive currents of contemporary politics and society, and they are by no means unique for the web, even if their online manifestations take particular forms of expression.

These currents of the social imaginary hover at a rather high level of abstraction, but are visible in concrete circumstances. We should be wary of reducing today's wide range of political expression – at times positively cacophonic – to just positions that support or criticize the dominant economic arrangement, but the themes of this prevailing current comprise an important referent for the fundamental health of democracy. Depoliticisation, the avoidance of the political, is as we can recall, one of the dilemmas of participation, one that seriously confronts democracy. These prevailing themes are of course often challenged – even if this rarely takes place in the dominant forums of the public sphere. What is important to grasp is that these elements in the major currents of the social imaginary do not only operate at the level of formal ideas, but are also embodied in many forms of expression from popular culture to journalism, from street humour to self-help therapies. Similarly, the alternative flows do not manifest themselves only as coherent political statements, but can be implied in televised satire (e.g. The Daily Show with Jon Stewart), manifested in the performance of rap lyrics, in social critique embedded in detective fiction, or evoked via expressions of solidarity and care for marginalized groups, and so on. Thus, while the coherent articulation of ideas still remains central to political life, political sentiments in the form of dominant and oppositional social imaginaries are increasingly embodied in affective, by various modes of cultural expression.

The web environment and subjectivity

If we take this thought and transpose it to the online environment, it means that we should examine how the hegemonic and contested currents find expression in the Web 2.0 milieu, and we can assume that these currents are driven by both rational and affective elements, with the latter seemingly on the ascent. Media culture overall seems to be moving ever further away from the ideals of the traditional public sphere and its rational character in the face of the frenetic late modern mix of seemingly infinite images, sound and text. It is against this historical backdrop, as I indicated earlier, that we have to understand contemporary web-based political participation. The interplay between
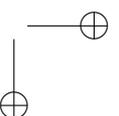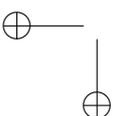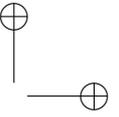
the affordances of communication technologies and the practices by which people use them for their own purposes becomes a central dynamic of the web environment. In this interface,

> (...) people adapt, reinvent, reorganize, or rebuild media technologies as needed to suit their various purposes or interests, As they innovate, users combine new and old techniques, or adapt combinations of familiar technologies in new ways. New media are recombinant, the product of the hybridization of existing technologies and innovative techniques (...) (Lievrouw, 2011: 216)

This allows people to 'construct new meanings and expressions out of existing and novel forms of interaction, social and institutional relationships, and cultural works' (Lievrouw, 2011: 216). This perspective helps us to understand more concretely the permutations of subjectivity, as well as the relevance of civic practices in participatory contexts. Moreover, such practices in turn result in the progressive evolution of civic cultures themselves; new practices become established as resources that future participation can draw upon.

The growth of affective forms of political communications problematise traditional notions of the Habermasian public sphere and their rather formalistic criteria for suitable deliberative democracy, as I argue in Dahlgren (2009) and as many others have also pointed out. Not only are there more affective dimensions involved in these kinds of political communication, but I would also propose that the practices themselves are significant in shaping the subjectivity of the participants. This is a conceptually different view than the notion of communicative rationality, where interlocutors are seen as engaging in the public sphere already pre-formed as subjects from an unspecified sociocultural elsewhere. Here I am positing a contingent self, whose subjectivity is in part formed by the shifting and at times contradictory and over-determined discursive circumstances in which s/he is involved, as opposed to a unified and fully self-transparent subject. (This mode of theorizing is inspired by the post-structural horizons of Laclau and Mouffe, 2001; see also Mouffe, 2005. I explore this tradition in relation to media research in Dahlgren 2011). Conceptually, the civic subject is thus never fully fixed, but always to some extent fluid, open to change, vulnerable to contradictory political valences. This implies that prevailing – and counter-flows are thus never fully cemented, but
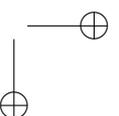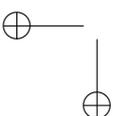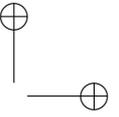
always open and porous to some extent. Politics, or political conflict, never reaches an end point, but is always in transition. This is of course better news for the counter-flows than for the prevailing, hegemonic currents.

Social media: politics as cozy cocoons?

Despite the generally low presence of politics on the web, the significance of online media for participation in political life is clearly growing. Especially when young people do turn to the political, the net environment has a central position. At the same time, there usually needs to be links between the on-and offline experiences; at some point political participation via the web needs to be complemented with other forms of connection to the political world. The web environment needs to help connect citizens to the political world beyond the screen itself. Yet it appears be the case that the daily habits of online life are making the connections beyond the net less likely to take place. Thus, much social life takes place online without necessarily being a preparatory step for arranging a meeting offline. Further, in the context of late modern individualization and neoliberal privatization, with the intensity of identity work as a reflexive project, there is a massive amount of online presentation of self taking place, via Facebook and other locations. In short, social media have become sites for extensive interaction that does not necessarily aim for face-to-face encounters beyond the screen, yet have important implications for identity (this line of critique is developed more extensively in Dean, 2010).

In regard to the patterns of online interaction, commentators (see, for instance, Benkler, 2006). of the web have coined such terms 'cocoons' and 'echo chambers' to signify the tendency for people to group themselves into networks of like-mindedness. This is of course an understandable human behavior pattern – one avoids conflicts and gets one's one world views and values reinforced. Socially it makes a lot of sense. But for democracy there is a danger: such cozy social environments tend to isolate its members from larger discursive flows within political society. Moreover, they also serve to reduce their participants' experiences with confronting alternative points of view, as well as their competence in engaging in argument. The dialogic quality of the public sphere erodes, as political groups exchange invectives with each other, and all too often never quite engage in civic discussion. This trend towards withdrawing to enclaves of like-mindedness is enhanced with social media,
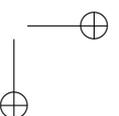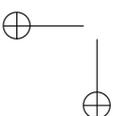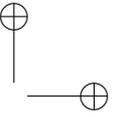
most notably Facebook, where the definitive logic is precisely 'to like': you 'click' on people that you 'like', i.e. that are 'like' yourself. Differences tend to get filtered out (and the risks of narcissism loom large). A similar logic appears in commercial contexts: if one buys a book online, one gets a message to the effect: "If you bought book X, you might also like book Z". In fact, democracy would be better served if there were messages that instead said "If you liked book X, you should encounter the alternative views found in book Z". But that of course would run counter to market logic.

The comfort of the solo sphere

A related socio-cultural pattern that seems to be emerging as a significant contingency and which is worrisome in regard to participation and the culture of democracy, is a form of what we can call personalised visibility, which includes self-promotion and self-revelation. When (especially) younger people do turn to politics, it seems that the patterns of digital social interaction increasingly carry over into the digital. Papacharissi (2010) argues that while digitally enabled citizens may be skilled and reflexive in many ways, they are also generally removed from civic habits of the past. For example, it is not so obvious among the young citizens of some democracies that outdoor organisation, mobilization, and demonstrations are necessarily relevant or effective forms of civic practice. They may well be right about that in some cases, but certainly the recent insurrections in the Arab world, the civic militancy in the southern EU countries in response to the crises brought on by austerity measures, and the Occupy Wall Street movement suggest otherwise.

According to Papacharissi (2010) much civic behavior today has its origins in private environments, which she suggests is giving rise to a new 'civic vernacular'. I think this analysis is definitely on the right track, but while she labels this setting for political engagement as the private sphere, it seems to me that this may term may be misleading. It readily evokes the traditional family or home milieu. This is no doubt a part of the setting, but I would call it instead the solo sphere, to indicate its historically new character. The solo sphere can be seen as a historically new habitus for online political participation, a new platform for civic agency.

From the networked and often mobile enclosures of this personalized space, the individual engages with a vast variety of contexts in the outside
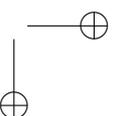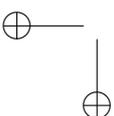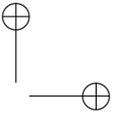
world. We need not launch into any discussion about essentialist distinctions between on- and offline realities; it suffices to simply indicate that they have to some extent different affordances, cue some different kinds of social skills, and most importantly offer differing spaces of social interaction, with often differing implications. These contrasts can be significant for political participation. It may well be that the online setting, with its powerful technical affordances, discourages engagement beyond itself. Papacharissi (2011) suggests that it fosters a retreat into an environment that many people feel they have more control over; a networked yet privatized political sociality emerges.

To the extent that this is true, it is understandable, yet it also introduces an historically new contingency for participation – which may in turn signal a historically new kind of democratic system. Yet we need not spend too much time with the crystal ball, trying to predict the future; there is plenty to do in the present.

The Challenge of Participation: Modest Hopes

The world finds itself in dire times, confronted by many crises, not least a global economic downturn that brings with it much social dislocation. Our broader analytic vistas suggest to us something about the contemporary sense of urgency, of the desperation experienced at home and globally by many citizens. Democracy, strong yet vulnerable, faces challenges from many sides, and it is daunting to reflect on what is at stake and what is required in order to ameliorate the situation. Among democracy's difficulties are declines in participation in formal arenas, which is brought on by systemic developments and cannot be explained at merely the psychological level by simple apathy or poor civic character. Yet we also witness a small yet highly significant enhancement of participation in the realm of alternative democracy. Social media, and citizens' use of them, while playing an ever more important role in shaping and empowering participation, cannot 'save' democracy, nor can they completely compensate for systemic mechanisms that obstruct political and civic participation. However, in the context of the evolving media landscape, social media, despite their limitations, do play an important role in today's political world and have certainly revitalized the public sphere.

New aspects of the civic identity can emerge in the force-field between the
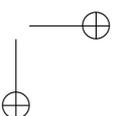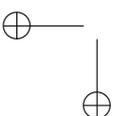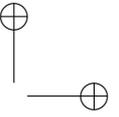
affordances of these media and the many and often novel practices that they engender, renewing and extending the terrain and even the definition of politics. These developments are proceeding at a dizzying pace, as both the media landscape and the socio-cultural world undergo rapid transitions, further altering key features of democracy. The networking possibilities and horizontal civic communication that social media provide are crucial features for supporting participation – understood as involvement in political contexts that in some way touches upon power relations.

At this point in our reflections we can benefit from the ongoing research and debates about what we can expect from social media in terms of their contributions to participation; not least, this literature should help us to stay clear of simplistic either-or responses to these questions. These discussions in fact usher us into the fundamental perspective that I have argued for here, namely that we can only understand the potential and actual uses of social media, and their significance for participation, by focusing on the complex contingencies that inexorably come with them. Analytically one can specify a broad array of contingencies. I have only touched upon some of the major ones, in the form of the political economy and architecture of the web and some key socio-cultural currents. It is in the analysis of the interwoven, configurational lines of influence of these and other such contingencies that we can begin to grasp the dynamics at work. At present, despite the problematic circumstances and many uncertainties, the historical future for democracy still remains open; participation, though seriously challenged still hovers within reach and is enacted by many citizens, especially in response to crises. However, such forms of alternative democracy face difficult odds, and in this regard, social media are indispensable but not, on their own, decisive. Research needs to continue to probe this complex relationship in order to better analytically grasp participation, as well to help enhance it.

References

Baym, N. K. (2010). *Personal Connections in the Digital Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Beer, D. (2009). Power through the algorithm? Participatory web cultures and
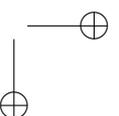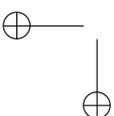
the technological unconscious. *New Media and Society*, vol. 11, no. 6, 985-1002.

Benkler, Y. (2006). *The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Carpentier, N. (2011). *Media and Participation: A Site of Ideological-Democratic Struggle*. Bristol: Intellect.

Carr, N. (2010). *The Shallows: How the Internet is Changing the Way We Think, Read and Remember*. London: Atlantic Books.

Castells, M. (2010). *Communication Power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Castells, M. (2012). *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Castoriadis, C. (1997). Psychoanalysis and philosophy. In *The Casatoriadis Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Cleland, S. and Brodsky, I. (2011). *Search and Destroy: Why You Can't Trust Google*. St. Louis, MO: Telescope Books.

Cohen, J. and Arato, A. (1992). *Civil Society and Political Theory*. Cambridge. MA: MIT Press.

The Communication Review (2011). Special Issue: *Twitter Revolutions? Addressing Social Media and Dissent*, vol. 14, nº. 3.

Couldry, N. (2012). *Media, Society, World: Social Theory and Digital Media Practice*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Dahlgren, P. (2009). *Media and Political Engagement*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Dahlgren, P. (2011). Mobilizing Discourse Theory for critical media politics: obstacles and potentials. In L. Dahlberg and S. Phelan, eds. *Discourse Theory and Critical Media Politics* (pp. 222-249). Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Dean, J. (2010). *Blog Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

van Dijk, J. (2012). *The Network Society, 3rd* ed. London: Sage.

Dwyer, T. (2010). Net worth: popular social networks as colossal marketing machines. In G. Sussman (ed.), *Propaganda Society: Promotional Culture and Politics in Global Context* (pp. 77-92). New York: Peter Lang.

Feenberg, A. and Freisen, N. (eds.) (2012). *(Re)inventing the Internet: Critical Case Studies*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Fenton, N. (2012).The internet and social networking. In J. Curran, N. Fenton, D. Freedman (eds.) *Misunderstanding the Internet* (pp. 123-148). Abington: Routledge.

Fuchs, C. (2011a). "A contribution to the critique of the political economy of google". *FAST CAPITALISM* 8.1 www.fastcapitalism.com (Last visited 8 Jan. 2013)

Fuchs, C. (2011b). *Foundation of Critical Media and Information Studies*. Abington: Routledge.

Goldberg. G. (2010). Rethinking the public/virtual sphere: The problem with participation. *New Media and Society*, vol. 13 (5), 739-754.

Grimmelmann, J. (2008). 'Facebook and the social synamics of privacy'. www.ciberdemocracia.es (Last visited 8 Jan. 2013)

Hindman, M. (2009). *The Myth of Digital Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The Journal of Communication (2012). Special Issue: *Social Media and Political Change*, vol. 62, no. 2.

Kadushin, C. (2012). *Understanding Social Networks*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Keen, A. (2008). *The Cult of the Amateur*. New York: Doubleday.

Laclau, E. and Mouffe, M. (2001). *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (2nd ed). London: Verso.

Lievrouw, L. A. (2011). *Alternative and Activist New Media*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Loader, B. and Mercea, D. (eds.) (2012). *Social Media and Democracy*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Lovink, G. (2011). *Networks Without a Cause: A Critique of Social Media*. Cambridge: Polity.

Marden, P. (2011). The Digitalised public sphere: re-defining democratic cultures or phantasmagoria? *Javnost/The Public*, vol. 18 (1), 5-20.

Margolis, M. and Moreno-Riano, G. (2009). *The Prospect of Internet Democracy*. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company.

MacKinnon, R. (2012). *Consent of the Networked: The Worldwide Struggle for Internet Freedom*. New York: Basic Books.

Marden, P. (2011). The Digitalised public sphere: re-defining democratic cultures or phantasmagoria? *Javnost/The Public*, vol. 18 (1), 5-20.

Margolis, M. and Moreno-Riano, G. (2009). *The Prospect of Internet Democracy*. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company.

Morozov, E. (2011). *The Net Delusion: How Not to Liberate the World*. London: Allen Lane.

Mouffe, C. (2005). *On the Political*. London: Verso.

Papacharissi, Z. (2010). *A Private Sphere: Democracy in a Digital Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Pappacharissi, Z. (ed.) (2011). *A Networked Self*. Abdingdon: Routledge.

Rainie, L. and Wellman, B. (2012). *Networked: The New Social Operating System*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Rosanvallon, P. (2008). *Counter-Democracy: Politics in an Age of Distrust*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
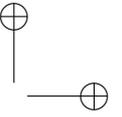
Song, F. W. (2009). *Virtual Communities: Bowling Alone, Online Together*. New York: Peter Lang.

Straume, I. (2011). The political imaginary of global capitalism. In I.S. Straume, and J. F. Humphrey (eds). *Depoliticization: The Political Imaginary of Global Capitalism* (pp. 27-50). Malmö, Sweden: NSU Press.

Sunstein, C. (2008). *Infotopia: How Many Minds Produce Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Turow, J. (2011). *The Daily You: How the New Advertising Industry is Defining Your Identity and Your Worth*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Vaidhyanatha, S. (2011). *The Googlization of Everything: (And Why We Should Worry)*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
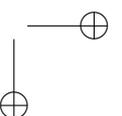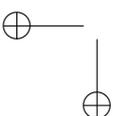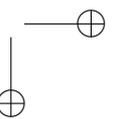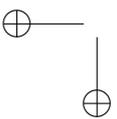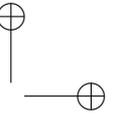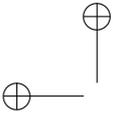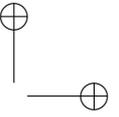
New bottles, old wine? New media and political parties

Carlos Jalali

The description that is made of parties is increasingly one of weakening and gradual loss of relevance in contemporary societies, a pattern of apparent "party decline" that leads some authors to provocatively inquire if we should "think the unthinkable": democracy without political parties. This pattern contrasts with the dynamism and vigour associated with new media, increasingly regarded as the solution to a series of political and social problems. And perhaps more significant is to notice that the role assigned to new media – both in normative and positive terms – occurs in many of the arenas that parties apparently abandoned, such as the articulation of interests or political socialisation and mobilisation.

Although common, this somewhat linear description – which suggests the transfer of formerly partisan functions to new media – may not be entirely correct. On the one hand, we should note that political parties increasingly place themselves in new media. On the other hand, interactions in digital media do not occur in a vacuum. Thus, they are inevitably influenced by the dominant political context.

This chapter aims to explore the role that new media can play in contemporary politics, with a special focus on the Portuguese case. It will be argued that new media may provide new means to remedy the substantial gap between citizens and parties, but that this result cannot be in any way considered inevitable. Rather, the use of new media by political parties may also simply reproduce the types of interaction that are found in other arenas, reflecting to a large extent the supply-side constraints generated by contemporary political party systems.

This chapter is structured in the following manner. We begin by presenting the conventional narrative associated with representative democracy. As will be demonstrated, parties are assigned a central role in this democratic process, serving as the main intermediaries of delegation in elected representatives. However, as the following section expounds, the partie's ability to
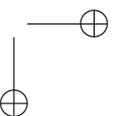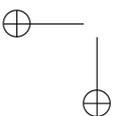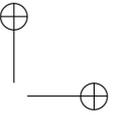
play this role (at least, in the fullness of normative expectations) is called into question in the context of the transformations that parties have faced in the last half-century. The chapter then outlines the more optimistic interpretations of this transformation, which see the emergence of new democratic forms, and has new media playing a central role in this "democratic modernisation". However, as the following section postulates, this conventional narrative may not be entirely correct, in so far as parties can also use new media to strengthen their role in the political system instead of generating more genuine forms of connection with voters. In a way, new media can only become a new way of doing politics as usual – a new bottle for old wine.

Democracy, Political Parties and Citizens

If the abstract concept of democracy is relatively simple – being captured in Abraham Lincoln's famous expression "government of the people, by the people and for the people" during his Gettysburg Address – the form its practical application should take is far from clear. As Lijphart states (1999: 1), Lincoln's definition of democracy says nothing about who governs, how to govern, and who the people are. Oliver Cromwell's statement (quoted in Bogdanor 1983: 1) that he was "as much for government by consent as any man, but if you ask me how it is to be done, I confess I do not know" exemplifies well the tension between the theory and practice of democracy.

When we talk about democracy in the modern world – especially with the end of the Cold War, which did much to reverse the notion of democracy as an "essentially contested concept" – we are usually talking about representative democracy. In it, citizens (voters) delegate the responsibility and authority of the decision-making process to elected representatives. This element of delegation in the process of representation is evident in most of the definitions of the concept of democracy, even when these differ in other aspects. Thus, the notion of delegation emerges in the almost "minimalist" definition of Schumpeter, which focuses on the dimension of electoral competition: "the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote" (Schumpeter, 1947: 269). It is just as perceptible in the definition of Mainwaring et al (2001: 38), which defines
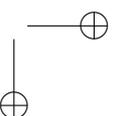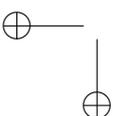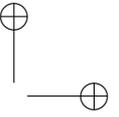
democracy as "a regime (1) that sponsors free and fair competitive elections for the legislature and executive; (2) that allows for inclusive adult citizenship; (3) that protects civil liberties and political rights; and (4) in which the elected governments really govern and the military is under civilian control".

As these two definitions illustrate, delegation occurs by means of elections which allow citizens to choose their representatives. Starting with the conceptualisation of representative democracy as a principal-agent relation, we can identify a "chain of delegation" from the principal (citizens) to their agents (political representatives). The chain of delegation entails responsiveness and accountability of representatives to citizens. Thus, it is expected that representatives formulate and implement policies that express citizens' preferences, giving rise to the notion of democratic responsiveness. At the same time, democracy presupposes mechanisms of accountability that allow citizens (or, in the case of horizontal accountability, other political agents) to assess responsiveness, punishing or rewarding agents' performance.

Political parties play a central role in this context, as they are the key organisational vehicle through which this delegation process occurs in contemporary democracies. On the one hand, political parties act as a crucial instrument of choice in the delegation process – in the perspective of responsiveness – by submitting platforms of public policies to voters. Simultaneously, they also serve as an instrument of accountability in so far as voters can reward or punish parties for their performance, even when individual politicians are not up for election.[1] The famous statement by Schattschneider (1942: 1) that "political parties created democracy" and that the latter is "unthinkable save in terms of political parties" exemplifies well this centrality assigned to parties. This crucial role of political parties is also evidenced in one of the most widely accepted definitions of democracy by Robert Dahl (1971). His concept of "polyarchy" – briefly defined as the government of many as opposed to the government for all – points to a political regime that is based on three dimensions: equality of vote in free and fair elections (which implies ensuring civil and political rights), competition between political parties aimed at the control of government; and the actual participation. At the same time, it should be noted that for Dahl a polyarchy is a system that is characterized by a high

---

[1] This analysis is based on the work by Müller (2000) about the chain of delegation and the role of parties in it.
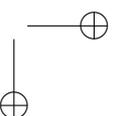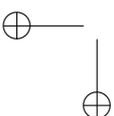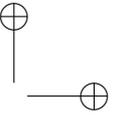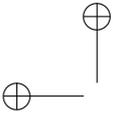
control of citizens over leaders: "if citizens control their leaders, it can be assumed that the latter are (must be) responsive to the former" (Sartori, 1987: 7).

This role of parties in the chain of delegation is also clearly reflected in the functions that the literature attributes to political parties. Thus, the main function is representation, with political parties serving as ways to articulate and express citizens' preferences in decision-making processes. Parties emerge as the main "bridge" between the State and society – be it from the ruled to the rulers in a bottom-up approach, but also in a top to bottom (from the rulers to the ruled) dynamic, in so far as parties act in "informing, educating and influencing public opinion" (Hague *et al.*, 1993: 235). In this respect, we must also consider the important role that they play in the aggregation of interests, transforming the specific demands of diverse agents into coherent and integrated proposals, which also implies mobilizing and socializing citizens politically.

But this centrality of parties cannot be dissociated from a specific type of party – mass parties. These are the parties of representation par excellence, organizing and representing a certain social group. These are parties that articulate class interests, derived from an identifiable cleavage structure, with strong social roots, and high levels of stability in terms of party identification and ideology. These parties are usually associated with a "dense network of social organisations" (Allum 1995: 175), as well as a large number of party members, organized in permanent structures and actively involved in party life at a sub-national level. Its centrality is noticeable in the fact that many authors consider a mass party as the ideal type of party. Duverger (1954) foresaw a "contagion from the left", as the organisational form of mass parties overtook its predecessor, the cadre party; while Sartori (1968) postulates that the consolidation of a party system occurs precisely when parties of notables and cadre parties become mass parties.

However, the pattern of party transformation from the 1960s onwards – reflected in the typology of catch-all parties by Kirchheimer (1966) or the cartelisation of party systems modelled by Katz and Mair (1995) – implies a loss of their traditional functions. Kirchheimer's model suggests a transformation of political parties into electoral machines whose main objective is no longer the representation of specific social strata and rather becomes the maximisation of votes (or at least, in obtaining the necessary votes to govern). This
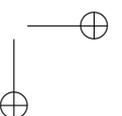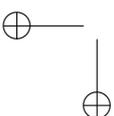
results in a reduction of the weight of ideology and the decline of parties' social anchoring, which is also reflected in a decline of party membership, as the data from Mair and van Biezen (2001) for Western Europe illustrates (Table 1). With regard to the countries where the decline is less evident – Portugal, Greece and Spain –, these simply reflect cases where mass parties never fully emerged, generating patterns of social roots that were born and remained largely superficial.

Table 1: Change in total party affiliation in Western Europe

	Period	Change in the party membership (M) / electorate (E) ratio	Change in numbers of members	Change in numbers as percentage of original membership
France	1978-1999	-3,48	-1.122.128	-64,59
Italy	1980-1998	-5,61	-2.091.887	-51,54
United Kingdom	1980-1998	-2,2	-853.156	-50,39
Norway	1980-1997	-8,04	-218.891	-47,49
Finland	1980-1998	-6,09	-206.646	-34,03
Netherlands	1980-2000	-1,78	-136.459	-31,67
Austria	1980-1999	-10,82	-446.209	-30,21
Switzerland	1977-1997	-4,28	-118.800	-28,85
Sweden	1980-1998	-2,87	-142.533	-28,05
Denmark	1980-1998	-2,16	-70.385	-25,52
Ireland	1980-1998	-1,86	-27.856	-24,47
Belgium	1980-1999	-2,42	-136.382	-22,1
Germany	1980-1999	-1,59	-174.967	-8,95
Portugal	1980-2000	-0,29	50.381	17,01
Greece	1980-1998	3,58	375.000	166,67
Spain	1980-2000	2,22	808.705	250,73

Source: Mair and van Biezen (2001: 12)

Katz and Mair (1995) demonstrate, in turn, how the resources of the State have a growing importance for party organisations, serving to compensate for
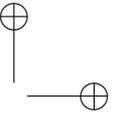
the loss of resources (e.g. financial) that result from a weaker social anchoring. The "bridge" therefore moves away from society and entrenches itself in the State. This transformation has clear implications for the nature of the democratic regime, with Dalton and Wattenberg (2000: 16) suggesting that we should perhaps "think the unthinkable": a democracy without parties.

New media, new bridges?

If the perception of a decline in terms of traditional (mass) party indicators seems to be consensual, the notion of democracy being increasingly less based on political parties is not necessarily seen as problematic. The analysis of some authors, such as Norris (2002), suggests that the "decline of political parties" has been compensated by an increase in forms of political participation that are less centred in political parties, giving rise to the notion of a "democratic Phoenix" (Norris, 2002).

New media are increasingly seen as a central element of this change, occupying the space left by parties in terms of articulation of interests, political socialisation and mobilisation, as is reflected in the increasing ubiquity of terms such as "digital democracy" or "e-democracy". The analysis by Gil de Zúñiga, Veenstra, Vraga, & Shah (2010) suggests that digital media can inspire a reinvention of democracy, postulating that "the ease of use of the Internet, along with its potential anonymity, may allow those who are disengaged from conventional politics to begin to close this gap and allow for a more democratically equal society" (Zúñiga et al, 2010: 46). In this respect, and in a more specific perspective, digital media are seen as potentially serving to involve young people in political processes (Bennett 2008).

Digital media are also seen as having transformed political campaigns (Cogburn & Espinoza-Vasquez 2011; Panagopoulos, ed., 2009) in democratic contexts; and as catalysts of pro-democracy movements in their non-democratic counterparts, as the popularisation of expressions such as "Twitter revolution" or "Facebook revolution" illustrates (see e.g. Mungiu-Pippidi & Munteanu 2009; or Saddy, 2011). The "revolutionary" role of new media is also noticeable in terms of how the news is constructed and consumed, giving rise to the concept of digital media as the "fifth power", thus going beyond traditional media (Newman, Dutton and Blank, 2012).
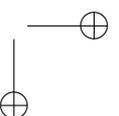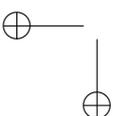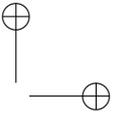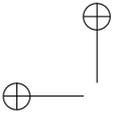
In a general way, the digital arena seems to become the new territory for politics. As Negrine & Papathanassopoulos refer (2011: 41), "we have seen the Internet force the older media of communication – television, the printed press, radio – to adapt their styles and content" to this new context, contributing to a substantial change in the nature of political communication, both in terms of its resources and its practices. Negrine & Papathanassopoulos (2011: 41) characterize this shift in political communication as a *transformation*, constituting a "marked change in its nature, form or appearance". At the same time, these authors consider the role of new media as being reflective of the social uprooting of parties – or, as they say, "a disconnect between parties and their former mass membership base" – which raises new forms of political participation involving bloggers, facebookers and tweeters, among others (Negrine & Papathanassopoulos 2011: 49).

This narrative is without a doubt appealing, suggesting that new media can represent a solution to the challenges faced by contemporary democracies, including the alienation and distancing of citizens in relation to political processes. Moreover, in so far as it associates technological evolution to a positive change in the quality of democracy, this narrative does not differ much from those that are presented in other spheres of human life. In fact, technology has been described as enhancing gains in many areas, ranging from health to transport or from education to agriculture. The notion that technology generates gains for the quality of life is (largely) unopposed. As such, it is not surprising to see this general idea be extended to the political sphere as well.

However, as we will argue below, this conventional narrative may not be entirely appropriate when applied to political processes. In particular, it underestimates the capacity of political parties – and political actors in more general terms – to adapt to these new technological requirements, allowing them to incorporate new digital instruments in the prevailing party rationales. This argument will be developed here around three key dimensions: the cartelisation of politics, which leads to its professionalisation and spectacularisation; the constraints generated by party supply; and, finally, the imposition of the logics of traditional media in new digital media. These points will be illustrated mainly by resorting to the Portuguese case.

In relation to the first of these dimensions, it should be noted that one of the implications of the model of cartelisation is the professionalisation of
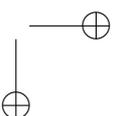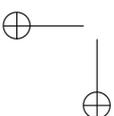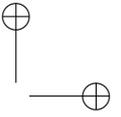
politics, which becomes an "increasingly specialized profession" (Katz and Mair 2009: 758). With the prevalence of professional politicians, whose main source of income is political activity, "the potential personal costs of electoral defeat . . . have increased" (Katz and Mair 2209: 758), and cartelisation becomes a form of professional protection. This helps us understand how cartelisation generates an evaporation of the real substance of competition between parties, even if in terms of some indicators competition is apparently more intense – for example, through higher costs and a greater professionalisation of campaigns (Katz and Mair 1996: 530). Parties (and politicians) ensure their collective survival through the resources of the State (Katz and Mair 1995: 5) – a pattern seen in Portugal not only in the state subsidies to parties, but also through the monopoly of party representation enshrined in the Constitution and the degree of occupation of administrative positions by party members.

At the level of the system, cartelisation generates incentives for all parties to adopt strategies that do not fatally injure their main rivals, as that could open up the political space to new parties that are potentially less cooperative (Katz and Mair 1995: 19-29, 23). To use a phrase from the satirical novel *Primary Colors*, it establishes a pattern of "pro-wrestling politics". Just as in professional wrestling – where tussles that seem to be extremely violent are in fact carefully staged – the competition between the major parties distances itself from aspects that may affect the nature of the party system and, consequently, the survival of the parties themselves. Politics thus becomes a media spectacle where the substantive debate on public policies gives way to episodic controversies.

These patterns do not disappear when we introduce the digital media in the political arena (and new media may even reinforce these patterns of professionalized spectacle politics, given the technical constraints that they impose). The case of political blogs in Portugal illustrates this pattern quite well. As a privileged observer stresses:

> Blogs have become mimetic mirrors of parties and political fractions, and blogs are today a "business venture", in terms of the management of individual careers, mainly at the political level.
>
> (Pereira, 2012)

Indeed, political blogs tend to present very clear political alignments –
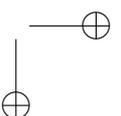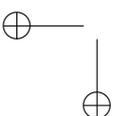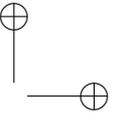
even if they are rarely explicit – and their online discourse frequently replicates party discourses, albeit with a language of its own. Thus, it seems to be more accurate to claim that it was the dominant pattern of politics that shaped blogs in Portugal, and not the reverse. Digital media does not seem to have generated the profound political transformation mentioned by Negrine & Papathanassopoulos (2011); instead, what we see is a superficial adaptation, with politics co-opting the new media, and subsuming it within the prevailing logic. Moreover, this pattern is reinforced by the not so rare phenomenon of political recruitment from blogs, also pointed out by Pacheco Pereira, which reinforces this idea of a co-optation of digital space by parties.

The second dimension relates to the constraints generated by party supply. The relation between demand (voters) and supply (parties) in the electoral market is not far from the proverbial "causality dilemma" of the egg and the chicken. At first glance, it may seem easier to determine the initial origin in the relationship between party systems (supply-side) and voters (demand-side) than between chickens and eggs. Indeed, political party systems are to a large extent determined by election results, which in turn are the product of electoral choices.

However, in practice, the question of what comes first is more complex. This is because if party systems seem to be a consequence of electoral behaviour, they also emerge as a potential constraint on electoral behaviour. The existence of a substantial temporal autocorrelation in results across elections is a good indicator of this potential effect. Indeed, the result of previous elections is often a highly significant predictor of the outcome of subsequent elections. Taking into account that parties formally contest each election *ab novo*, nothing prevents voters from changing their vote in each election, at the individual and aggregate level. In probabilistic terms, we should see a much greater change in terms of votes between elections. And if we take into account other data – such as, for example, the relatively low levels of trust in political parties throughout Europe – this could even be an expected phenomenon. However, radical changes in electoral behaviour, as the one that occurred in Italy at the beginning of the 1990s, are rare, and this infrequency is captured by their description as "political earthquakes".

According to Mair (1997), the continuation of a party system occurs precisely through the constraints of choice that it imposes on voters. Using the conception of Schattschneider that "the definition of the alternatives is the
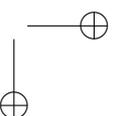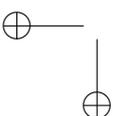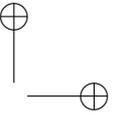
supreme instrument of power", Mair argues that a party system imposes a specific political language where a particular conflict becomes predominant – the main dimension of competition. Thus, party systems "become 'about' something" (Mair, 1997: 14), generating a particular structure of competition, which is mainly determined by the competition for government.[2] As Sartori (1994: 37, quoted in Mair, 1997: 191) notes, it is "when the electorate takes for granted a given set of political routes and alternatives very much as drivers take for granted a given system of highways, [that] a party system has reached the stage of structural consolidation qua system". In this sense, voters are constrained on their electoral choice by the dominant nature of the party system, which leads to a "narrowing of the [electoral] 'support market'" by the parties.

This perspective is consistent with the analysis made by McDonald and Budge (2005: 61), who see elections as imposing a structure of choices upon citizens. Voters are thus potentially constrained in their choice by the range of parties and party programs – in other words, the supply-side can significantly influence the choices on the demand-side. In this context, it is likely that the constraints on the supply-side limit not only the choices of voters but also the impact of new media on politics. The more defined this "set of political routes and alternatives" that voters take for granted, the more limited will be the ability of new media to change these "routes and alternatives". While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to assess this effect directly, studies on the Portuguese case point to the existence of substantial supply-side constraints on voters (Freire, 2004; Jalali, 2009), which is consistent with a mitigation of the impact of new media on national politics.

Finally, the third dimension relates to the predominance of traditional communication logics in new media. As Fenton (2010) highlights, new media often simply replicate and accentuate the dominant discourse – or even degrade it, as a result of the pressures (of production time and cost reduction) they bring upon journalists. Although Fenton's position is not entirely pessimistic – noting some successful cases of the impact of digital media – the author warns against the "techno-optimistic" expectation that new media will inevitably generate gains in terms of the quality of democracy. Once again,

---

[2] It is the idea that the voters do not solely express preferences for specific parties; "rather, albeit not always to the same degree in different party systems (...) they are also expressing preferences for potential governments" (Mair 1997: 222-223).
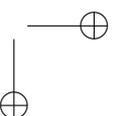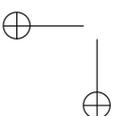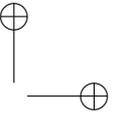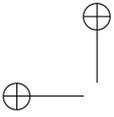
there is a pattern of absorption of new media by the prevailing logics, and not a transformation of the latter by the former.

New media, old politics?

What is the role then of new media in politics? We can identify two extremes in its use. At one of these extremes seems to be the Portuguese case, in which new media are incorporated into the political communication repertoire without changing it significantly. At the other extreme we can point to the American case, where new media seems to have transformed politics – although, as we will argue, the perception that this has generated a greater role for citizen participation is, to a large extent, illusory.

The absence of transformation in the Portuguese case is particularly evident during periods of electoral campaigns, which – as Gillespie and Gallagher state (1989: 170) – represent the moment of greatest involvement and interaction between parties and society in Portugal. Portuguese electoral campaigns are fundamentally spectacles designed for the media, and in particular for television. Direct interaction with citizens is scarce and generally ineffective. Examining the electoral campaign of 1999, I mentioned[3] that the party members and candidates are aware that the practice of going to fairs and markets to distribute plastic bags and trinkets with the party logo has virtually no electoral returns. Nevertheless, as a candidate told me at the time, the parties must continue to go to these fairs and markets and offer these trinkets in order to mark territory and show the electorate – in particular, their own electorate – that the party is in the field.

Moving one decade forward in this analysis, it is clear that Portuguese parties have a presence in new media, from websites to social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. However, this presence seems to generate a reproduction of conventional political discourse, in a logic that is fundamentally unidirectional. The presence of parties in digital media does not seem to have caused any significant change in the nature or form of party interaction with voters. Instead, the presence seems to be mainly dictated by the need to be present in new media, rather than by the possibilities that these media provide. Thus, new media seem to be the functional equivalent of going to fairs

---

[3] Jalali (2007).
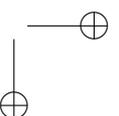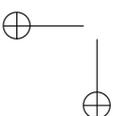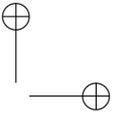
and markets – a form of marking territory and showing segments of the electorate that the party is in the digital world. But the interaction with the electorate remains superficial, be it either in the "real" or "virtual" space.

At the other extreme we can consider the American case, where new media have revolutionized the way of doing politics. Existing studies on Barack Obama's presidential campaign in 2008 tend to be unanimous on this effect. One author even considers that Obama would probably not have won the presidential elections of 2008 without the effective use he made of new media (Clayton 2010: 152).

The importance of digital media seems to be even more evident in the presidential elections of 2012. In part, new media were used as a way to increase the exposure of the candidates (Wortham 2012). However, the aspect that has been highlighted the most in Obama's victories is his database on voters which was developed in the campaign of 2008 and reinforced in 2012. Talbot (2008: 78) describes how this database and digital tools allowed Obama to campaign:

> The MyBO [Obama's social networking site, www.my.barackobama.com] databases could slice and dice lists of volunteers by geographic micro region and pair people with appropriate tasks, including prepping nearby voters on caucus procedure. "You could go online and download the names, addresses, and phone numbers of 100 people in your neighborhood to get out and vote – or the 40 people on your block who were undecided," Trippi says. "Here is the leaflet: print it out and get it to them. It was you, at your computer, in your house, printing and downloading. They did it all very well."

In this context, it is important to emphasize the role of digital media in the collection and analysis of voter data. As Beckett states (2012), Obama's campaign gathered a considerable set of individual-level information on voters through digital tools. This allowed the campaign to subsequently adjust and adapt its messages depending on the profile of voters, as elaborated from these data. Larson, Shaw and Beckett (2012) illustrate this point with the various versions of a simple email from Obama's campaign, with each one being adjusted to the type of recipient. Thus, politics adopts the strategies of marketing and sales based on data mining, which delivers political messages "tailored" to each voter.
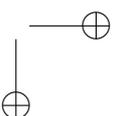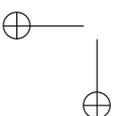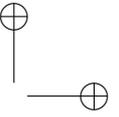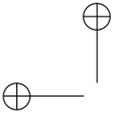
If the American case represents a substantial change in politics, it also raises a question: to what extent does this transformation lead to a more genuine connection between citizens and their representatives? In fact, this type of campaign can generate a perception of proximity between the electorate and the elected that is, ultimately, potentially illusory. The principal-agent relationship – in which the voter, as principal, delegates decisions to a party or politician – is subverted, transforming itself into a process where the agent mobilizes the principal, transmitting to him – to each voter, individually – what he wants to hear. Contrary to generating effective citizen participation, digital media serves to reinforce political agents. There is therefore a transformation, but not necessarily one that favours the quality of democracy.

Overall, then, we find that the influence of digital media is deeply facilitated by partisan strategies (and/or individual politicians, as in the American case). Either by taking the "extreme" Portuguese case, or the US one, we can see that new technological tools can be subsumed to the dominant political logic, and may even, at the limit, reinforce it.

Conclusion

Digital media are an unavoidable part of contemporary societies, and their impact is noticeable in many spheres of human life. In this context, their impact on politics is inevitable. However, and as this chapter sought to explore, the effect is not necessarily the reinvention of democracy as suggested by some authors. Rather, an analysis of the media must also take into account the effect of the political context, and the role of agency that political actors have, which allows them to adapt to new technologies – and, potentially, absorb these technologies within prevailing logics. Adapting the old Italian proverb – "*fatta la legge, trovato l'inganno*" – we could say that also in this area political agents are able to find ways to circumvent the effects of new media.

In the absence of a virtuous and automatic transformation of democracy, exogenously generated by digital means, the future of democracy is likely to depend on factors that are more prosaic, but perhaps also more effective: citizens and institutions. In particular, citizens that are more involved and institutional mechanisms that promote and integrate this greater participation. In this sense, the future reinvention of democracy is replaced by the same pro-

cesses that underpinned the previous reinventions of democracy; and implies the same sacrifices that sustained the democratic gains of the last century.
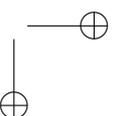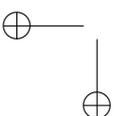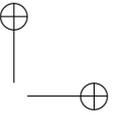
References

Allum, P. (1995). *State and Society in Western Europe*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Beckett, L. (2012). "Three Things We Ofn't Know About Obama's Massive Voter Database", ProPublica, 27 Mar. 2012. URL: www.propublica.org [accessed on 2.10.2013].

Bennett, L. (2008). Changing Citizenship in the Digital Age. In L. Bennett (ed.), *Civic Life Online: Learning How Digital Media Can Engage Youth* (pp. 1-24). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Bogdanor, V. (1983). Introduction. In V. Bogdanor and D. Butler (eds.), *Democracy and Elections* (pp. 1-19). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Clayton, D. M. (2010). *The presidential campaign of Barack Obama: The critical analysis of the racially transcendent strategy 1987-1990*. New York: Routledge.

Cogburn, D. L. and Espinoza-Vasquez, F. K. (2011). From Networked Nominee to Networked Nation: Examining the Impact of Web 2.0 and Social Media on Political Participation and Civic Engagement in the 2008 Obama Campaign. *Journal of Political Marketing*, 10 (1-2), 189-213.

Dahl, R. (1971). *Polyarchy: participation and opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Dalton, R. and Wattenberg, M. (2000). Unthinkable Democracy: Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies. In R. Dalton and M. Wattenberg (eds.), *Parties without Partisans: Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies* (pp. 3-16). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Duverger, M. (1954). *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*. London: Methuen Press.
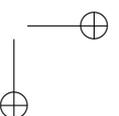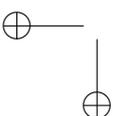
Fenton, N. (2009). Drowning or waving? New media, journalism and democracy. In N. Fenton (ed.), *New media old news: Journalism and democracy in the digital age* (pp. 3-16). London: Sage.

Freire, A. (2004). Voto por temas: orientações perante as políticas públicas, desempenho do governo e decisão eleitoral. In A. Freire, M. Costa Lobo and P. Magalhães (eds.),*Portugal a Votos. As Eleições Legislativas de 2002*. Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais.

Gil de Zúñiga, H., Veenstra, A., Vraga, E., and Shah, D. (2010). Digital Democracy: Reimagining Pathways to Political Participation. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 7(1), 36-51.

Gillespie, R. and Gallagher, T. (1989). Democracy and authority in the socialist parties of Southern Europe. In T Gallagher and A. Williams (eds.), *Southern European Socialism* (pp. 163-187). Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Hague, R., Harrop, M. and Breslin, S. (1993). *Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction*. Londres: Macmillan

Jalali, C. (2009). No meio está a virtude? As preferências e posições de eleitores e partidos nas legislativas de 2005. In M. C. Lobo and P. Magalhães (eds.), *As Eleições Legislativas e Presidenciais: As eleições legislativas e presidenciais 2005-2006* (pp. 155-182). Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais,.

Jalali, C. (2007). *Partidos e Democracia em Portugal (1974-2005)*. Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais.

Katz, R. S. and Mair, P. (2009). The cartel party thesis: A restatement. *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 7 (4), pp. 753-766.

Katz, R. and Mair, P. (1995). Changing Models of Party Organization: The Emergence of the Cartel Party. *Party Politics*, vol. 1 (1), pp. 5-28.

Katz, R. and Mair, P. (1996). Cadre, Catch-all or Cartel? A Rejoinder. *Party Politics*, vol. 2 (2), pp. 525-534.

Kirchheimer, O. (1966). The Transformation of the Western European Party Systems. In J. LaPalombara and M. Weiner (eds.), *Political Parties and Political Development* (pp. 177-200). Princeton: Princeton University Press,

Larson, J., Shaw, A. and Beckett, L. (2012). "Message Machine: "You Probably Don't Know Janet", ProPublica, 6 Mar. 2012. URL: www.propublica.org [accesssed on 10.2.2013].

Lijphart, A. (1999). *Patterns of democracy: government forms and performance in thirty-six countries*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Mainwaring, S., Brinks, D., Pérez-Liñan, A. (2001). Classifying political regimes in Latin America, 1945-1999. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 36 (1): 37-65.

Mair, P. (1997). *Party System Change: Approaches and Interpretations*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Mair, P. and van Biezen, I. (2001). Party Membership in Twenty European Democracies, 1980-2000. *Party Politics*, vol. 7 (1), pp. 5-21.

McDonald, M. D. and Budge, I. (2005). *Elections, Parties, Democracy: Conferring the Median Mandate*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Müller, W. (2000). Political parties in parliamentary democracies: Making delegation and accountability work. *European Journal of Political Research*, 37(3), 309-333.

Mungiu-Pippidi, A. and Munteanu, I. (2009). Moldova's "Twitter Revolution". *Journal of Democracy*, 20(3), 136-142.

Negrine and Papathanassopoulos (2011). The transformation of rentalo.com communication. In S. Papathanassopoulos (ed.), *Media Perspectives is the 21st Century* (pp. 41-54). Abingdon: Routledge.

Newman, N. Dutton, W. H. and Blank, G. (2012). Social Media in the Changing Ecology of News: The Fourth and Fifth Estate in Britain. *International Journal of Internet Science*, 7 (1), pp. 6-22.
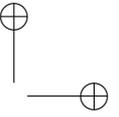
Norris, P. (2002). *Democratic Phoenix: Reinventing Political Activism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Panagopoulos, C. (ed.) (2009). *Politicking Online: The Transformation of Election Campaign Communications*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Pereira, J. Pacheco (2012). "Perguntas que não levam a parte nenhuma (II)", *Público*, 4 Fevereiro 2012.

Saddy, R. (2011). Social media revolutions. *Journal of Professional Communication*, 1 (1), pp. 31-33.

Sartori, Giovanni. (1987). *The theory of democracy revisited*, Chatham (NJ): Chatham House Publishers.

Sartori, G. (1968). Political Development and Political Engineering. *Public Policy*, vol. XVII, pp. 261-298

Schattschneider, E.E. (1942). *Party Government*. New York: Rinehart.

Schumpeter, J. (1947). *Capitalism, socialism and democracy*. London: Harper & Brothers.

Talbot, D. (2008). How Obama Really Did It. *Technology Review*, 111 (5), 78-83.

Wortham, J. (2012). "Campaigns Use Social Media to Lure blood gasses after adding Voters", New York Times online, Oct 7. 2012. URL: www.nytimes.com. [accessed on 10.2.2013].
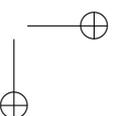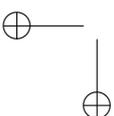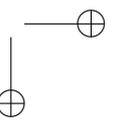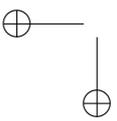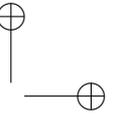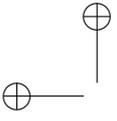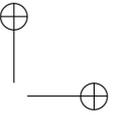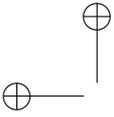
An alternative approach: portuguese associativism and trade union associativism

Daniela Fonseca

Introduction

There was a headline in the newspaper *Sol*, dated March 20, 2012, with the following title: "*CGTP negoceia com radicais*" (CGTP negotiates with radicals). With a brief reading of the proposed sentence one could have believed in an illegal negotiation between a trade union and a new social movement (the radicals). Inside the newspaper, the perception of the news changed drastically, as it was merely an isolated act of that trade union with new social movements, some of them with pacifist purposes. Without questioning the news value, or its more or less manipulative nature, we took advantage of the best that the example has to relaunch the theme of associativism, be it conservative or contemporary in nature. And it is not indifferent to make that exception because there have been remarkable changes in the last two years in Portuguese associativism. This is especially evident in relation to the theme of labour, which has been magnified by the television cameras.

There has been a proliferation of new social movements, in the national public space, and these are being presented to the common citizen as more attractive products than the traditional trade union associations. It is well known that in the 1970s and early 1980s trade unions had a real power and there was a boom of associated members (in Portugal this boom only occurred in the 1990s). Today, and taking into account the general decrease of unionization rates (Estanque, 2008; Hyman, 2004a, 2004b; Ferreira, 2001; Santos, 2001), reflecting the precipitous drop of associativist involvement in general (Viegas and Santos, 2009; Viegas *et al.*, 2010) and of its own exclusion from party politics (Estanque, 2005, 2008; Mair, 2003) in particular, it is important to know how these structures can recover and maintain the strength they once had. We could also ask: in a country with low indices of associative involvement, what can be expected from trade union involvement, especially in a period that provides new ways to fight from the distance of a simple click?
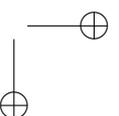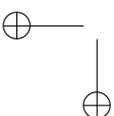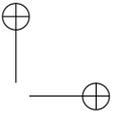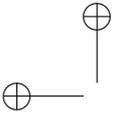
There is strong evidence that allows us to think that the force of trade unionism began to be inhibited by new forms of public intervention, both social and political, and from new social movements as a new radicalism of the middle class. The question that arises is what is reserved for the new and old social actors: confrontation or complement? Carvalho da Silva believes that more than opponents these groups should cooperate:

> We really need the existence and concrete action of social movements. Because they themselves are builders of thought, in the most profound sense of the word, through the collective action that characterises them and that is an expression of human interaction.[1] (2003: 42)

This is also Alberto Melucci's point of view when he states that "the emergence of movements already characterizes them as winners, because their mere existence is enough to affect cultural codes and dominant symbolic systems" (quoted in Picolotto, 2007: 173). In spite of this, there is a curious fact that some of the more prominent members of antiglobalization movements derived from trade unions and (more radical) worker ideologies; this is what happened in Seattle (1999), whose leaders were provided by North American trade unions (Wieviorka, 2003); and this is the case of Portugal in some protests coming from new social movements, where the more or less discreet and public presence of some political leaders and trade unions mainly linked to the left stand out.

It should be noted that currently the States themselves impel the proliferation of these movements, either to exert control over their most virulent forms of action, or to take advantage of some of its educational, cultural and social potential. According to Jorge Machado (2007), the State began to see strategic and necessary partners in some new social actors:

> The incorporation of these social actors to the political sphere has been successful in inverting the logic of conflict to one of cooperation, thus providing a greater range of civilian institutions in the context of a democratic governance (...) the change

---

[1] All quotes have been translated from Portuguese by Rui Vitorino Azevedo, unless otherwise noted.
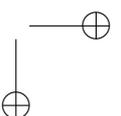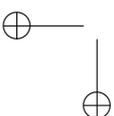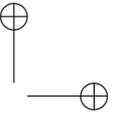
culminated with the recognition, on the part of national laws, of the legal and political status of such social formations. Then, the State started to incorporate, through institutional and political arrangements, the social action of organizations originated in civil society, as it is noticeable in the case of non-governmental organizations (...) [Thus] social movements have come to play important roles as catalysts of social demands not contemplated by the State – whether through public policies, or through the lack of recognition of these social actors as political actors. (Machado, 2007: 255)

Viegas and Santos (2009) hold a similar position when they state:

The partnerships between the State and associations, in particular the IPSS, satisfy all sides: individuals, because they increase their skills, the IPSS because it broadens their field of action, the State because, at a time of shrinking expenditures, it finds a formula for regulating and maintaining services provided to citizens. (2009: 122)

However, it is important to find out whether the State may or not delegate functions that should be their own to third parties. By resorting to associativism, the State sends the invoice to civil society, fleeing from some of its most key responsibilities.

Despite the interest in this issue, the current article has other objectives. First, we would like to ask what associativism is, what it serves and how it is presented at a national scale, and secondly, how trade union associativism is characterized in Portugal and in the world.

1. Associativism: virtues and imperfections

Presently, we consider that there are two generalized evils in associativism: on the one hand, the registration of a certain accommodation/institutionalisation in traditional associations and in the performance of their leaders; on the other hand, the emergence of a new type of associativism at a global scale, combining violent practices with new social themes and diverse identity flags.
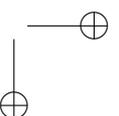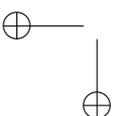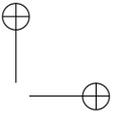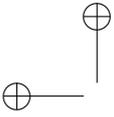
Let us start at the beginning and see what an association is. By association we understand the phenomenon that occurs when two or more people offer, in a permanent and continuous way, knowledge, activities, or projects, for the benefit of the common good. It is not enough to have charitable objectives; the associations must have statutes, regulations and autonomous management so that they can benefit from the figure of public utility, which gives them a set of tax benefits. It has, therefore, a legal personality and is moved by objectives of mutual assistance and cooperation.

Such a broad definition is one of the major problems in the study of this theme: the plurality of forms and identities that allow such distinct groups to be marked. In other words, the scientific sources of associativism are as scattered as the nuances that these associations may have. And it is not difficult to see several sciences (Sociology, Political Science, Management, Economics, Law) reflecting on this topic. But, it is also not easy to establish theoretical categories that are sufficiently comprehensive for the multiplicity of associations that proliferate. Viegas and Santos (2009: 123) propose, in spite of this, a valid categorization, which combines the perspectives of Wessel (1997) and Van Deth and Kreuter (1998), stressing three large groups of association: (a) *the associations of social integration*, which contains the associations of social and religious solidarity, the cultural, sporting and recreational associations and the associations of parents and residents; (b) *the associations for the defence of group interests*, which comprise trade unions, professional associations and pensioners; business or financial associations; and c) *the associations that express new social movements*, representing the defence of citizenship rights, consumer, ecologist and environmental associations, and associations for the defence of animals.

The proposed categories envision the problem of associative heterogeneity more easily, comprising those who wonder about the validity of the associations for the functioning of democratic systems. Following Eric Olin Wright, Viegas and Santos (2009: 119) question if more or less associativism means more or less autonomy from the State, whether there is more or less social control, or more or less democratic participation. The authors also point out two paradoxes: a) How can associations have so much importance, if only a minority of citizens participate in them?; (b) If associations are so important, how do we explain the decline of associative involvement in recent decades? (*ibid.*, 121).
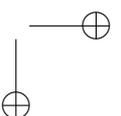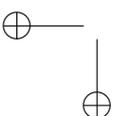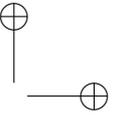
Contrary to some more radical critical positions that tend to see problems in associativism, such as the interests of classes or the effects of faction, at the expense of the general interest, whatever that may be, it is important to recall the classical perspectives by Toqueville and Putnam. From the famous Democracy in America emerges the idea that the greater the associative participation of citizens the stronger the Democracy is. Putnam found a positive correlation between the higher rates of associative participation, the density of social networks, personal confidence and tolerance, and the indices of political interest and civic participation. He showed how associations are relevant in the improvement of democracy. The inverse is also true, that is, the increase of individualism and the decrease of associative involvement would be equivalent to a decrease of civic mobilization, political participation, and the control over institutions and political agents. Thus, Putnam assumes that:

> One of the reasons for the contemporary democratic malaise – that are clues to the apathy and disenchantment in relation to policy, the reduction of civic mobilization, for example, in electoral terms and the growing diffidence in relation to political institutions and political agents – is the erosion of social and cultural conditions. (quoted in Viegas et al., 2010: 160)

In short, one possible interpretation on associativism involvement depends on how one can understand their virtues and flaws. On the side of virtues, we highlight the fact that associations guarantee more information to citizens, more symbolic skills, greater participation in civic exercise, greater public projection on social problems, the representation of interests, and influence on the implementation of public policies, among others (Viegas and Santos, 2008: 120; Viegas et al., 2010: 161). On the side of imperfections we can stress all the indicators of extremist action of some groups that prevent, in some cases, the normal functioning of democratic institutions.

Based on these considerations, it is necessary to know how Portuguese associativism moves, and evaluate their main characteristics and trends in relation to other European countries.
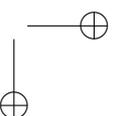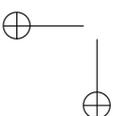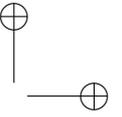
2. Portuguese associativism

José Manuel Viegas, Sérgio Faria and Susana Santos (2010: 164-165) cite the study *Citizen, Involvement, Democracy*, concerning the years 2001-2003, which helps characterize Portugal in terms of associative participation. In this study, Portugal has an average level of associative involvement (as in Spain), placing it among the countries with strong associative activities (Scandinavia and Central Europe) and the countries of weak associative activities, as in the East. During this period, it was noted that 46.6% of Portuguese people were not involved in associations. In Eastern Europe, where Moldova and Romania are case studies, the rate of involvement was even lower. Here, 80% of the population did not have any type of associative relationship. It is the opposite case in Scandinavian countries (Denmark and Norway) with 90% of associative involvement. Germany and The Netherlands had slightly lower values that reach 70%.

As far as the types of association at the date of this study, in Portugal, Fátima, Fado and Football were not only a myth, since the associations with greater involvement by citizens would be those that are characterized as *associations of social and religious solidarity*, the *sports, cultural and recreational associations*, immediately followed by *trade, professional and pensioner associations* (ibid., 166). In the opposite sense of what happened with other European countries (Central Europe and Scandinavia), the lowest levels of Portuguese associativism would include *consumer associations, and associations for the defence of citizenship rights and social values*.

In terms of diachronic evolution, it is important to note, however, that from 2001 to 2008, the great majority of the Portuguese do not belong to any type of associativism. In data from 2008, 83.6% of the Portuguese population did not have any type of associative involvement, as can be shown by analysing Table 1 and Graph 1.
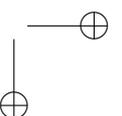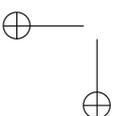
Table 1: Diachronic Evolution of Portuguese Associativism

	Modalities of association	2001	2008
New social movements	Organizations of civic action	4,1	2,1
Social Integration	Sports Clubs	11,9	4,1
	Cultural Organizations	3,0	1,4
	Recreational Clubs and Associations	8,2	2,6
	Religious Organizations	8,9	1,8
	Social Organizations	4,0	4,0
Defence of interests	Unions	5,4	4,4
	Professional Associations	1,3	2,5
	Employers' Organizations	2,1	0,8

Sources: CID Project 2001; Freire, A. and Viegas, J. M. L. (coord.), "Inquérito à População Portuguesa — base de dados, 2008", *in* Freire, Viegas e Seiceira (2009), quoted by Viegas and Santos (2009: 131).

Graph 2: Diachronic Evolution of Portuguese Associativism (2001-2008)
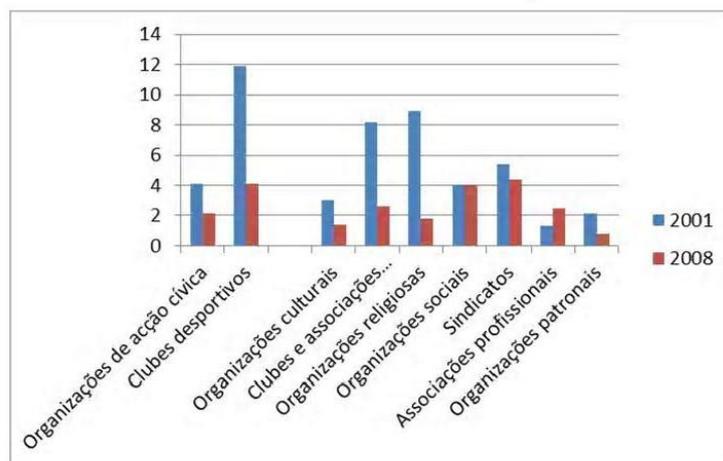
Source: developed by the author.
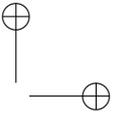
Based on the analysis of the proposed elements it becomes evident that there are some losses especially in relation to religious associations, which dropped from 8.9% to 1.8%. This may be explained by the greater secularization of Portuguese society, as claimed by the authors (Viegas and Santos, 2009: 127-129). With regard to the evident decrease in *sporting and recreational associations*, this can be justified by the economic crises that have arisen with more intensity since 2006, depriving families of the budgets available for these associations; on this, the authors' observations are not conclusive.

In the next section, we would like to deal with the particular case of unionism and its global decline, which is justified by various factors.

3. Portuguese trade union associativism

There are several transitions occurring in the world of work at a national and international level. In the 1980s, the debate centred on the global decline of union affiliation rates, a little throughout the world (trend that did not accompany Portugal, as we have seen). Today, there are new themes that go beyond the loss of activists for other types of militancy.

Several studies have demonstrated the presence of a negative phase with regard to trade union associativism. João Freire, in the book *Livro Branco das Relações Laborais (The White Book of Labour Relations)*, in 2007, and Paulo Pereira de Almeida, in a study on independent trade unions, in 2009, conclude two striking realities for Portuguese trade unionism: extreme ignorance by public opinion about what unions are and their purpose; and a large difference between the rates of *Portuguese unionization* and those that occur in the countries of northern Europe – this last factor cannot be detached from a macro trend which is their own *associativism*, as we have seen. Apart from this, the paradox happens when, in fact, the Portuguese have a rather positive appraisal "on the role of trade unions, both in regards to the protection of jobs for salary employees, or in regards to the quality of the working conditions of these employees" (*Livro Branco das Relações Laborais*, hereafter, LBRL, 2007: 71). It is also curious to verify that, "despite the importance attributed to trade unions, the answers obtained indicate that more than two thirds of respondents are not nor have they ever unionised" (LBRL, 2007: 72).

This means that, despite the positive valorisation of the role of trade uni-

ons: a) 2/3 of the Portuguese were never unionized; b) there is more than 60% of the Portuguese who do not sympathize with any trade union; (c) more than half of the Portuguese did not recognize the effectiveness of any union; and d) 4/5 of the Portuguese declare that they have never gone on strike (LBRL, 2007: 85) (as you can verify by looking at Table 2).
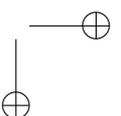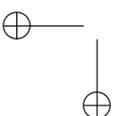
Table 2: Participation in Strikes

Never went on strike	82,4
Went on strike more than five years ago	8,3
In the past five years went on strike once	4,3
In the past five years went on strike more than once	4,9
Total	100
Nr.	1023

Source: Comission for the Livro Branco das Relações Laborais (LBRL, 2007: 77)

To that extent, it can be said that the national workers are able, at the same time, to express a high degree of dissatisfaction in relation to a series of questions related to salaries, the autonomy of working hours, the opportunities for career advancement, and at the same time maintain a low rate of unionization (LBRL, 2007: 81).

If it is true that the suggested ambiguity does not allow you to pinpoint the real causes of a chronic distancing of the Portuguese from trade union associativism, there are several justifications pointed out by some authors that help us understand the global crisis of trade unionism.

Rodrigues states that the main causes for the decline of trade union associativism should be sought in: a) the flexibility of labour relations, with a corresponding change in the growth of self-employment and part-time jobs, excessive subcontracting, the entry of women in the labour market, the increase of working at home; (b) the reduction of available jobs as a result of technological innovation; c) the relocation of businesses; (d) the use of new forms of management that are conducive to an individualistic relationship with the workplace and disaggregate the connection of workers with trade unions (quoted in Ramalho and Santana, 2003: 25).

Conversely, Huw Beynon highlights that the points of pressure placed on
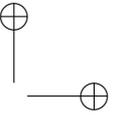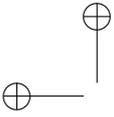
trade unions are caused by multinational companies, international agencies (IMF) and nation states. With respect to multinational companies, they are responsible for a weakening of the power and scope of trade unions, as the author suggests with some examples, from which we extracted one: the company *Hyster* announced that one of its European factories should close, but would save those that proposed a greater reduction of wages (Beynon, 2003: 48).

In addition to external pressures, Hyman (2004a, 2004b) emphasizes a breach in communitarian solidarity and an erosion in the image of trade unions as social partners. Currently, with the lowering of blue-collar workers, it becomes difficult to maintain the rates of trade union affiliation. Hyman affirms that the figure of the normal worker disappeared from the horizon of trade unions, which he characterizes as follows:

> The "normal" worker, and hence the "normal" potential trade union member, was thus a full-time employee whose employment status was not merely casual. By extension, the "normal" employee was a man who was presumed to be the "bread-winner" for his family. (Hyman, 2004b: 20)

In addition to this change, Hyman recalls the erosion of the status of the social partner, caused by the loss of union affiliation (2004b: 19) and by changes in the trade union agenda, which was formerly linked to wages, weekly rhythms and employment defence and today is entirely dedicated to new themes.

> This in turn shaped the typical trade union agenda: predominantly concerned with terms and conditions of employment, and in particular with three aspects: achieving the payment of a "family wage", defining and reducing the standard working week, and constraining the employer's ability to hire and fire at will. (Hyman, 2004b: 20)

This means that we are not only faced with the existence of new forms of employment, where we can include temporary jobs, jobs from employment agencies, part-time jobs, "green receipts" (used by independent workers in
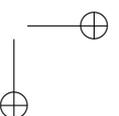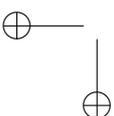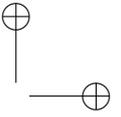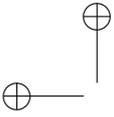
Portugal), self-employment, but also in the presence of a new *type of worker*, which according to Standing, is classified into seven categories:

> (. . .) the elite, the salariat, "proficians" (those without stable employment but with valuable marketable skills), traditional core workers, low-skilled "flexiworkers" who depend on casualised job opportunities, the unemployed, and those detached altogether from regular (or legal) work. (Standing quoted in Hyman, 2004b: 21)

Hyman does not neglect other critical factors of trade unionism, as globalisation, the intensification of transnational competition, the pressures of multinationals, and the policies of a minimal State, but emphasizes central aspects of the world of work in relation to the erosion of the normal working relationship, which has come to include female work and the work carried out by unprotected minorities. The consequences of these changes manifest itself especially in a loss of capacity to organize a set of workers that is so heterogeneous.

Although there is no direct relationship between this logistic inability and the general demoralization of trade unions (a fact that has been furthered by other factors), the truth is that they have lost, in recent times, the aura of protector of the weakest. Other aspects, such as ideological deterioration, the lack of internal democracy, or the absence of a true internationalism, justify this long demoralisation. In fact, unions have survived in national moulds, or have been confined to the territorial limits of the nation state. And the truth is that the nation state has lost its own space to manoeuvre against the economic power of multinationals and the political power of transnational organizations of which it is part.

Conclusion

When you choose a title as *Political Parties and Democracy. An Alternative Approach: Portuguese Associativism and Trade Union Associativism*, it is believed that, sooner or later, there will be a discussion about the relations between Democracy, associativism and trade unions. If the question of political parties appeared here only for reasons of the general structure, not having
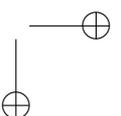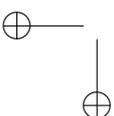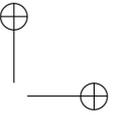
been contemplated in this article, the remaining components of the title, and even if at a superficial level, were developed in one way or another.

We looked at, along with other authors, the virtues and defects of associativism, recalling its heterogeneity and relationship with democratic systems and we also gave a brief analysis on the Portuguese case, stressing its weak activity, enhanced, among other things, by the fact that Portugal is a southern country and a young democracy. We also spoke about the case of trade union associativism and its weaknesses, although not all of its constraints have been pointed out, due to constraints of space, time and relevance. We mentioned that there is a widespread tendency for which people do not understand the role of trade unions, although they may express sympathy for them. We also noted that, in spite of the Portuguese showing discontent with the situations of conflict that occur in the world of work, the vast majority of them have never joined a union, or even gone on strike.

By observing several studies, we noticed that there has been an increase of the concerns inherent to new social movements that happen daily in Portuguese society; in addition to being more attractive, innovative and free in some cases, these are proposed as alternatives to a world hungry for alternatives.

Under the penalty of trade unions not seeing the threat that the new social actors represent, we must say that the battle is being lost and that the ideological battle is on its way to be lost. If traditional autism, so often mentioned by journalists, scholars and public opinion, is not urgently compensated with an approximation to the discourses and agendas of new social movements, the probability of trade unions surviving is lower with the passing of each day.

References

Almeida, P. P. (2009). *O sindicato-empresa. Novas vias para o sindicalismo independente*. Lisboa: Bnomics, Deplano Network.

Beynon, H. (2003). O sindicalismo tem futuro no século XXI? In M. A. Santana & J. R. Ramalho (Org.), *Além da Fábrica, trabalhadores, sindicatos e a nova questão social*. Coleção Mundo do Trabalho, São Paulo: Boitempo Editorial.
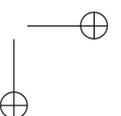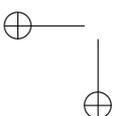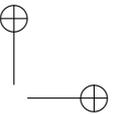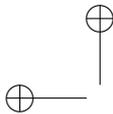
Comissão para o Livro Branco das Relações Laborais (2007). *Livro Branco das Relações Laborais*. Lisboa: Edição do MTSS.

Estanque, E. (2006). A questão social e a democracia no início do século XXI – participação cívica, desigualdades sociais e sindicalismo. *Revista Finisterra*, vol. 55-56-57: 77-99.

Estanque, E. (2005). Trabalho, desigualdades sociais e sindicalismo. *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, 71: 113-140.

Estanque, E. (1999). Acção colectiva, comunidade e movimentos sociais: para um estudo dos movimentos de protesto público. *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, 55: 85-111.

Ferreira, A. C. (2001). Para uma concepção decente e democrática do trabalho e dos seus direitos: (Re)pensar o direito das relações laborais. In Boaventura S. Santos, (Org.), *Globalização, fatalidade ou utopia?* Porto: Edições Afrontamento.

Hyman, R. (2004a). The Future of Trade Unions. In A. Verma & T. A. Kochan (Editors), *Unions in the 21st Century. An International Perspective* (pp.17-29). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hyman, R. (2004b). An Emerging Agenda for Trade Unions? In R. Munck (Editor), *Labour and Globalisation. Results and Prospects* (pp. 19-33). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Machado, J. A. (2007). Ativismo em rede e conexões identitárias: novas perspectivas para os movimentos sociais. *Sociologias*, 18, July/Dec. Available at http://seer.ufrgs.br (accessed on 24 August 2011).

Mair, P. (2003). Os partidos políticos e a democracia. *Análise Social*, vol. XXXVIIIb (167), pp. 277-293. Available at http://analisesocial.ics.ul.pt , (accessed on 12 July 2012).

Picolotto, E. L. (2007). Movimentos sociais: abordagens clássicas e contemporâneas. *CSonline, Revista Eletrônica de Ciências Sociais*, Ano 1, Edição 2, pp. 156-177. Available at www.editoraufjf.com.br . (Accessed on 24 August 2011).
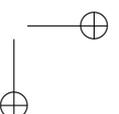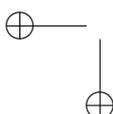
Ramalho, J. Ricardo and Santana, Marco A. (2003). Trabalhadores, sindicatos e a nova questão social. In Marco A. Santana & José R. Ramalho (Org.), *Além da Fábrica, trabalhadores, sindicatos e a nova questão social*. Coleção Mundo do Trabalho, São Paulo: Boitempo Editorial.

Santos, B. de Sousa (Org.) (2001). *Globalização, fatalidade ou utopia?* Porto: Edições Afrontamento.

Silva, M. Carvalho da (2003). Os trabalhadores e os movimentos sociais de hoje. In J. Rebelo (ed.), *Novas formas de Mobilização Popular*. Porto: Campo das Letras.

Viegas, J. M., Faria, S. and Santos, S. (2010).Envolvimento associativo e mobilização cívica. In J. M. Viegas, S. Santos & S. Faria (orgs.), *A Qualidade da Democracia em Debate: Deliberação, Representação e Participação Políticas em Portugal e Espanha* (pp. 157-180). Lisboa: Editora Mundos Sociais.

Viegas, J. M. and Santos, S. (2009). Envolvimento dos cidadãos e dos parlamentares nas associações. In A. Freire & J.M. Viegas (orgs.), *Representação Política – O Caso Português em Perspectiva Comparada* (pp. 119-143). Lisboa: Sextante Editora.

Wieviorka, M. (2003). Os movimentos anti-mundialização. In J. Rebelo (ed.), *Novas formas de Mobilização Popular*. Porto: Campo das Letras.
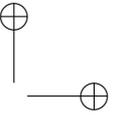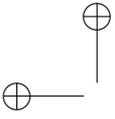
PART III
POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN THE INTERNET AGE
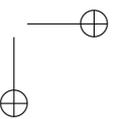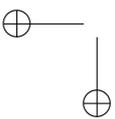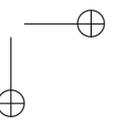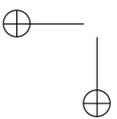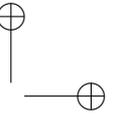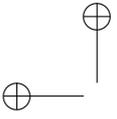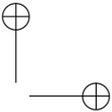
Sound bite: politics in frames

Nuno Francisco

When we talk about emergency in politics we also talk about a particular kind of emergency. It is one that can be understood as a search for effectiveness which is conditioned by the space and time parameters made available by traditional media. And it is within those boundaries that the effectiveness of message construction comes into play followed immediately by the effectiveness of reception. And one, as is known, is inseparable from the other.

It is not only in journalistic jargon that the term sound bite is used to characterize a brief statement with an immediate and precise impact. A sound bite is an autonomous and incisive discursive moment which was designed in media antechambers by spin doctors in order to fit perfectly as a newspaper title or headline or as the perfect measure to open the television news.

Buzzwords are the absolute truth condensed into a statement of scarce seconds that build much of the fragmented political speech. The key has to fit into the keyhole. In other words, the political speech has to fit the public stage which is assembled by the media for their audience. This is the effect of taking advantage of the time and space that traditional media put at the service of political action: to adapt the speech to media's singularities.

What is intended is the maximum impact in the minimum amount of time. And, here, ideological density and contextualization is something that is not part of this frenetic landscape.

The sound bite is therefore an almost perfect portrait of the traditional media machine. This term does not only translate the act of selecting, cutting and fragmenting the political speech on behalf of media, but it also dominates the actual discursive act, which is tailored to the media window available.

We are therefore speaking about a profitability of the political speech in newspapers tending towards texts that are increasingly shorter and centred on the fact itself as opposed to the context(ualization) and absolutely limited television times. This phenomenon is even more evident when we speak about informative blocks of generalist television channels that congregate the desired audience which generally accounts for millions. In fact, the issue here is
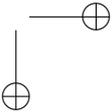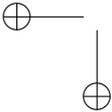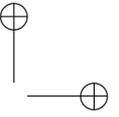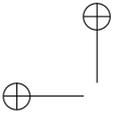
the limit of time and space. These are variables that collide head on with the need for contextualization or with the construction of a coherent, explanatory or analytical political speech.

This is the field of journalistic measurement of the political fact. The media are a vehicle for mediation, interposing themselves between the public and the political actor. They act as an intermediary, such as a guide, interpreter and organizer of the information conveyed, influencing how the public perceive and decode reality.

In the context that preceded the emergence of the press, the political speech was confined to an elite that interacted amongst themselves. Otherwise, the first newspapers were filled with a much politicised discourse. It was factional and served for that elite to battle and/or insult each other, with partial views of the facts. Political communication, let us call it, remained in the same social circle, that of the lettered and politically compromised elite.

The first periodicals were, above all, ideological pamphlets sustained by patrons and political entities. They were expensive, restricted and confined to well delimited purposes. It is true that the common, apolitical and/or illiterate reader, without any capacity for civic intervention, had no access to the wording of opinion. These articles were often read aloud to an audience – newspapers had relatively low print runs and, therefore, were scarce and expensive for the majority of the population; and then, of course, due to the illiteracy that permeated the more disadvantaged classes.

With the advent of the industrial revolution, journalism experienced its own revolution, toward its first major massification process. A new type of press emerged: the penny press. With the exodus from the countryside to the city, the new city dwellers now proliferated the worker neighbourhoods of cities. Cheap and unqualified manually labour was necessary at the dawn of this new concept of production. The industrial revolution would forever change economic and social foundations.

The press also adapted to the new industrial times. The recently arrived readers to urban areas needed cheap and easy to read newspapers with short news – just as their leisure time. The appeal was based on a formula for success: crime, corruption, gossip and *fait-divers*. The political and politicized vector of the press, based on pure opinion and that was not fading, gave rise to this new journalism carried out by new professionals: journalists. For this formula to arrive where it was necessary, at the masses, it needed to have a
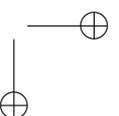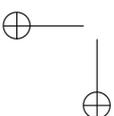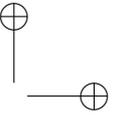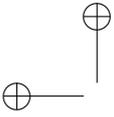
cheap vehicle. Hence, newspapers began to publish advertising in between the news. This would broadly cover their production costs, and could reach the public at almost derisory prices. And as more and more people read, more advertising was put into the editions.

The politically committed newspapers did not please media owners simply because they were, at the outset, limiting the potential universe of readers and upsetting advertisers. Politics did not disappear from their pages, but lost prominence with the maelstrom of the information-spectacle. And politics gradually ceased to belong to the elites to become consumable information and, why not, a spectacle? That spectacle, as Douglas Kellner[1] states, is transversal to society in a media escalation that captures attention. It is a new culture of the spectacle that translates a new configuration of the economy, society, politics and everyday life, and where politics is not in the least bit devoid of this process. And the rules are clearly different when politics fell from the elites to the sphere of large audiences. So it was, and so it is.

Information and entertainment, as media business areas, are shaped according to the rhythms of contemporary society. Many newspapers are designed to be easily read in public transport on the way to work. The broadsheet format is taking great strides towards extinction; the news is brief, respecting the structure of the inverted pyramid, summarizing the essential and eliminating that which is deemed to be superfluous for the quick reading that is wanted. In radio and television, the "on air" time available for speeches by political protagonists is also very limited. From the speeches given, only a few phrases, previously selected by editors, will get to know the vast media stage.

An article by journalist Craig Fehrman, published in *The Boston Globe*, in January 2011[2], posed the right questions on how the North-American political speech is conditioned by journalistic mediation, particularly by the powerful medium of television.

In the summer of 1992, when George Bush, Bill Clinton and Ross Perot were preparing their presidential race, CBS announced a new policy for its evening news. From now on, the network would not use any sound bite– that

---

[1] See the text by Douglas Kellner entitled "Media Culture and the Triumph of the Spectacle".

[2] "The incredible shrinking sound bite – It's not just a modern problem – and may not be such a bad thing after all".
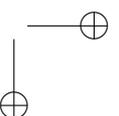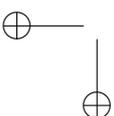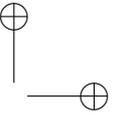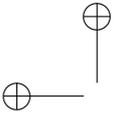
is, any footage of a candidate speaking uninterruptedly – that lasted less than 30 seconds.

This was CBS's response to worrying news: research from the University of California showed that the average duration of a television sound bite had fallen drastically, from 43 seconds in the presidential election of 1968 to just nine seconds in the 1988 election. This decline led to great concern from teachers, journalists and politicians. Democrat Michael Dukakis complained precisely about the presidential campaign of 1988 saying that "It wasn't heard because it wasn't aired."

And so CBS launched an extended sound bite policy as "an experiment" and "a public service." It was also a marketing experience with the first segment of the network, centred on a 34 second clip about Ross Perot, receiving much praise.

But this article from the Boston Globe also tells us:

> If you've watched any political coverage since 1992, you know what happened: CBS's experiment failed. This week, as Congress's 112th session begins, the shrinking sound bite stands as a rare enemy of Republicans and Democrats alike. Whether running for president of the United States or for city council, politicians can count on seeing their words broken into ever smaller and more fragmentary bits. You might debate whom to blame – asked about nine-second sound bites, one TV executive replied, "the politicians started it" – but you can't dispute the trend. In recent presidential elections, the average TV sound bite has dropped to a tick under eight seconds. A shorter, dumber, and shriller political discourse, it seems, has become another hazard of modern life.

With the media concentrated on the power of the message, this is dismembered and simplified in order to achieve the aims of effectiveness and reach the public, always in the shadow of a generalized fear: bore the audience. And this *modus operandi* of the means has infected the message, in this case the political message. The simplification of content has the precise aim of making the meaning as linear and accessible as possible. Making the complex become simple.
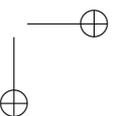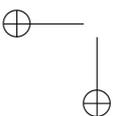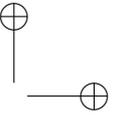
This is the destructuration process of the object that is communicated, extracting the complexities, the ambivalence, the subjectivities that could encourage multiple interpretations of the text. Or as Baudrillard states:

> mass communication excludes culture and knowledge. This is not about real symbolic or didactic processes coming into action because it would undermine the collective participation that constitutes the meaning of a similar ceremony – a participation which is performed solely by means of a liturgy and a formal code of signals that are carefully emptied of all meaning. (Baudrillard, 1991, p.108)

Traditional media (newspapers, TV and radio) had an exclusive claim, practically until the beginning of this century, on the diffusion of political messages, dictating the rules on how the communication policy was conveyed to the public space.

Television introduced the image as a factor of approximation. By itself, this fact results in a revolution, an additament to the symbolic nature of Man. The living image and its simple explanation restricts symbolic nature, and limits the imaginative process of the association that newspapers and radio – through the word – have always instilled. It came to establish a cognitive "laziness". Geovanni Sartori refers that:

> Radio was the first great diffuser of communication, but it is a diffuser that does not "change" the symbolic nature of Man: as the radio "speech" always spreads things said with words. So that printed books, newspapers, telephone and radio are all – in line with – elements that are bearers of linguistic communication. The rupture is produced in the mid- 20th century with the arrival of television.[3] (Sartori, 1998, pp. 26-27)

A rupture that leads to the prevalence of the act of seeing over the act of speaking:

> (. . .) in that the voice of the medium, or a speaker is secondary, and is in function of the image. And, as a consequence, the viewer

---

[3] My translation.
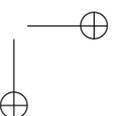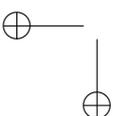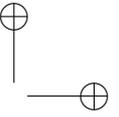
is more an animal that sees than a symbolic animal. For him the
things represented in images count more that the things said with
words. This is a radical change of direction, because while the
symbolic capacity distances homo sapiens from animals, the fact
that we see brings us closer to our ancestral capacities, and to the
genus to which homo sapiens belong.[4] (Sartori, 1998, p. 26)

Television has become a "comfortable" medium because it does not re-
quire a capacity for abstraction, which is taken from a newspaper text or from
hearing the radio. The transmitted image, that knowledge, replaces the in-
genuity of association between the word and the meaning assigned to it by
us. Television has simplified and standardized meaning, the meaning that it
itself creates for the facts it transmits. The old cliché that a picture is worth a
thousand words reaches its culmination. Because these thousand words have
worlds and meanings associated to them. The televised image is not construc-
ted to give rise to abstractions. It is shown – it is what it is – and is explained,
if necessary, by the narrator. Television has translated the capacity of abstrac-
tion to the minimum.

But the audience will always be more than a uniform mass with an imme-
diate willingness to be bound by the predictable political proposals propaga-
ted by televisions. There is no mere passive and isolated acceptance of what
is proposed. There is always the risk of the message being "distorted" by the
receiver, no matter how linear and tight it may seem to whom emits it. There
is not only one audience, but a myriad of publics.

Taking into account the vision sustained by many of the authors of British
Cultural Studies, the sharing of a certain optimism would allow us to affirm
that yes, the public has the ability to reinterpret the text, according to the con-
text of reception. We believe, however, that we are faced with another scenario
of reception, that of a process that is not similar to a reinterpretation or distinct
readings of a message, but only to a reaction: the adhesion or rejection of the
message emitted.

The simpler it is in its enunciation, the less interpretative resistance it
will tend to find or cause, limiting itself, therefore, to a "distortion" between
that which is intended to transmit and that which is, in fact, received. This,
in mediatised politics, is called effectiveness. Then, yes, it will be accepted

---

[4] My translation.
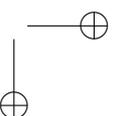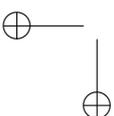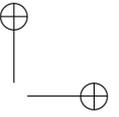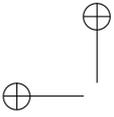
or rejected. But it will be more difficult to be given to the ambiguities of interpretation.

Political discourse is measured by parameters of efficacy. It has to be worth, communicationally speaking, in the same measure of time that it is allowed through different media. If an important political speech, in the context of an electoral campaign, begins at 7:30 pm, at any rally, it is known that the main lines will be saved for the 8 o'clock slot of direct television news services, when this window is open to millions of homes. The powerful sound bites are all in these pages that will be read during the live 8 o'clock news.

The habits of visual consumption quickly disseminated this shortening of the capacity of abstraction for a medium that invites cognitive decompression and "laziness". And it also invited the political speech to this apparent laziness. On television everything is apparently simpler and more frontal, even the political speech. In other means, the word was everything. Now, there is an appendix called image. Generalist television for a large audience is averse, by nature, to narrative complexities and style. The ease of access and interpretation of their content is what sustains much of its vitality and influence.

September 26, 1960, marked the first televised American presidential debate, putting Senator John F. Kennedy and Vice-president Richard Nixon face to face. These debates have had a huge impact on politics because they gave, for the first time, the American people the opportunity to see the candidates face to face to discuss important issues, such as international affairs and education. However, in 1960, there were still many people who did not yet have access to the luxury of owning a television. As such, these debates had two distinct perceptions among the public: one through television, and another through radio.

The majority of people who have heard the debates on radio tended to think that the candidates were balanced in their fencing of arguments. In contrast to this view, the majority of people who watched the televised debates saw John F. Kennedy as the undisputed winner.

What the majority did not know was that not long before this first debate, in September, Vice-president Nixon had a knee injury and had been hospitalized for two weeks. He had lost weight and was still pale when it was time for the debate. In addition, Nixon refused to use make-up to disguise his pallor and his wardrobe seems not to have been the subject of great attention by
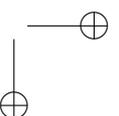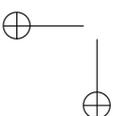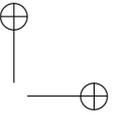
his advisers. On the other hand, Kennedy was tanned and apparently in great shape.

J. F. Kennedy's initial intervention demonstrated knowledge on how to convey the message. At the height of the Cold War, and with eyes fixed on the audience, the speech made it clear from the very beginning that there was a fundamental separation and clarification of fields: the good, the bad, us and the enemy, the world of freedom and the world of slavery, the force that the US had to affirm in the World in front of Krushchev's Soviet Union. In this dichotomous world, the US would play the role of guardians of freedom. In the living rooms of millions of North Americans was the man who would push to increasingly expand the borders of the free world, keeping the homeland safe and thriving and freeing the nations threatened by the shackles of the Soviet totalitarian threat. Everything was understood or implied in a few minutes. Or in a few words: "I am that force". The geopolitical complexities and the balance of forces between the two nuclear superpowers are summarised effectively in that assumption of strength and power implicit in these initial phrases of the speech from the man who would be the future president of the US.

But elucidating, as well, is the first sentence from Nixon's counter-argument: "The things that Senator Kennedy has said many of us can agree with". Intentionally or not, Nixon, ended up dismantling that which the political speech is built for in media consumption: It is virtually impossible to disagree with him ... and his foundations.

How can one contest ideas that are so universally disseminated in political speeches such as "We have to lower taxes!", "We have to make our country economically stronger!", "We are the beacon of freedom!", "We need to support the national industry!" or "We must invest in Education, the guarantor of the future of our country"? How can one not applaud this rhetoric, regardless of the ideological differences at the heart of the public space? Or as Nixon, the Republican said to Kennedy, the Democrat: "The things that Senator Kennedy has said many of us can agree with".

And the idea is exactly that, we added. This debate has indelibly marked the relationship between politicians and the media. In addition to the political argument, that the radio listeners of the debate found Nixon to be at least as competent as Kennedy, it was the image and not the word that eventually determined the perception of the winner and the loser of the debate for those who watched the contention on television. Today, we know that any debate
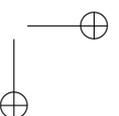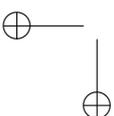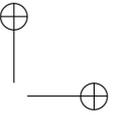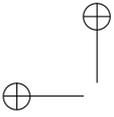
is prepared to the millimetre. It is the subject of long hours of negotiation between the television stations and the candidates' campaign staff, from the position that the politicians will occupy in the studio to lighting, and the order of questions.

For a long time now, in the scene of a professional and highly mediatised politics, nobody dares to underestimate the effect that television may have in the construction of the political message. The question is no longer merely rhetoric, the power of the word and of the arguments but also the image built, something to which Nixon appears to not have given due attention, but that was a lesson for the generations of politicians that followed.

Kathleen Jamieson[5] notes, moreover, that the way the technical resources combined in television eventually created a grammar of feeling, which, for example, leads the spectator to react negatively to the combination of features such as abrupt camera cuts, black and white images or particularly dark lighting.

Television has introduced the image as a factor of approximation, contextualisation and recognition; the image itself translates an autonomous message, which complements, at the very least, the speech that is to be delivered. On its own, this fact results in a wide range media revolution. The word is no longer an autonomous word, the fruitful rhetoric and the art of persuasion. The word is surrounded by an image that also communicates. A political message does not succeed only with the argument, but also by the posture, by trust, by a look or a mere smile. In a word: telegenic. In two words: form and content.

II

John Pissarra Esteves adds that: "to public political reason, emerging from the enlarged communication and collective discussion, we now have a scientific and bureaucratic rationality, that is the responsibility of the new elite of experts who came to dominate the Public Space – the administrators of logotechniques" (Esteves, 2003, p. 181) and that are responsible for the enlargement of what Adriano Duarte Rodrigues (1991, p.91) calls the "performative machine of media", that obliterate "the symbolic components of the world of discourse, namely those which have to do with the specific strategies of enunciation, to focus on the pure game of sign forms and work on them in accor-

---

[5] See Kathleen Jamieson, *Dirty Politics – Deception, Distraction, and Democracy.*
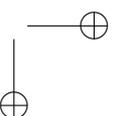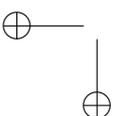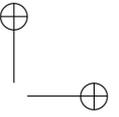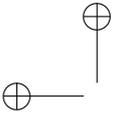
dance with the behavioural schematic of the stimulus-response".[6] (Rodrigues quoted in Esteves, 2003, p. 181)

At this point, it is also worth recalling John Friske:

> Television is, above all, a popular cultural means. The economy that determines its production and distribution intends it to reach a massive audience and the audience in western industrialized society is composed of numerous subcultures, or sub-audiences – with a wide range of social relations, with a wide variety of socio-cultural experiences, and, as such, a variety of speeches. To fulfil their own objectives, television tries to homogenize this variety so that a program can reach as many different audiences as possible. (Friske, 1987, p. 37)

The temptation to universalize "undisputed truths" from the mediatised political speech is, in itself, a possible translation for the urgency to reach a scale that attempts to cross the ideological borders of these numerous subcultures. The media, as powerful agents of socialization, fulfil a role of massive diffusion which is not compatible with the comprehensive enumeration of political manifestos, of contextualizations that sustain any political program or intricate arguments that will outline a structured thought about a country.

The combination is a clear and telegenic image of a politician on top of a speech made of effective rhetorical fragments and not as part of something greater, a whole. In this context, the parts are more important than the whole and if you add these parts you do not get a whole. Because each part exists by itself and for itself and only has a meaning by itself.

Sound bites are thus autonomous fragments of a political speech, which acquire meaning as such, and are constructed for the predictable media windows available and not as another piece of a complex theoretical construction of a program of political action. They are, on the contrary, brief and tendentiously effective grimaces of these programs, summaries of ideologies that leverage political action. They are also, simultaneously, a defence of politicians themselves, because they are, as we have seen, constructed discourses, in its genesis, not to be knocked out easily, such is the unanimity they tend to

---

[6] My translation.
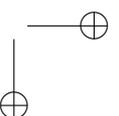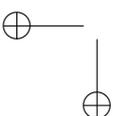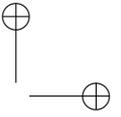
provoke, unlike what would happen for sure in a point by point discussion of a vast program of political action.

Despite this safety net created by political agents around the political message, the unforeseen can happen, when journalistic mediation still lies between the political speech and the public sphere.

And there are other gaffes which, although they are not errors "forced" by journalistic action, may compromise any effusive speech. Gaffes occur with some frequency. The shield of the highly mediatised political message, built in the almost universal validity of its wording, can, after all, be compromised in any media curve to meet a battalion of journalists, or by a simple linguistic carelessness that is impossible to correct. These are the inherent risks in the media scene.

In spite of the mishaps of a process that is mediated, a political speech for media consumption is built to be a pacific truth and to be in immediate agreement with the wording. The truth, in this media context, is heard, not explained.

Now, we are living a clear transfer to other domains. We speak of new horizons, without the traditional journalistic mediation, that spread through the internet and social networks. Facebook and Twitter are today, for instance, inescapable stages for political action, being these two networks also conducive to the propagation of the sound bite.

In this non-mediated space new frontiers have been defined, opening up the space for interactivity, and putting the internet and social networks at the service of political action. Today, we are told by Ricardo Jorge Pinto and Jorge Pedro Sousa that, "the journalist has lost the monopoly of the information game. His function as a filter of information was now conditioned by the entry into the scene of communication dissemination mechanisms that are available to all"[7] (Pinto; Sousa n. d, par. 56).

Even because:

> The Internet has widened this trend of the journalists' loss of the
> monopoly of information management. But it also poses serious
> problems at the level of receiving such information by the audi-
> ences. How can a "navigator" of the WWW have confidence in

---

[7] My translation.
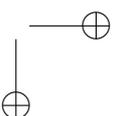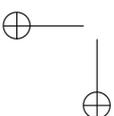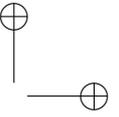
the information produced on an electronic page? What are the criteria of credibility that can be used in the reception of the information on the Internet? These questions do not have single and universally valid answers. There probably even won't be any useful answer, except for the one that stipulates that credibility is not the sole criterion for the dissemination of information. Especially because the concept of information is no longer the same as it was used by traditional media.[8] (Pinto; Sousa n.d., par. 58)

The debate also revolves around the problem of definition of boundaries between traditional media and the communicative opportunities created by the internet, where one attempts to understand the issue of complementarity or conflict of interests. Because access to the press, television and radio depends on the intermediation of journalists and the internet is assumed as a medium that is fragmented and freed of filters. We are speaking about distinct efficiencies. If the internet allows a greater intimacy with voters, if it allows a perfect management of political discourse for distinct audiences, if the internet reveals an undeniable ability to eliminate the classic distinction between emitters and receivers and if it dismisses intermediation, we also know that the radio, press, and especially television – the mass means of communication, par excellence – are still the privileged space for the dissemination of political ideas in a homogeneous and massive way. And as long as this is the case, the discourse will be: far-reaching words that wrap unavoidable truths; a politics in frames.

References

Baudrillard, J. (1991). *A sociedade de consumo*. Lisboa: Edições 70.

Esteves, J. P. (2003). *Espaço público e democracia*. Lisboa: Colibri.

Fehrman, C. "The incredible shrinking sound bite – It's not just a modern problem – and may not be such a bad thing after all", in: *The Boston Globe*. Retrieved Octobre 02, 2012 from www.boston.com.

---

[8] My translation.
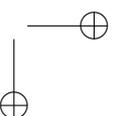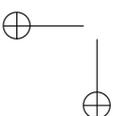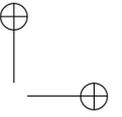
Fiske, J. (1987). *Television culture*. New York: Routledge.

Kathleen, J. H. (1992). *Dirty politics: Deception, distraction, and democracy*. New York: Oxford University.

Kellner, D. (s.d.) A Cultura dos Media e o Triunfo do Espectáculo. *Líbero*, Ano VI . Vol. 6, nº 11.

Pinto, R.J; Sousa. J.P (n.d.). *O Futuro incerto da internet: intercomunicar além do comércio e da publicidade*. Retrieved February 02, 2013 from www.bocc.ubi.pt.

Sartori, G. (1998). *Homo videns: La sociedad teledirigida*. Madrid: Tauros.
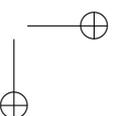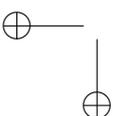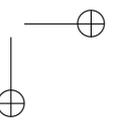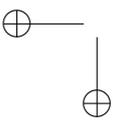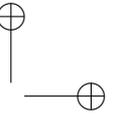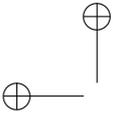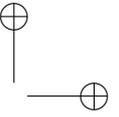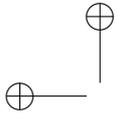
Challenges to intermedia agenda-setting: reflections on Pedro Passos Coelho's outburst

Eduardo Camilo and Rodolfo Silva

This study focuses on the existing relations between new media and traditional media with regard to how the opinion published in digital environments can transform itself into an opinion published in an editorial environment of the journalistic field.

This brief reflection is made up of two sections. The first – entitled "Pretexts" – reports on a relevant epistemological framework about the interceptions between the "field of digital opinion" and "news opinion". This section has been designed from the following question: can one theorize about the reflexes of the "digital" in the domain of news activity? If so, how is this inter-influence realised?

In the second reflection – called "Texts" – we propose to carry out a very brief empirical verification with the purpose of ascertaining the possible existence of these interceptions between digital and news opinion. The exercise – corresponding to a case study analysis –, refers to the Portuguese Prime Minister's (Pedro Passos Coelho – PPC) anthological text, simply signed as "Pedro", on September 9, 2012, after his television speech which included changes to the model of the Single Social Tax (TSU), among other measures to combat the deficit.

1. Pre-texts

We chose to address the issue of the projections of digital public opinions within the domain of published opinions in traditional media (after all, it is one of the several facets of the relations between traditional media and digital media) from the following parameters of reflection: a) the trends underlying media's technological changes; b) the status of Web 2.0 in the paradigm of media convergence and mobility; c) the reconfiguration of public spaces and political participation; and d) the restructuring of the routines of journalistic work.
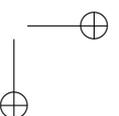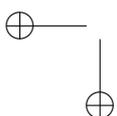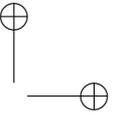
a) Technological trends: convergence with mobility

The new information and communication technologies, which have the Internet as its main tool, created new models of social interaction. This reality has led to a society that many call "mediatised", characterized by facilitating exchanges between individuals who are isolated or organized into groups, and the institutions of the community fabric.

Communication between individuals is the basic element of the construction of a community, regardless of their degree of complexity. By means of symbolic exchanges we create relationships and bonds intended to regulate daily life, whose scope in time and space has to increase as the groups grow. If in a small community the interaction of co-presence may be enough to maintain the effectiveness of the communication required by individuals, the same does not apply in situations of a broader dimension. Hence, and according to Thompson (2007, p. 19), the history of humanity reflects constant efforts to create instruments capable of mediating messages whose importance has increased over time:

> From the birth of the graphic arts industry in Europe of the 15th and 16th centuries and the development of various types of electronic media in the 19th and 20th centuries, the "combination of interactions" in social life has changed. The face-to-face interaction was not excluded, but complemented by other forms of interaction that have assumed a growing role.

Although we do not put ourselves in a strict position to support technological determinism as an engine of social evolution, which depends on various factors, we accept that communication technologies originate from the adoption of new models of social organization (Cardoso, 2006) and create new forms of socialization (Delarbre, 2009). The existence of descriptions such as "information society" or "knowledge" point to the role that symbolic exchanges play in contemporaneity.

The rapid evolution of the Internet, particularly in the last three decades, has resulted in an appropriation without parallel in the history of media. If there are still limitations of access, it is a fact that they have diminished and, between users, the instruments that are available allow a constant daily use. The current paradigm is structured around notions such as *Evernet* (Rötzer,
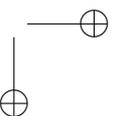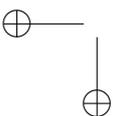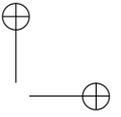
2011, p. 39) which is nothing more than the possibility of accessing a network at any time and in any part of the world. This logic is associated with the development of mobile technologies and devices such as tablets or smartphones that offer the user the possibility to be "always on", thus breaking with the restrictive logic of access from computers placed at fixed locations.

Digital coding is the decisive aspect within the framework that we are describing. Media tools such as the press and radio favoured the ease of consumption, but the same is not true with television, cinema or the telephone (during the pre-mobile communication period). However, the convergence of audio and visual speeches – the multimedia character – into the same support and device, which can already be easily transported anywhere, certainly created a new practice of content appropriation.

b) Web 2.0

What is the status of Web 2.0 in the previously referenced trend?

In the digital environment, the flexibility of access – in the meantime freed from restrictions of space and time – allowed individuals to begin to develop new practices in the field of media coverage. Subsumed under the generic name "Web 2.0" (O'Reilly, 2005), there are tools that have emerged on the Internet that allowed individuals to begin to generate content, diluting the previously well-defined border between the poles of production and reception. Today, as established by Neto (2009), the purpose of a highly mediatised society stems from a constant interaction that permeates all fields of everyday life and that encourages the sharing of speeches, not only of individuals, but also of institutions, "converting them into new characters of this coding system of reality" (p. 19). Beyond the invitation that the availability of instruments directs to individuals, or even the fascination exercised by the use of gadgets and extensions – as McLuhan would designate –, the possibility for interaction and sharing content is one of the aspects that most encourages the use of digital media. That is where the success recorded by blogs or social networks lies. These platforms are structurally quite different, but personal expression emerges as a common denominator.

This particularity of the production of information that is shared and participative will substantiate in two phenomena that we consider important in this reflection: the reconfiguration of public spaces and the restructuring of the routines of journalistic work. In one case, Web 2.0 apparently accelerates the
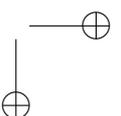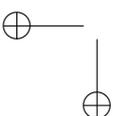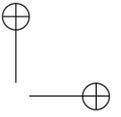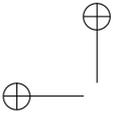
consumption of information, but also the modalities of participation, debate, reflection from the citizen-user in relation to the most varied agendas of thematic topics and from various modes of communication. It is the case of cognitive nature, where what is at stake is the consensus of the truth value of the topics discussed; the modes of communication for interactive character associated with the relations of intersubjective nature about the value of adequacy, the correction of authority claims and the modes of expressive communication associated with inter-subjective relations supported by language and adjacent to the pretensions of truthfulness. As for the second emerging phenomenon, with the consecration of Web 2.0 reference is to the reconfiguration of routines underlying journalistic editing, where it is assumed that there is an increasingly frequent reflection on "digital agendas", concerning published opinions, and in the "editorial agendas", as regards to published public opinions. This essay focuses precisely on the domain of this repercussion complemented by a case study.

You can always argue about the phenomena of the migration of digital public opinion to the field of media. But what are the contours of this migration? What is its amplitude and news coverage, for example, in phenomena such as those of 79,403 comments relating to PPC's "text-outburst" on his Facebook page? And what is the role played by journalists as gatekeepers for situations such as this?

Let us develop these two trends concerning the contribution of the Internet and Web 2.0 in the reconfiguration of public spaces and political participation and in the restructuring of journalistic routines.

c) The reconfiguration of public spaces and political participation

A consequence of online activity is the extension of public space (Delarbre, 2009). It is not a public sphere in line with Habermas's theorization, which is only established with the existence of a debate driven by the use of reason (even though it is necessary that this public space exist for it to work).

Delarbre sees in this virtual place a land to "make it public", that is, to favour "advertising", the "publicity", in the sense that Kant and Habermas used the term. We risk to read in the researcher's theory an interpretation of public space as territory, the (physical) place of convergence, which can be filled (or not) by interactions endowed with more capital gains able to propitiate the formation of opinion.
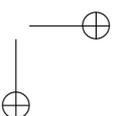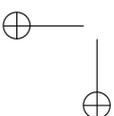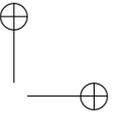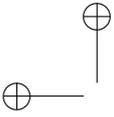
We highlight the three characteristics that Delarbre (2009) diagnoses is this virtual public space:

a) It mediates political power and citizens because institutions are now available on the network, closer to the individuals. And if this "does not make the work that they do more legitimate and more plausible, in any case, it leaves it less opaque" (p. 84);

b) It reproduces the relations that exist offline or creates new ones. In the case of the former, we can consider the dialogic contact that occurs between the audience and mainstream media, in detriment of a unilateral contact that occurs in the traditional communication model;

c) It enables the diffusion and appropriation of content from and by individuals, that is, the expansion of the volume of content occurs which will eliminate the boundaries between public and private. Social networks and many other spaces for sharing text, photos and videos fill the online space with content where subjectivity is a present trend. With this, "the public space of which the Internet is part is filled with private themes in virtue of this emotional denuding – and suddenly also bodily – as practised by the authors of such open diaries" (p. 89).

In each of the three characteristics we find the exponentiation of practices that already existed in the pre-Internet era, in traditional media or in the contacts between individuals in the interaction of their own personal relationships. Before institutions entered the online space, which Delarbre believes makes its activity less opaque, those entities were already subject to public scrutiny. This visibility was – and continues to be – created by the means of traditional mass communication. However, there is a significant difference here: the operation model of mainstream media, founded in criteria of newsworthiness established over the decades, prevents an extensive coverage of a topic and is rarely directed to a range of content as happens with the analysis of records, reports or official statistics, among others. On the Internet, these documents are available for the public who is more interested in doing a deep analysis of a subject.

As regards the entry of subjective speeches in public, we will not discuss the path followed by many news media around the attention directed towards
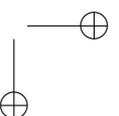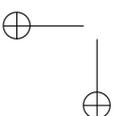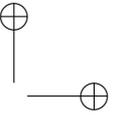
aspects of the private life, in large part, of public figures. We are interested in the democratization of access to public space by individuals who do not have celebrity status. Opinions and specific aspects of their lives, in the most diverse forms of expression, are published in the media that the Internet offers, in further evidence of the ease granted to audiences for the production of speeches.

This practice concerns us because the contents published by individuals are not always devoid of public interest. Gillmor (2005, p. 12), defender of the advantages of journalism with citizen contribution, recalls the terrorist attacks in New York in September 2001 to emphasize that common people can possess "details to report and images to show", in that which is no more than dissemination without the intermediation of conventional mass media. This movement has produced in recent years examples of collaborative portals where activists construct their narratives, some with public interest, and attract the attention of audiences and conventional mass media.

All in all, in the context of our theme of reflection, we believe that Web 2.0 platforms such as blogs and social networking sites in the categories of new forms of interaction, as in the case of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, have assumed in recent years an important role in the creation of speeches made by unspecialized producers for large audiences. They have therefore promoted an exchange without precedent that will reawaken the attention of traditional media, to the point of resorting to these contents for the formation of their agenda, creating a new model of intermedia agenda-setting, which has as its starting point the personal means for publication and, if we wish, the domain of a kind of "digital public opinion". The reconfiguration of public spaces favoured by Web 2.0 also produces implications in political participation itself.

In spite of the fact that the reception of new communication and information technologies have been marked by the same ambivalence with which early innovations were evaluated, it is at least possible to establish that the Internet, and its evolution to Web 2.0, is being absorbed by the political field. We affirm it as evidence, without situating ourselves in the field of those who look to the worldwide network as revitalizing political participation and, consequently, democracy, or of those that position themselves in theories that minimize their role.

As mentioned above, the sequence of developments recorded in the field of digital technologies offered to all political actors – from citizen to leaders –
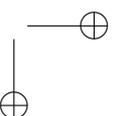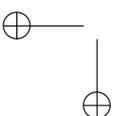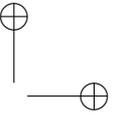
a set of tools with which they can build political speeches and proceed to their exchange. Regardless of the quality they are in fact an approximation to what may be constituted as a public sphere in digital terrain. Delarbre even defends that the habermasian public sphere possesses characteristics that perfectly fit a kind of digital public sphere of the World Wide Web (Delarbre, 2009, pp. 75-76):

> The countless scenarios and virtual meeting places beyond the geographical and political limits, the interrelation of themes and approaches, the convergence of expert opinions, even those who do not have expert knowledge, and even the existence of spaces to discuss, examine specific issues and learn the news, could constitute a review of some of the functions and actual organization of the Internet.

According to the author, in the already mentioned area of exchange between social institutions and individuals, the Web offers the possibility to express concerns, make requests and promote initiatives from society. To sum up:

> The Network, in that manner, is the area of both state and social interrelationships with institutions, and even constitutes a new space for political dispute. Within it, you try to solve or at least diminish the most varied litigations including those that especially deal with issues of public interest. (Delarbre, 2009, p. 86)

Gomes (2005) adds other complementary characteristics that are equally important such as: anti-hierarchy, non-coercion, free expression and thematic agenda-setting without constraints, whose discussion favours the generation of a more spontaneous public opinion. Added to these facets is the absence of filters and supervising offices of external agents to debate, the fading of social differences, class and status, and the overcoming of territorial and temporal limitations that occur in other fields of sociability.

To exemplify the duality with which the political potential of the Internet is assessed, Delarbre, the same author who sees it as a form of expansion of public space that has possibilities of constituting a public sphere, believes that it has not materialised yet. The existence of a space is not found by itself,
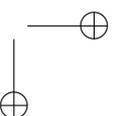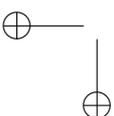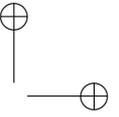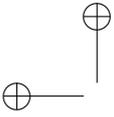
until citizens "seize the opportunity to share facts, opinions and joint actions in matters relevant to public life" (2009, p. 81). This affirmation corroborates Gomes's position (2005): the Internet is a simple instrument that, per se, does not thwart or perform promises, because this depends on the agents that use it, which may, through their practices, either achieve or thwart its potential.

We believe that, in actuality, devices for social interaction, as is the case of blogs (or the service of Twitter's microblogging), social networks (such as Facebook, which hosts profiles) and YouTube, the video portal, are fundamental pillars for the exercise of this political action, as has been observed on several occasions. For example, we can point out the social mobilization for street demonstrations that have been made through these virtual spaces or the choice of these channels to disseminate messages from political leaders. But not only: what to say about the "torrent of comments" (79,403) relating to Pedro Passos Coelho's message-outburst in September 2012, if not a form of digital public opinion that, together with the exercise of indignation in street protests, will have contributed to the Prime Minister backing down in the enactment of new legislation on the single social tax? In addition, conventional media, established pillars in democratic functioning, are attentive to this dynamization and it is quite frequent that they take advantage of the material published online and include it in their content. What is yet to discover are the moulds of appropriation of this same material by the "more conventional" media (press, radio and television). Are these modalities registered into a kind of intermedia agenda-setting[1] or a new modality of contact with sources of information, which are now endowed with unique characteristics that derive from the potential of Web 2.0?

d) Restructuring the routines of journalistic work

By using the platforms of Web 2.0, individuals, who in the *media* had

---

[1] As we will observe next, the theoretical configuration of intermedia agenda-setting points towards the transfer of projection between news media agendas – be they information agencies or resources available to the public –, that is, when the news published by a means (described as elite), influences how themes are treated by other media. We take from this concept the interaction between media and the idea that contents are accessible for acquisition on behalf of an audience in a medium, in this case the Internet, which can be accessed by the public. However, we must remember that it is not information disseminated by specialized producers, i.e. journalists.
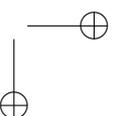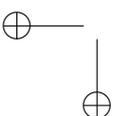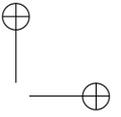
and in some way continue to hold the status of "audience", are transformed into the "co-authors" of speeches they publish in a means capable of reaching a world audience. Even if these contents are marked by subjectivity, some feature information likely to have public interest in journalistic moulds. This circumstance leads to phenomena of agenda-setting by traditional means. It is in this perspective that the activity of individuals in the new public space may be eligible to receive the attention of mainstream media, whose agendas start to integrate contributions collected in personal publishing platforms on the Internet. It will be possible to devise the same dynamics for this specific case of Pedro Passos Coelho's text-outburst and to the thousands of comments. What is it that transitioned from these texts to the field of print media and influenced its textuality?

Gillmor (2005) argues that journalists should be more attentive to the contributions from readers and possibly seize this participation to improve their products. What is verified is that these speeches, already circulating in public space and capable of universal consumption, are beginning to be incorporated into the agenda of traditional means, causing changes in the method of journalistic work in two ways: Stabe (2011) believes that journalists incorporate new communication tools (social networking sites) into their daily routines; while Bruns (2003) advocates the replacement of the selection process based on gatekeeping (White, 1964), for gatewatching. The executor of this process, who is more adapted to the Internet's publication model, observes what is published online and highlights the content that may be more useful for the audience. In this respect, advertising takes priority over publication (Bruns, 2003, p. 8): "Gatewatchers fundamentally publicise news (by pointing to sources) rather than publish it (by compiling an apparently complete report from the available sources)".

The means of personal publication, available online, acquired the potential to create an intermedia agenda-setting in mainstream media. Intermedia agenda-setting (McCombs, 2006; Vliegenthart and Walgrave, 2008) follows the process described by the agenda-setting theory, in the sense that there is a transfer of salience. In this case, of contents from one medium to another. This happens because when journalists perform their duties they observe the competitors to validate the meaning of the news, to mimic the more categorized media, the so-called elite (McCombs, 2006) and bridge the difficulties of complete observation of the world (Vliegenthart and Walgrave, 2008).
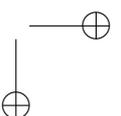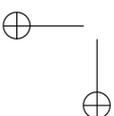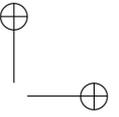
In the Internet era the number of producers has increased exponentially. Through personal portals, blogs, or social networks, the individual can produce and disseminate speeches to a potentially global audience, in a movement whose consequences are already discernible in the media. Serra (2009, p. 10), in a study on the Portuguese blogosphere, points to "five main processes through which blogs influence – and even impose – their media agenda-setting for mainstream media and, via these, the public agenda and even the political agenda". These processes are: "exclusive ("hole"), publication, critical verification (watchdog), amplification and reframing" (pp. 10-11).

We do not classify the material published by citizens as journalism – which we see as an institutionalized activity – but the fact of being available online for large masses, elevates this information, or intervention, to a different status. It is not a simple source of information, to which only journalists have access, in so far as they can reach a global audience.

Not all the assumptions that justify intermedia agenda-setting are present when you transfer a theme from a personal digital environment to mainstream media. This happens to overcome difficulties with coverage (the citizen can be present at the moment that something important is happening, and can register and disseminate it in his/her own Internet environment); to filter information for breaking news; or because the debate that is taking place on the Internet becomes too important in terms of public interest, thus assuming itself as a journalistic event. It is precisely in this category that we have entered the monitoring of the Portuguese means of social communication to the activity verified on Pedro Passos Coelho's Facebook page, in general, and in relation to the famous *post* of September 2012 concerning the outburst about the difficulties he felt when he gave a speech on the single social tax the previous day.

Let us now discuss this case study in detail.

2. Texts

First of all, here is a very brief historic contextualization.

On September 7, 2012, the Portuguese Prime Minister, Pedro Passos Coelho (PPC), made a statement, transmitted on three national television channels at 8.00 p.m., on the decisions that would be included in the State Budget
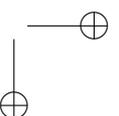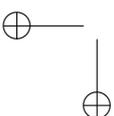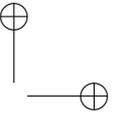
for 2013. Among them, was one of the government's decisions, which had been the target of great contestation from entrepreneurs and workers, implying changes to the model of the single social tax (TSU). At 12:16 am on Sunday, September 9, the head of government commented on a previous speech in a text published on his Facebook page, in a less formal tone (cf. Appendix 1). The post was the immediate target of thousands of interactions in the three modalities provided by the structure of the social network: a) user comments; b) signs of support – *Like*; and c) sharing the text. These interactions continued months later. At the end of the day on December 17, 2012, therefore 70 days after publication, the referred post had 79,403 comments, the last being made on that same day. In terms of "signs", there were 11,468 *Likes* and 4,414 shares with other profiles from the same social network.

The study that we are proposing now intends to cross two vectors: the textual activity of Web 2.0 citizens-users on PPC's personal Facebook page after the speech he made on September 8, 2012 as the Portuguese Prime Minister and the journalistic coverage exerted by Portuguese daily newspapers on this corpus of comments. We proceed with the following exploratory hypotheses:

1. The journalistic coverage focuses on digital expressed opinions. More important than PPC's text-outburst on Facebook is the reaction from internet users which falls into the category of news event. The confirmation of this hypothesis would involve inventorying the news coverage criteria of this digital public opinion;

2. Journalistic coverage by traditional media falls into the domain of intermedia agenda-setting. In this perspective, the routines of journalistic work tend to reproduce the range of digitally expressed opinions which will encourage their amplification. In spite of their messages being constructed by ordinary citizens, print media will consider what is being said there, thus formatting their agenda.

From a methodological point of view, this analysis focuses on seven editions of five daily Portuguese newspapers with national distribution: *Correio da Manhã, Diário de Notícias, Jornal i, Jornal de Notícias* and *Público*. The period of analysis covers the interval between September 8 and 14, 2012, in a total of 34 editions. Our aim was to study print mainstream media and therefore the news published online was not included, even in portals of the same
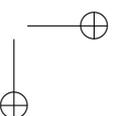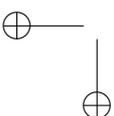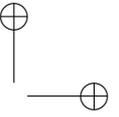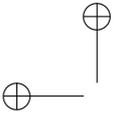
media analysed, such as one of the news pieces that eventually had impact in Portugal, and was published by the Financial Times.[2]

In a first phase (a), we quantify the published news texts that make a reference to PPC's outburst on Facebook. Then, (b), the published content will be analysed to uncover the actual journalistic use given the users' digital opinions.

A) Quantitative data

The first step of analysis focused on a kind of clipping: a survey of contents and analysis. The matter concerning PPC's post on Facebook and the torrent of comments that resulted integrate a type of media textuality that we can generically insert into the category of "Crisis". It is a matter that falls within the scope of the financial rescue that is operating in Portugal since 2011, which is permanently on the media's agenda, and encompasses newspaper sections on politics, society and economics. Throughout the period under analysis, we have the following set of levels:

a) **Level 1**: Crisis (texts inserted in any section of the newspaper about themes on austerity, crisis and governance);

b) **Level 2**: PPC – Facebook (the texts on PPC's communication on Facebook, present in the selected set from Level 1);

c **Level 3**: Comments on PPC's text (the texts on or with reference to the Prime Minister's comments, in the social network, selected from Level 2);

The contents were classified into categories (Information vs. Opinion) and editorial sub-categories as listed in Table 1.

---

[2] Accessible at: www.ft.com.
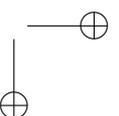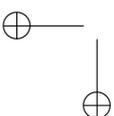
Informational Content	Opinionated Products
News	Cartoons/Satire
Reports	Opinion (opinion articles, editorials and other)
Interviews	Opinion from Readers (readers' letters)

Table 1 – Type of Contents

The survey focused exclusively on verbal speech and did not contemplate other visual or graphic news such as pictures or infographics which accompany the journalistic discourse.[3]

Let us look at the results.

Level 1: Crisis

Over seven days, 470 pieces about the crisis and eligible for the study were published (280 informational and 190 opinionated) (Cf. Table 2). These values represent an average of 67 daily pieces.

Genre	Occurrences
Informational Products	280
Opinionated Products	190
TOTAL	**470**

Table 2 – The corpus of analysis: number of speeches on the crisis (Portuguese Economic Crisis)

Level 2: PPC – Facebook

However, it is important to emphasize that this "corpus is heterogeneous" in terms of composition, because it adds the most varied "journalistic coverage". It is therefore necessary to modify it on that material that relates exclusively to covering PPC's text-outburst and the thousands of comments. Thus, the

---

[3] In spite of the diversity with which the content is presented – under the same theme (or news), news articles, opinion texts or small interviews are often found – we classify each block with a title as an independent text.

470 occurrences identified at Level 1 are reduced to 20 (11 news pieces and nine opinion articles). In these, there is some reference, even if reduced, to the subject of study (Cf. Table no. 3). This is the material that constitutes our corpus of analysis.

Genre	Occurrences
Informational Products	11
Opinionated Products	9
Total	**20**

Table 3 – Distribution of journalistic coverage by "textual category"

In short, this corpus of analysis only represents 4% of the material originally published on the "Crisis", which immediately allows us to conclude on the reduced impact of PPC's post as a journalistic event in print media.

Let us now proceed by focusing our analysis exclusively on the 4%, with the purpose of investigating how this event was reported.

Of the 11 journalistic works that mention "PPC on Facebook and respective comments", seven include them as the main theme and the remaining four only make reference in terms of complement/framework. In turn, there were five opinion articles identified where the authors evaluate it, even if not exclusively (Cf. Table 4).

Informational Texts	Occurrences
Information about PPC's text/comments	7
Information on other topics, but with reference to PPC's text/comments	4
Opinion Texts	
Opinion Articles that comment on PPC's text/comments	5
Opinion Articles that only relate to PPC's text/comments	4
Total	**20**

Table 4 – Emphasis on news

And what was covered in this "occurrence-event"? Was it only PPC's "outburst" text, the number and diversity of comments that it triggered or both aspects?
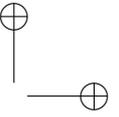
We conclude that, in the two types of discourse (informational and opinionated) there was a greater frequency (11 occurrences) of reference to *the post* (the "outburst" text). We add five occurrences to this value in which the text is reported via direct quotation. Precisely, such a prevalence constitutes an unexpected result which relativizes somewhat the theoretical postulates on the new modality of intermedia agenda-setting that we previously mentioned. More than the transfer and amplification of the salience of digital public opinion on an event, journalistic coverage has focused mainly on the occurrence of such an event in itself. Why have they chosen to do this? We suspect that the editorial motivation may report the singularity of the event itself, a singularity that refers to the disparity of modes and criteria for PPC's communication: one being of an institutional nature, filled with a pretence of authority propagated by TV during dinner time; and the other of a personal nature, warmer, more intimate and evocative of a psychological portrait. Curiously this disparity was evident in another occurrence-event, three months later. It corresponds to PPC's paternalistic outburst, also aired on Facebook, from a text message sent from a mobile phone, which complements the institutional Christmas communication, also transmitted on television from the Palace of São Bento.

Let us continue with our theme. If it is clear that journalistic coverage is centred on the originality of the circumstances and moulds of enunciation of PPC's text-outburst, there still emerges with some preponderance the reference to comments from users of the social network, both in terms of mention or quotation. Table 5 gives these values.

	Occurrences
Direct quotation from the text-outburst	5
Direct quotation from comments	2
Reference to comments	9
Reference to text-outburst only	11
Total	**27**

Table 5 – Methods of news coverage
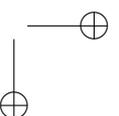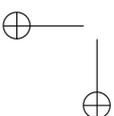
Level 3: Comments on PPC's text

Let us focus on the analysis in terms of news coverage of the readers' comments on PPC's text on his Facebook page. We remind you about the importance of restricting the analysis to this analytical line. If we consider the comments as textual phenomena, evocative of a state of digital public opinion regarding two events (PPC's formal speech about the TSU in the Palace of São Bento and the intimate speech on his Facebook page), it becomes critical to understand how they were transformed into "public opinion news". It will be from this projection that we can formulate some considerations about the phenomenon of intermedia agenda-setting. In addition, the category "Direct quotation from comments" is relevant in the context of this case study, because it relates closely to the verification of hypothesis no. 2 about the possibility of the routines of journalistic work being able to reproduce the range of digitally expressed opinions. In this possibility resided the conception that the participation of users of PPC's Facebook could be, by itself, a newsworthy event, in addition to configuring an agenda process that originated in the individuals' comments and was utilised by the newspapers.

Let us therefore characterize each of the occurrences relating to the category "Direct quotation from comments".

The first occurrence reports to work published in the September 10, 2012 edition of the *Jornal de Notícias*. Inserted into the Politics heading, the news strictly reports Pedro Passos Coelho's post. It is a comprehensive work, which in addition to reproducing the text, presents an interview with the political scientist Viriato Soromenho Marques who analyses, in turn, the prime minister's intervention. In another accompanying text, it retrieves the behaviour of other political leaders in the same social network: Cavaco Silva (President of the Republic), Antonio José Seguro (Secretary-general of the Socialist Party), Francisco Louçã (at that date Coordinator of the Left Block) and Paulo Portas (President of the CDS-PP and Minister of Foreign Affairs). However, this comprehensiveness is limited, because with respect to the quotation of comments, there is only one mention without any indication of the author, or the date of publication of the comment:

"Resign now!", is read between the reactions that keep growing.

Jornal de Notícias, 10-09-2012
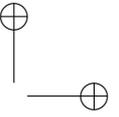
The second occurrence has a more complex classification. It refers to a two page publication in the Jornal *i*, on September 11, in the Zoom section, under the theme "Austerity" (Figure no. 1). In that journalistic piece, 18 comments were selected, reproduced, and displayed on pages along with a picture of PPC. It presents a graphic model that is closer to the infographic, in so far as the sentences were not worked in the form of news, but simply presented together with the author's name. Even so, perhaps because of the difficulty to devote more space to the matter and given the graphic arrangement chosen, there are phrases that were cut or do not indicate authorship. The comments are accompanied by the following text:

> On Pedro Passos Coelho's page, the comments about the prime minister's apology do not stop growing: at the closing time of this edition, there were 39,030. The insults, the aggressiveness and verbal violence are present in almost all of them. These are the softer comments. Jornal *i*, 11-09-2012

With the analysis of each one, we come to the conclusion that the selection has focused on the shorter comments, between 122 characters (the longest one) and nine (the most concise example). The option may have been constrained by space.

If you look at the content of these comments (Cf. Table 6) the most redundant theme is that of "contestation", be it expressed in the form of an appeal to demonstrations and protests, or as a manifestation of surprise at the fact that the Portuguese are still calm and quiet about the economic situation. The theme of contestation was revealed in four occurrences, followed by the "Criticism towards governance"; "Pedro Passos Coelho's Text on Facebook"; and "Generalised criticism". We wonder if the thematic range of Jornal i wasn't already preparing the agenda-setting of civil society itself, which would be evidenced days later in the streets with the mega-demonstration on September 15, 2012, to protest against the Government.
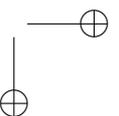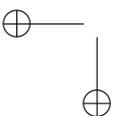
Themes	Occurrences
Criticism towards governance	3
Public contestation	4
Politicians at the margin of austerity	2
The Good Reputation of Pedro Passos Coelho	1
On Pedro Passos Coelho's text	3
Generalised Criticism	3
Reference to other interventions by Pedro Passos Coelho	1
Difficulties	1
Insult	1

Table 6 – Selected themes of comments

In axiological terms, all these criteria are overcome by the same recurrence: that of negativity and dysphoria. (Cf. Appendix 2). This feature is important because it refers to the creation of effects of meaning and pragmatics associated with a sort of news framing that does not correspond to the nature of the occurrence. Actually, we confer the particularity that the majority of comments were of devaluation, not only about PPC's outburst, but also about his credibility and political honour. We may also highlight the existence of a considerable quantity of judgments that are positive or signs of *Like*.

Ideas for discussion

We present some of the considerations arising from this case study:

1) The Internet can be used as a space for political participation. If we take the definition of this concept, based on Sani's studies, we can frame the "commentator activity" verified in PPC's profile as being about the "discussion of political events" and "dissemination of political information" (Sani, 1983, p. 888). Furthermore, there are the assumptions of a highly mediatised society, in the aspect that the contact between leaders and citizens is facilitated through a digital medium, Web 2.0. This medium is integrated, more generally, into the communicational paradigm *Evernet* and "Always on" which favours contact between users and access to information in the system. It is to be expected,

in spite of not being part of the scope of this study, that the high number of comments found on PPC's page reflects precisely this paradigm;

2) A comparative reading of Delarbre's assumptions also allowed us to conclude that there are extensions of space and public spheres. PPC's text-outburst, the appropriation of Facebook itself by a political actor is integrated within a framework of apparent absence of intermediation from political power and the citizens. The resounding feedback to his communication – which is also related to the dissemination and appropriation of content from and by individuals – would also be impossible to verify in any other context than the digital.

3) By the heterogeneity of content and the discursive tone of the comments published on PPC's page, we can still fit them into Wilson Gomes's typology: absence of hierarchy and coerciveness and the existence of discussion without filters or external control. Considering the typology of the structure of Facebook, it is not an identifiable aspect on the existence of differences, social class or status among those who commented. We also believe that the longevity of the comments on the post greatly exceeded the limitations of time, since the discussion through comments continued months after. This aspect is reinforced by the analysis of another intervention by the Portuguese Prime Minister in 2012, which we highlight to exemplify how interaction through the social network can extend in time: on June 25, the head of government used Facebook again to comment on the Government's meeting marking its one year anniversary in power. On December 17, the intervention had 11,663 comments, with the last being made at 9:12 pm of this day;

4) Despite the limitations of Internet access and given that among those who are connected to the Web, not all are registered in a social network, we can establish that Facebook is also used for political purposes, without wanting to value the degree or the effectiveness in which this happens. We are well aware of the contingencies such as the inaccessibility of many citizens to spaces such as this, but that does not mean that a significant volume of individuals use it to exercise political participation, expressing an opinion that is sent directly to the Portuguese head of state with executive powers. In this particular case, such participation was reactive – originated by PPC's action (the speech about the TSU at the Palace of São Bento and the intimate message on his Facebook page), but it would not be feasible from another type of intervention conveyed by a traditional means of communication;
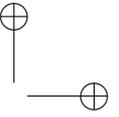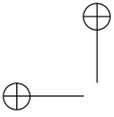
5) It is not possible to evaluate this analysis given the digital comments, or even the repercussions that this "commentator activity" has in the definition of policies applied in Portugal. However, the data collected allow us to at least put the hypothesis of digital tools being used for the purposes of expressing opinions and to create a new space for debate. If later this public opinion creates a specific political action, it is something that more in-depth studies still have to assess;

6) Some final synthetic considerations on the case study. The angle of coverage of PPC's text-outburst on Facebook is inserted in the theme "Crisis". In addition, as relevant as the digital opinions expressed in the form of comments may be – which could also be included in this theme – it is the Prime Minister's speech as Pedro and a father – that becomes the text-object of the news coverage. Thus, the previously formulated hypothesis no. 1 was not confirmed, probably due to the two determining trends in terms of news criteria.

The first refers to the criterion news-value "reference to elite people" (Galtung and Roars, 1965): despite everything, Pedro as a father and citizen is Passos Coelho, political leader and Prime Minister – and his word represents formality. The second tendency refers to the *fait divers* for an entire territory of the extraordinary or unique that enables contact points with the imaginary and the fantastic. Can we fantasize about this political actor that comes out of São Bento extremely busy after one of the most decisive communications to the country since the Revolution of 1974, attends a concert by the popular music singer Paulo de Carvalho with his wife (where he whistles one of the songs) and, 24 hours later, decides to communicate to the Portuguese as if he were just Facebook's boy next door?

7) In addition to the news-value mentioned beforehand, and based on Galtung and Roars's typology, we frame the selection of the theme in mainstream media into the category threshold, as regards the number of comments: the fulfilment of this selection aspect points to the impact on journalists having focused on the large amount of individuals participating on PPC's page. Even when the occurrence is covered from the perspective of their own comments, the angle continues to be based on quantity and not quality. It should be highlighted how the focus attached to the content of the comments themselves attracted a merely residual attention from journalists. Indeed, only in two occasions did they resort to quotations, and, even so, it was from a clearly ne-

gative axiological focus not in line with the opinionated range and the number of likes that this text-outburst also received. The analysis of these journalistic constructions show us that there is not only no effective highlight as well as it not being fully reliable. And in view of this reality, we can still incorporate the news-value "reference to something negative", as a criterion of choice. The post was umbilically linked to the consequences that many predicted would be negative for the everyday lives of the Portuguese and this anticipation pointed to the negativity of the measures. The option for the critical comments may have to do with the news-value "connection", since the negativity framed from the beginning the entire theme and it would certainly be the reality that was mentally more acceptable by the public.
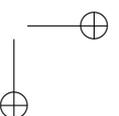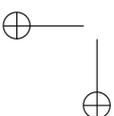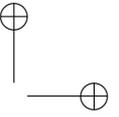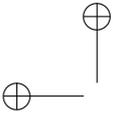
Even so, the theme was not strong enough to maintain or have significant coverage in terms of space on the media agenda of the newspapers analysed and, in this respect, we reflected upon the following: the impact that the theme "Crisis" had throughout the week may have obliged material and human resources to be channelled to a large number of sources and other approaches, putting the effervescence of PPC's profile in the social network on the back burner.

We can still consider that PPC's publication, and the torrent of respective comments, hindered the fulfilment of the news-value "frequency", in how the content of comments were worked – that which interested us most for this analysis. The journalistic analysis of thousands of entries from individuals is certainly an inappropriate task for the regimes of media production studied and the progressive increase of its volume, day after day, has made such a task increasingly unfeasible.

8) What is certain is that the weak journalistic expressiveness of an opinionated range on the comments made by the Internet users regarding the Prime Minister's speech has contributed to a non-confirmation of the paradigm of intermedia agenda-setting (refutation of hypothesis no. 2). Actually, in what concerns this case study, we cannot consider the existence of any situation of intermedia agenda-setting because the journalistic coverage does not reproduce in a significant way the range of digital opinions: it focused mostly on the amount of comments and not on its content which, had it happened, would have obliged the other position about this hypothesis. It seems to us that some newspapers may have had some difficulty in managing the flow of online con-

tent, a handicap resulting from the incompatibility of their traditional models of production, when faced with a dynamic environment as is the Internet.
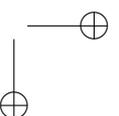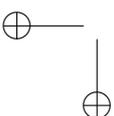
References

Bruns, A. (2003) Gatewatching, not gatekeeping: Collaborative online news. *Media International Australia Incorporating Culture and Policy: quarterly journal of media research and resources*, 107, pp. 31-44.

Cardoso, G. (2006). *Os Media na Sociedade em Rede*. Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian.

Delarbre, R. (2009). Internet como expressão e extensão do espaço público. *MATRIZes*, 2. pp. 71-92.

Galtung, J. & Ruge, M. A. (1993). Estrutura do noticiário estrangeiro. A apresentação das crises do Congo, Cuba e Chipre em quatro jornais estrangeiros. , In N. Traquina (1993) (org.). *Jornalismo: Questões, Teorias e «Estórias»* (pp. 61-73). Lisboa: Vega.

Gillmor, D. (2005). *Nós, os media*. Lisboa: Editorial Presença.

Gomes, W. (2005). Internet e participação política em sociedades democráticas. *Famecos*, Agosto, pp. 58-78.

McCombs, M. (2006). *Setting the agenda: the mass media and public opinion*. Malden. Blackwell Publishing.

Neto, F. (2009). Jornalismo: sensibilidade e complexidade. *Galáxia*, 18, 17-30.

O'Reilly, T. (2005). What Is Web 2.0: Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next Generation of Software. Retrieved February 02, 2009 from http://oreilly.com.

Rötzer, F. (2011). Um mundo novo mas tutelado. *Courrier Internacional*, 187, 38-40.
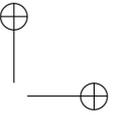
Sani, G. (1983). Participação Política. In N. Bobbio, N. Matteucci & G., N., Pasquino (eds.). *Dicionário de Política* (pp. 888-890). Brasília: Editora Universidade de Brasília.

Serra, P. (2009) *Os blogs e a questão do agendamento*, Retrieved February 02, 2011 from, www.bocc.ubi.pt.

Thompson, J. B. (2007). *A nova visibilidade*.Retrieved July 16, 2011 from, www.revistas.univerciencia.org.

Vliegenthart, R. & Walgrave, S. (2008). The Contingency of Intermedia Agenda Setting: A Longitudinal Study in Belgium. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 4, 860-877.

White, D. (1964). The "Gatekeeper": A Case Study in the Selection of News. In: L. Dexter, L. & D. White (Ed.), *People, Society, and Mass Communications* (pp. 160-172). New York: The Free Press Of Glencoe.
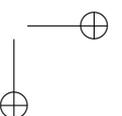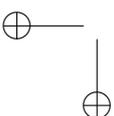
Appendix 1 – Post by Pedro Passos Coelho on his Facebook page[4]

Pedro Passos Coelho · 112,681 like this
September 9, 2012 at 12:16 am ·

· Friends,

I have made one of the most ungrateful speeches that a Prime Minister can make – inform the Portuguese, who have faced with so much courage and responsibility this extremely difficult period in our history, that the sacrifices have not yet ended.

It was not what I would like to tell you, and I know that was not what you would like to hear.

Our country today is an example of determination and strength, and this is the direct result of the sacrifices that we have all made. However, for many Portuguese, in particular the young people, this recovery has not generated what they need most at this time: a job. Anyone who is in this situation knows well that this is more than a financial problem – it is a personal and familial tragedy, and the measures that I announced yesterday represent a necessary and inescapable step towards a real and lasting solution.

I see every day how much we are already working to correct the mistakes of the past, and the frustration of not being able to spare us from these sacrifices is only supplanted by pride that I feel in seeing, once again, what the Portuguese are made of.

I wanted to write to you today, in this personal page, not as Prime Minister but as a citizen and as a parent, to say only this: this story does not end here. We will not give up until the work is done, and we will never forget that our children are watching, and that it is for them that we will continue, today, tomorrow and for as long as is necessary, to sacrifice so much to recover Portugal so that they won't need to do so.

Thank you all.

Pedro

---

[4] My translation.
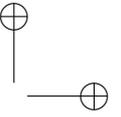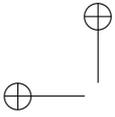
Pedro Passos Coelho · 112.681 gostam disto
9 de Setembro de 2012 às 0:16 ·

- Amigos,

  Fiz um dos discursos mais ingratos que um Primeiro-Ministro pode fazer - informar os Portugueses, que têm enfrentado com tanta coragem e responsabilidade este período tão difícil da nossa história, que os sacrifícios ainda não terminaram.

  Não era o que gostaria de poder vos dizer, e sei que não era o que gostariam de ouvir.

  O nosso país é hoje um exemplo de determinação e força, e esse é o resultado directo dos sacrifícios que todos temos feito. Porém, para muitos Portugueses, em particular os mais jovens, essa recuperação não tem gerado aquilo que mais precisam neste momento: um emprego. Quem está nessa situação sabe bem que este é mais do que um problema financeiro - é um drama pessoal e familiar, e as medidas que anunciei ontem representam um passo necessário e incontornável no caminho de uma solução real e duradoura.

  Vejo todos os dias o quanto já estamos a trabalhar para corrigir os erros do passado, e a frustração de não poder poupar-nos a estes sacrifícios é apenas suplantada pelo orgulho que sinto em ver, uma vez mais, do que são feitos os Portugueses.

  Queria escrever-vos hoje, nesta página pessoal, não como Primeiro-Ministro mas como cidadão e como pai, para vos dizer apenas isto: esta história não acaba assim. Não baixaremos os braços até o trabalho estar feito, e nunca esqueceremos que os nossos filhos nos estão a ver, e que é por eles e para eles que continuaremos, hoje, amanhã e enquanto for necessário, a sacrificar tanto para recuperar um Portugal onde eles não precisarão de o fazer.

  Obrigado a todos.

  Pedro
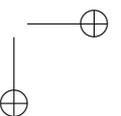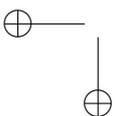
Figure 1 – Page from the Jornal *i* on September 11, 2012
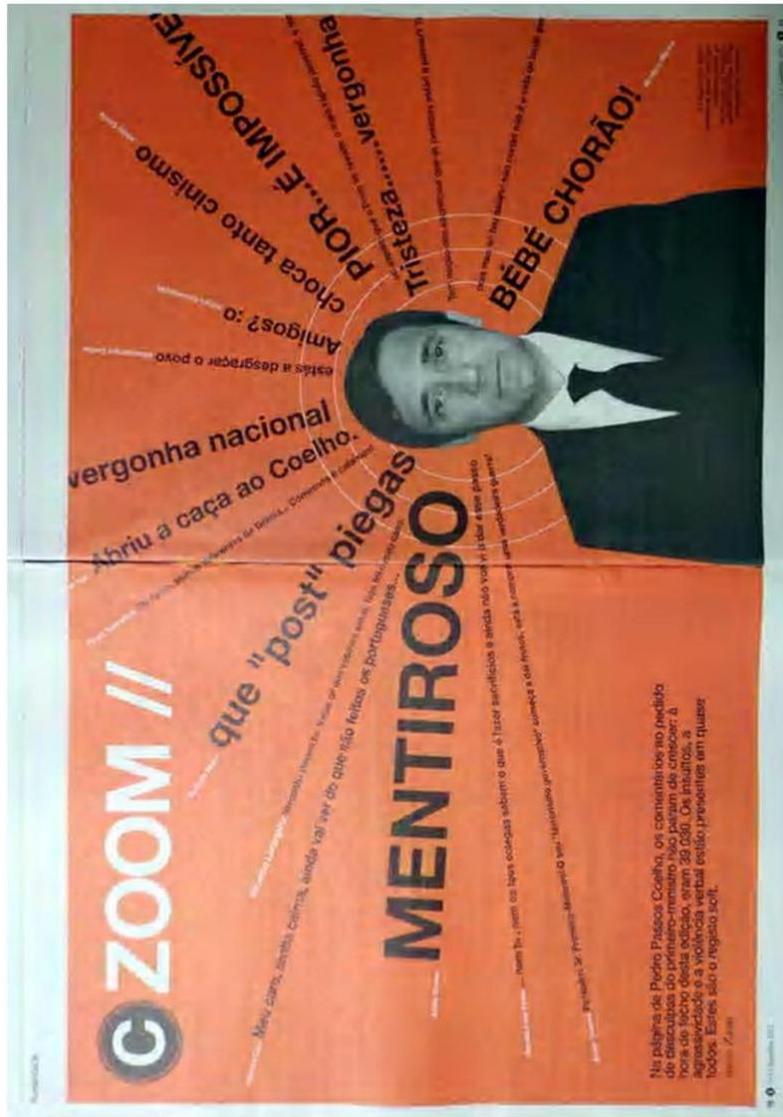
Appendix 2 – Analysis of the study on Jornal *i* about the comments on PPC's Facebook

Comment	Characters	Idea	Trend (Support - Positive; Rejection - Negative)
Congratulations Mr. Prime Minister! Your "governmental terrorism" begins to bear fruit. It is buying a real war!	122	Criticism towards governance. Allusion to the possibility of making a contestation arise.	Negative
... Neither you nor your colleagues know how to make sacrifices and I still have not seen you take that step.	100	Criticism towards governance. Allusion that the sacrifices do not include politicians.	Negative
LIAR	9	Criticism towards Pedro Passos Coelho's honour	Negative
My dear, stay calm, you will see what the Portuguese are made of...	70	Refers to PPC's text	It is not possible to identify the trend with rigour. It may be an ironic comment that threatens what the Portuguese may do to contest the Government's policy, or simply one of confidence that the Portuguese will overcome the difficulties. In accordance with the criterion that seems to have presided over the selection, we tend to consider the first hypothesis as the strongest.
All those who voted for you should be ashamed. It was not my case.	66	Criticism towards those who voted for PSD in 2011.	Negative
What a mushy "post"	17	Use of an expression previously used by PPC, which became a soundbite and was recurrently used against PPC.	Negative
In fact, we are different from Greece... we eat and shut up!	56	Criticizes the pacific way that the Portuguese have accepted the austerity measures, as opposed to the behaviour of the Greeks.	Negative
The hunt for Coelho[5] has started.	23	Allusion that PPC will be the target of severe criticism.	No, tendentially, although it can also be interpreted as a preview to Government contestation.
(Illegible on page)national shame	16	General Criticism.	Negative
you are disgracing the People	24	Evaluation of PPC's policies are leaving the population (with fewer possessions) more unprotected.	Negative
Friends? :0	10	Amazement at the use of the term friends, suggesting that PPC may not be regarded as such by the Portuguese.	Negative
So much cynicism is shocking	19	Analysis of PPC's text.	Negative
WORST... IS IMPOSSIVEL (illegible on page)	17	General criticism stating that we are reaching the limit.	Negative
I only hope that People revolt as soon as possible, and (illegible on page)	60	Request for protests against the Government's austerity measures.	Negative
Sadness...shame	18	General criticism, without specifying exactly against what.	Negative
Are you aware of the sacrifices that people are making? (illegible on page)	59	Draws attention to the difficulties in which people live as a result of the austerity policies.	Negative
but to your salary it isn't and the life of a lord (illegible on page)	48	Reference to wages of politicians.	Negative
CRY BABY!	12	General insult.	Negative

---
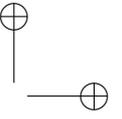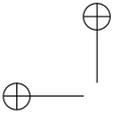
[4] This newspaper title is understood by the fact that the surname of the Prime-Minister, "Coelho", may also mean rabbit or bunny in the Portuguese language.
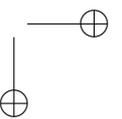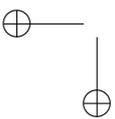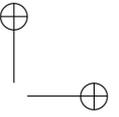
Political communication 2.0: new challenges for an old art

Elsa Santos and Rosália Rodrigues

Introduction

The history of Political Communication is divided into three phases. The first is prior to the appearance of the means of social communication, the second arises simultaneously with the emergence and development of mainstream media, especially radio and television, and the third phase is asynchronous to the development of new information and communication technologies, namely the new digital media, such as the Internet.

The present article is a reflection on the development of Political Communication in Portugal, from the beginning of the 20th century until today, with an emphasis on "Communication 2.0" developed on the political parties' and the government's institutional websites.

In this sense, this analysis is based on Communication Theory in order to understand the changes brought about by websites in the process of political communication, namely the *Uses and Gratifications Theory*, the *Two Step Flow Theory* and John Thompson's *Reception Theory*.

The main objective focuses on a reflection about the communicative possibilities of the website portals analysed, as well as the new challenges they are capable of encouraging in the old art of Politics.

1. Communication channels

Firstly, one should be reminded that that there are two distinct types of communication channels, direct and indirect. With different characteristics and functions, both are fundamental for communication, especially in politics.

The direct channels of communication are controlled by political parties. These include diverse actions of a public nature, such as: meetings, party conferences – regional or national, local rallies, debates, town hall meetings, speeches, among others.
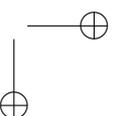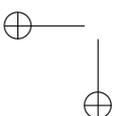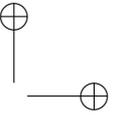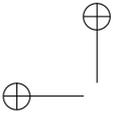
In addition to the actions of face-to-face communication, in different situations and directed to different audiences, the publications that bear official symbols are also important. We consider here the newsletters, flyers, posters, stickers, flags or banners.

Part of the direct communication, controlled by the party, is also the work of local scouts, performed by members of the same party, volunteers and paid activists, whose mission is to come into contact with voters.

During an electoral campaign, political propaganda counts on different means of communication for this purpose, such as billboards, paid newspapers, radio, TV adverts, and (unpaid) TV air time, as well as the coverage of debates between candidates in the so-called public service.

According to their nature, it is possible to affirm that the channels of direct political communication assume a considerable efficiency among different audiences attentive to the party.

> In general, direct channels are usually most effective at connecting with and mobilizing party activists, supporters, and sympathizes, all of whom are relatively highly predisposed toward the party to begin with. Direct channels are also effective at reaching the more attentive sectors of the general public, media professionals in particular. (Norris, 2005: pp. 4-5)

With regard to indirect channels of communication, these are mediated and therefore are not controlled by political parties.

> To reach broader audiences, including undecided, wavering, or floating voters, political parties rely heavily on indirect (or "mediated") channels – so named simply because parties do not control them directly. (Norris, 2005: 5)

Of the communication channels considered indirect, we can include regular press conferences; press releases or news summaries; interviews with leaders; participation in debates with leaders, opinion and editorial reviews; recordings for newspaper and radio campaigns, as well as the development of journals.

The indirect channels are thus directly related with the media. Journalists are the ones here who control the message, selecting, interpreting and disseminating information to the public and for public opinion.
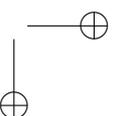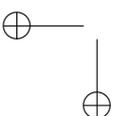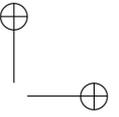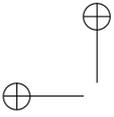
Assuming that both direct and indirect channels have distinct functions, they also play a fundamental role for a good communication. As Norris explains:

> Together, direct and indirect channels of communication link party organizations internally (or vertically) among their members, activists, and officials, as well as externally (or horizontally) by connecting party leaders and representatives with the electorate and other political groups. (Norris, 2005: 5-6)

The different types of communication channels – direct and indirect – participate in an active communication, capable of responding to the different requirements and needs of the parties and public.

2. The main types of party communication

Beyond the simple distinction between direct and indirect channels, Norris presents another division that reflects the history and evolution of political-party communication. The author speaks of three essential phases that reflect the political organizations' evolution of communication. All result from contexts that are both distinct and similar in regards to the determinant elements in each moment. These elements are mass media, the legal regulation of political parties and social structure. This results in different forms of communicating or campaigning. Norris distinguishes three main types: traditional people-intensive campaigns in which communication occurs in person, face-to-face, between politicians or their representatives and citizens; modern broadcasting campaigns, which come with the traditional media; and the more recent campaigns on the Internet that take advantage of the potential of new communication technologies.

As far as the functions of each type of campaign, the author explains that traditional campaigns focus on information, that broadcasting campaigns focus on persuasion and, finally, that Internet campaigns have mobilization as their main objective.

Each of the forms of communication allows a greater and more effective force of the message transmitted. Although they mark different periods of the evolution of political communication, it is true that they do not disappear
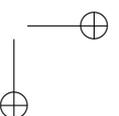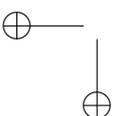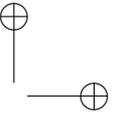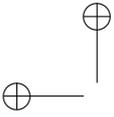
with the onset of another. There is a complementarity that is evident by the distinct function that each one assumes. Currently, in addition to the use of the digital means, there remains the relevance of the presence of television and newspapers as well as close contact with people, particularly voters. As Norris states, "The rapid pace of technological development today means that party leaders must continually reconsider their communications strategies" (Norris, 2005: 3).

Online communication is inherent to a constant evolution and an increasing number of users. Thus, it requires special attention on behalf of political parties which need to adapt their communication according to varying needs. In order to do this, they need to revert to constantly renewed strategies, new instruments, and consequently to new rituals and new professionals.

The use of the Internet, since the 1990s, has demanded the very development of political marketing which occurred first in the United States of America. The same techniques crossed the Atlantic, instilling the concept of Americanization (Norris, 2005) in the campaigns carried out in Europe, via the Internet.

> Recent developments include parties' widespread adaptation to newer information and communication technologies – notably party websites, which started to develop in the mid-1990s, alongside the growing use of mobile phones, fax machines, text messages, e-mail, and, most recently, activist weblogs. Accounts have interpreted these developments as representing a "rise of political marketing", whose techniques have been borrowed from the private sector, or the "Americanization of campaigning", emulating patterns originating in the United States. (Norris, 2005: 6)

The development of the online environment has been registering a relevant growth over the course of time, from weblogs to party and candidate websites. It requires therefore the presence of specialized professionals in political marketing, capable of defining the best strategies, as well as professionals from new technologies and the managers of digital content.
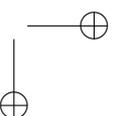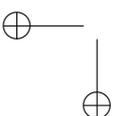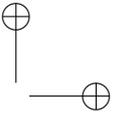
3. Has the Internet changed political-partisan communication?

The Internet, especially through the website, has revolutionized political-partisan communication throughout the world and in Portugal as well. However, it is considered, above all, as an extension of other means of communication. As far as Gibson is concerned, it is "an additional element to parties' repertoire of action." (Gibson et al., 2003: 236). Therefore, the website presents itself as a space where content that has already been published by other means of communication is made available. Thus, as Gibson points out: "Parties are not providing much that is new but more of the same in a different format" (Gibson et al., 2003: 235).

In its early days, and even today in some cases, online communication, through websites, is a reproduction of traditional forms of political communication, instead of proposing new forms of relationship between parties and citizens. Even so, the potential of the digital opened new forms of communication and a greater proximity between parties and citizens. It could be said that online characteristics such as interactivity were not and still are not exploited to its full potential. Regardless of some limitations, the website has changed political party communication.

4. Website

Between the websites of a party or candidate, political digital communication has two main functions: to inform and promote a good image. Interactivity contributes to the success of these same functions. Online interactivity assumes the most relevant and decisive role for the proximity between parties and citizens, opening up a space for response and feedback. This is, after all, the culmination of a communication that is closer to the public and of a new phase of democracy. Thus, "Interactivity is in the integration of profane statements on websites of parties (...) [so much so] that we have identified a manifestation of the evolution of communication partisan" (Blanchard, 2006: 13).

In accordance with Blanchard's statement, interactivity has spawned a new political communication where the public can inform itself and participate, giving its opinion or asking questions that are answered directly by the
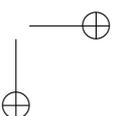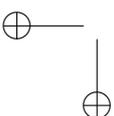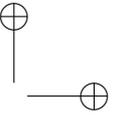
party or candidate. However, the power of interactivity, being the most diffe-rentiating factor of the Internet, may not be used to its full potential or without any kind of moderation since it is a resource to which limits are imposed.

5. The internet as a means of persuasive communication

The emergence of new media has led to the creation of new strategies and new possibilities for campaigning. The success of political campaigns conducted in cyberspace can take advantage of the strong personalization of the messages conveyed because the information becomes increasingly oriented, taking into account the type of transmitter and the various audiences. The emergence of social networking tools such as blogs or wikis, as well as the possibility of sharing personal profiles on Facebook, YouTube, etc., announce a new form of communication, a decentralised communication that challenges the traditional means and also a new field of "battle" for political parties to excel in the cybernautic environment.

These facts would be great for the resolution of certain problems that arise in political communication and the functioning of democracy. But, will they be enough to achieve some of the old communicational utopias, such as a com-pletely transparent, interactive and participatory communication? Or, are the possibilities offered by the new media just that, opportunities for something – a means to –, but which in reality are not effective and do not change anything in the usual communicational processes? These are the questions that will be addressed in this article.

In fact, in the case of political communication, during periods of electoral campaign, there were some changes made possible by new media. The suc-cess of Barack Obama's Internet campaign in 2008 triggered in Portugal the willingness to make an online campaign that was also more participatory and interactive, extending it to other public spaces. An example of that was the hiring of the team that did the website of the Democrats in the United States of America, the Blue State Digital (BSD), by the Portuguese Socialist Party (PS) to develop the online political campaign for the candidate José Sócrates. The *Movimento Sócrates* (Sócrates Movement) marked the beginning of a 2.0 Campaign in Portugal.

For the first time, the campaign made on the Web was advertised in other
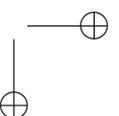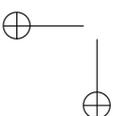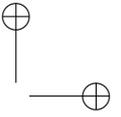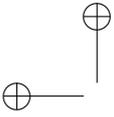
media in such a way that it was already considered not only as a mere complement that was disputed in traditional media, but became an integral part of an entire interactive campaign that was well planned and took place in all channels of communication, including new media such as mobile phones with exclusive cyberspace content. The offline campaign was connected to the network and the main events that occurred during the party's campaign were then exposed in the "movement" that characterised the campaign page for PS's general elections in 2009.

The party itself organized a conference to discuss the importance of "interactive democracy", which shows that there is a concern by political actors in making the democratic practices more interactive through the Internet and to advertise this act so as to increase the audience. PSD's website also revealed the importance given to the Internet as a means of interaction between political actors and citizens/voters.

This form of Communication 2.0, i.e. the communication that takes advantage of the potential of Web 2.0, focuses directly on Political Communication which, in turn, assumes the Web's communicational interactive characteristics. The Internet will be the medium that connects politicians to citizens, changing the relationship that they have in the political world.

6. Political communication strategies on the web

Political Communication refers to internal and external communication linked to political parties, or political and governmental institutions. It is the communication that occurs between individuals as citizens, done by public criticism, and can be professional. It is also the entire communication generated about political actors.

The research carried out in the area of communication attempts to make Political Communication increasingly more effective, in order to reduce the possible existing noise, making the communicational processes more directed toward the different groups that constitute the various audiences, increasingly diversified and pluralistic. This is where the performance of communication agencies, advisers, public relations professionals and publicists enter. They are the operators of "Persuasion Industries", as Antonio Fidalgo designates when referring to the persuasion exerted by specialists who work in media
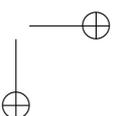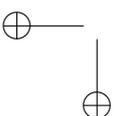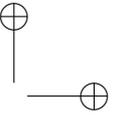
companies, and whose objective is to "sell" a product or idea (Fidalgo, *Blog Retórica*). The persuasion continues to be present in all fields of social life, especially in politics and is accentuated even further during electoral campaigns.

In political sites, rhetoric is present from the very beginning, in the midst of the message, that in certain circumstances becomes more appealing, following the McLuhanian precept that the medium is the message. In this sense, the Web, as the mediator of a message, has tools that help to draw up this same message, making it more understandable, more complete and more persuasive.

The Internet has allowed modifications in reading through the intertextuality of the hypertext and hypermedia. These are facts that have brought about a change in language and consequently in persuasion, having therefore become multimodal. What makes the new means new is precisely the readaptation of the older ones. This is the opening of new possibilities by taking advantage of those that already existed. In the Network of the World Wide Web we find the junction of the features of the old media into a single one, which allows several types of reading/interpretation. In addition, the Internet can be considered as a massive means, when the public that accesses the message is very broad, when any person can access the information, as long as he or she has an appropriate technical device. Then, the Internet allows a return of the message, a feedback between their producer and receiver, as well as the production of new content. However, who controls the means ceases to be an elite, and starts to be the users as well. This multidirectional process influences, without a doubt, the mechanisms of persuasion and rhetorical language.

The Internet allows a greater reflexivity, because it offers more informative sources and, in addition, it provides interaction between the various actors. It also allows a greater deliberation and participation in the discussion of problems, as well as their resolution. And, in turn, the participation of citizens in the network influences the decision-making, by bringing closer the political and civil sphere in a cybersphere, facilitating a relationship without intermediaries between them and by blocking influences from other spheres, such as the economic and also the entertainment and culture industries, as well as other means of mass communication. The Internet provides communication channels for the citizen of a country to be more active and it is in this aspect that one can speak about cyberdemocracy, since the cybercitizen assumes the role
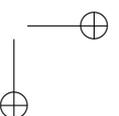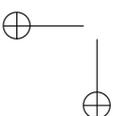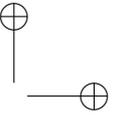
of a consumer and at the same time producer of information policies, having greater freedom and equality in the access to information, and participating in the various processes.

Thus, during an election campaign, the citizens' choice ends up being freer, because we become freer with the greater amount of possibilities we have to expand our knowledge and participate in events. The principle of freedom is quite explicit in a democratic regime, as a fundamental condition for its implementation and development. For this reason, cyberdemocracy, as we understand it, which is developed in cyberspace and uses its potential to promote and expand itself in the world, facilitates social and political democratic relations. Political campaigns are no longer pure propaganda, controlled by political actors, and start being more dynamic and interactive, in which citizens participate in them, giving their support, or demonstrating their disapproval on the screens of the new media. Political Communication therefore gains visibility in the cyberworld at a fully global scale.

However, the Internet is not yet accessible to all, in spite of the increasing use which is ever more apparent. Even so, the political discussions generated in network spaces, open to civic participation – cyberspace –, mark the principle of non-coercion, reflexivity and argument proposed by Habermas, of what would be an ideal of the clarified public sphere.

In a report submitted in the framework of a study carried out for the World Internet Project, it is noted that in Portugal the evolution of Internet users has been growing since 2003, with 48.8% of the population already having Internet at home. In 2009 the number of users was around 29% and it is currently 44.6%.[1]

But, you cannot overlook the fact that the communication generated in the cyberspace of the Internet can expand to other media, or be in the order of the day of citizens' agendas. Another characteristic element of Web 2.0 is the fact that there is no hierarchy within the arena of discussion because

---

[1] *A Utilização da Internet em Portugal 2010*, available at: www.umic.pt, [accessed in October 2011]. This study also shows that the universe of participants continues to reveal a tendency for male participation, despite the tendency for the disparity between genders to attenuate. Younger people, students and people who hold professional positions in senior management are the most frequent users of the Internet. Digital illiteracy and access to a computer or network (due to financial issues) are the main obstacles presented in the non-use of the medium.
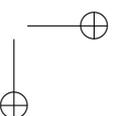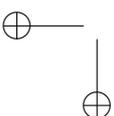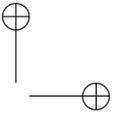
anonymity provides the dissemination of positions, even if some opinions are more credible when identified and associated with a personality. Anonymity only ensures that discussion be generated in a space without oppression and fears of exclusion. The Internet can be a means of popular participation in the public debate, as a channel of expression of civil society groups and it can also be an instrument of pressure on the producers of political decision. It is for this reason that the Web enables the increment of new practices and democratic opportunities that are more innovative and that politicians have to take into account, at all times, especially during key moments such as election and campaign periods.

In the early 1990s, the institutional sites of parties consisted of a mere home page with an e-mail, some contacts and information about the political personalities. Only after the new millennium do sites have content that is thought for the different audiences, with more segmented and updated information.

On the other hand, political marketing began to develop and new methods and political strategies were created, betting more on mass-media campaigns and online campaigns, announcements and requests for assistance in political sites. One of the factors cited for the use of websites in political communication is to inform citizens and communicate with activists, because in spite of the potential of the medium, we have to take into account that the information does not reach everyone. As has already been mentioned, not everyone has access to the information available in the network of cyberspace, and those who have access to them don't always transmit feedback.

The intelligent planning of a campaign becomes crucial to win enough attention from the media, as well as the public. Taking into account the ever-increasing flow of information, the success or failure of a campaign largely depends on the planning, implementation and evaluation of the campaign with all the scientific tools available (Gibson & Römmele, 2007, p. 3). It is well known that good speakers must not contradict, at the outset and in such a direct way, the opinions of the masses. Instead, they should accompany them, guide them, so that they feel that the path taken was taken together. The persuaders try to understand the "popular tastes" so that they can shape their suggestions in the same way as advertising tactics. Thus, the dialogue generated in Web 2.0 will allow a better relationship between political actors and citizens, and
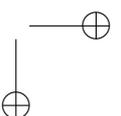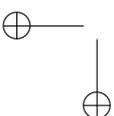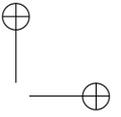
this permits speakers-politicians to better know the predispositions of their audience-citizens.

In a political campaign the sender of the message is a collectivity, a party, a government. In this case, the intention reverts to a complex communicational process among members. The receptors of a political campaign are the citizens, potential voters. Once the target audience is quite heterogeneous, influencing it in terms of a choice or opinion will be an arduous task for the transmitters-politicians. That is why political campaigns tend to be more personalized, so that they can "reach" all citizens.

In an election period, a political candidate wants to "sell" his image to the voter, by shaping the profile that best fits the target audience. The candidate is therefore the product. The price are the proposals that the candidate offers, which must be well thought out and thoroughly evaluated and accepted by the citizens.

A candidate that is assumed as a "product" to be "sold" on the market and "consumed" requires the same criteria for classification as if we were dealing with "something fabricated". It is in this aspect that today we can speak of a specialization of persuasion techniques in the era of industrialization. Industrialized persuasion tries to "sell" a "product" to public opinion which is also industrialized.

Competitiveness is a component that needs to be refuted by the best arguments. The distribution of the product in political marketing is done through the means of social communication, and all the other means available to the candidate, to promote their image and their proposals to consumers/voters. Communication or promotion comprises social actions carried out by the candidate, which varies between visits made to institutions, schools, hospitals, businesses, streets, neighbourhoods, or by means of more specialized techniques such as advertising, public relations, relational marketing, merchandising, or other instruments, for example posters and billboards, celebrations, events, telemarketing, mobile committee, stickers, campaign rallies, street and private campaigns, direct-marketing, flags, radio, Television and the Internet, with blogs, personal web pages, institutional sites of political parties, social networks, etc.
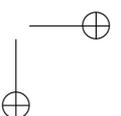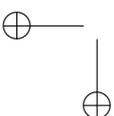
7. Methodology

Let's examine the cyberspaces of two political sites, which were created with the purpose of making the online political campaign for PS and PSD in 2009. These were the *Movimento Sócrates* [Sócrates Movement] (www.socrates-2009.pt) and the *Política da Verdade* [Policy of Truth] (www.politicadeverdade.com).[2] The spaces analysed are those that we consider to have more interactive and participatory web portals.

The period that we are going to analyse is the official campaign of the Legislative Elections of 2009 for the Assembly of the Republic. This is from 9-25 September 2009, although the Internet campaign began before (as soon as the sites were put up) and ended on the day of the elections, the 27th of September. Incidentally, this is an advantage of online campaigns.

In relation to the content available on the sites, we performed a quantitative and qualitative analysis, taking into account whether it was favourable or critical to the party, criticizes the opposition, or provides news. We also considered the political program to which it belonged. In relation to the universe of cybercitizens who participated, we established a comparison by gender and also looked at whether or not they were identified to their profile, and, when mentioned, to the region where they dwell.

7.1 Analysis of the "MOVIMENTO SÓCRATES 2009" Site

(www.socrates2009.pt)

Figure 1 – *Movimento Sócrates 2009* website

---

[2] These two portals are no longer available on the Web.
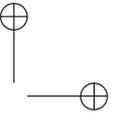
The site *Movimento Sócrates 2009* was created on March 2, 2009, with the purpose of establishing a policy of interactivity with citizens. This website contained spaces that were much more interactive than the Socialist Party's institutional webpage (www.ps.pt).

What was found on the *Movimento Sócrates* website is that it was only up during the campaign period since it stopped being updated shortly after. The last message that appears on the page was put up on October 3, 2009 by an Internet user.[3] From then on, no other content was entered, which is an indication of the portal's posterior inactivity and its extinction. In 2011 the website was no longer available on the web.

In the *Movimento Sócrates* site we highlight the section MovTV, the social networks associated with the portal (Delicious, Digg, Facebook, Twitter, Myspace), the MyMOv, where Internet users can register their profile and can become cyberfriends, i.e. users can belong to multiple cybercommunities and discuss matters in groups and discussion forums. The space "Eu Participo" [I Participate] is also the most interactive and participatory of José Sócrates's site.

The "MovTv" contained the videos produced by the team of the site with campaign images, the congresses and street rallies, speeches and interviews of celebrities who support the party, such as the former party president Almeida Santos, or football player Luis Figo. This space was open to the participation of Internet users so they could send videos. The videos made by the coordinators of the site were produced by a specialized team with professionals who "manufactured" their news.

Thus, from 9-25 September, 160 videos were included in "MovTv", which is an average of 9.4 videos per day and seven films sent by the public. In relation to participants, we found that there is only one participant who is female, while the other five are male and there is one from a group of Internet users ("Socialists of Covilhã"). Thus, we have a representation of 71% of male subjects, 14% were female and 14% did not have a specific gender. In relation to the video content, they all presented content that was favourable to PS.

Within "MovTv", there is a subsection where videos were included with

---

[3] The last analysis made of the site was in April 2010, since the portal is no longer available on the Web for consultation.
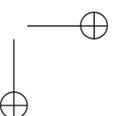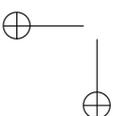
"PS's TV Airtime". In total, there were five videos that relate to interventions in rallies and the policy measures taken by the party during the last four years of governance, from 2005 to 2009. The airtime also has a sign language interpreter, which reveals a certain worry towards accessibility to the site, a mark of concern for the deaf community. Therefore, it appears that the portals make information more accessible to all citizens, thus minimizing any existing obstacles, maximizing the dissemination of the message that they intend to transmit, and diversifying the scope of the public.

In the "News" section, 22 messages were posted. The news is about the agenda of the electoral campaign, in particular visits made to various regions of the country and the contact politicians made with the population. It also included interventions by political actors, declarations, or messages of support from public figures. The text and video (85.7%), video (9.5%) and text and image (4.8%) are the multimedia elements used to disseminate messages. Thus, the Internet, as a multimodal means of communication, is well explored in relation to taking advantage of multimedia tools to make the news more appealing and interactive for internet users. It also outlines a communicational rhetoric that is more effective.

The last news inserted on the site, until May 2010, was that of September 25, 2009, precisely the last day of the official campaign for the political parties. This reveals that the page was created with the purpose of promoting the electoral campaign for the legislative elections. Nonetheless, it would have been interesting if the virtual community formed on the *Movimento Sócrates* had continued to interact, because that would be a factor of enlargement of the democratic debate. One of the reasons for that "collective intelligence" to lose activity may lie in the fact that the portal was not updated by those responsible for it.

On the site, one could download photos, videos, documents, widgets and buttons, wallpapers and screensavers and communication tools. In all the days of the campaign, a total of 86 photos could have been downloaded, 29 of which were posted between 9 and 25 of September. A total of 46 videos and 11 documents were available with information about the Governmental Program, new strategies and proposals, a list of candidates, the party's daily newspaper *Avançar Portugal* and the computer animations, the buttons and widgets and screensavers, and also, the images of the posters and billboards

of PS's campaign. The video was a widely used tool in the campaign made on the site.

The "MyMov" space is the site of the page where Internet users could insert content and make comments and we can consider it one of the most interactive fields of the website. "MyMov" is an area where multimedia content could be included by Internet users, such as photographs, videos and written messages.

Figure 2 – Interactive Spaces of *Movimento Sócrates*

"MyMov" represents the movement that each citizen could do, within the site and even the role that they could assume as a volunteer during the electoral campaign. It contains a "Public Area", in which any user can access. It also has an area for registration, "My Profile", where you can create a profile since this is a social network within the portal. There is still a space designated "Groups" with several discussion forums on diverse topics of public interest.

The "Public Area" contained messages, links, videos and photos sent by Internet users.

Figure 3 – *O Meu Movimento* [My Movement]

During the period of the official campaign, 60 messages were inserted for an average of 3.4 messages per day. The 18th and 23rd of September were the days that showed greater civic participation. In relation to the content of the messages, 47 were favourable and supported PS (78.3%), and 13 were critical of the opposition parties (21.7%). Regarding participants, 14 were female and 45 were male. There was one participant related to a group of individuals or association. This is tantamount to participation, by gender, of 69% of men, 23.3% of women and 1.7% of plural.

In the space open for the insertion of links, 12 references were inserted, in which 11 were placed by men (91.7%) and only one by a female Internet user (8.3%). Some links were favourable to PS (8.3%), others often relegated to content that criticised the opposition (75%), still others, were self-promotion, or disseminated themselves, such as links to blogs, or the personal web pages of the Internet users (16.7%).

In the space "videos", there were seven videos inserted between the 14th and 25th of September. One of them was by a woman (14%), five were by people of the male sex (72%), and another belongs to an anonymous Internet user (14%). The contents relate to PS's congresses, images of interventions from other political actors of the opposition, and some are of humorous videos criticising the opposition. In total, there are two that criticise other political parties (29%) and five that support PS (71%).

All the videos placed on the portal are available on Sapo (http://videos.-sapo.pt) and may still be consulted. During the campaign days, 297 videos were posted, in which 80.1% contains favourable content for PS, 18.9% criticise the opposition, 0.7% are videos of television broadcasts and 0.3% has purely informative content. The videos reproduce the events of the political campaign such as rallies, candidate speeches, speeches from personalities, etc.
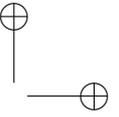
The images put in the "Photographs" section relate to the political campaigning on the streets, congresses and others are photographs of supporters of José Sócrates. Out of a total of 44 messages, 79.5% support PS, and 20.5% criticise the opposition.

On "My Profile" users had to register and provide some data, such as an e-mail address. From then on, an identity was created that allowed access to a social network where you could make friends and join discussion forums from the subsection "Groups" in "MyMov". A cyberidentity was, therefore, generated and it could be true, or it could be a pseudonym of the individual.

In the "Groups" section, 13 discussion forums were available. These were related to various topics such as "Environment", "Culture", "Businesses and Jobs", "Energy", "Science and Technology", "Europe and the World", "Defence", "Safety", "Justice", "Education and Qualification", "Health", "Regional Development" and "New Opportunities".

Between the 9th and 25th of September, there were participations in the groups "Energy", "Science and Technology", "Europe and the World", "Safety", "Health", "Regional Development". This space was open for Internet users to debate and reflect on matters relating to the various forums. The themes were released by the coordinators of the sites and discussed by those interested. In these public cyberspaces, the civic participation on behalf of the public is notorious. The opportunity to remark on the comments progressed the debate even further, since each message entered by the Internet surfer could generate a new discussion. It is the reflection of the multiplication of communication itself which is a part of the cyberspace network. What formed these cybercommunities was the sharing of meaning and common objectives, resulting in a collective intelligence. This collective intelligence reflected on topics of public interest and themes that nourished a special interest. In this sense, this participation and joint cooperation contributes to both the formation of public opinion, as well as to the enlargement of the democratic debate and civic participation. As for the political actors, it allows them to be able to better define campaign strategies, government strategies, and to adapt to the public's requirements and needs.

These forums had an equal participation between men and women. The most participated forum had as its theme "Businesses and Jobs". It had comments from the 5th of March to the 7th of April and 53 messages were entered by registered members in this group.
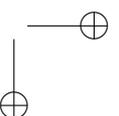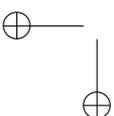
In total, from March 2nd until April 2010 we verified the existence of 2,520 associations to cybergroups and 192 comments were posted. The groups allowed the public to debate and reflect on various issues. This is an example of the activity of collective intelligence that we spoke about. And, the activity of collective intelligence will result in a well-formed public opinion, i.e. a public opinion that results from the reflection of informed, interested, and rational individuals whose objective is to understand what is best for society/the community at large. These are the rational ways of democratic exercise, and passing this procedure to cyberspace allows Internet users to gather in cyber-communities. This is where they form a collective intelligence in order to try to reach a consensus about what will be best for the collective, and where they debate and participate in the debate with different points of view. Thus, they are putting into practice a cyberdemocratic deliberation.

The space "I Participate", has also proved to be one of the most interactive of the website and it fully assumed the Communication 2.0 of CyberPolitics. It contained cyberforums for discussion, chats, and transmissions of rallies and televised debates.

Figure 4 – Ambições para Portugal [Ambitions for Portugal]

In the section "Ambitions for Portugal", which included the testimonies of 140 people, but since 15 were repeated messages, we tallied 127, in which 46, that is, in terms of percentage 36.2%, were female and 81, or 63.8% were male. The participants were identified by name and location. In relation to the
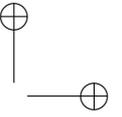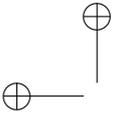
locality, the majority were residents in the Lisbon and Setúbal region (44.1%), or in Beira Litoral (26%).

In the "Special Volunteers Forum", 53 messages and opinions on various topics were disclosed. Within the universe of participants, 27 were male (50.9%) and 26 were published by women (49.1%). All of the messages were favourable to PS.

In the "Special Forum-New Opportunities" a total of ten messages were posted during the electoral campaign period. Of these, three were female (30%) and seven were male (70%). In relation to content, 10% are critical to the party, i.e. one, and nine are favourable, 90%, but there was a total of 23 messages that were inserted since August 28, 2009, in which 30.4% were opinions of women and 69.6% were from men. In relation to content, 78.3% support the party, 13% criticized the opposition and 1.9% were for informational purposes.

In other forums there were four discussion topics: "Reform of the State and Public Administration: Consolidation, Modernization and Less Bureaucracy", "Economics and Development: Resume Growth, Combat the Crisis, Modernise", "Freedom, Safety and Citizenship: More Democracy" and "The Policies of Qualification: Education, Science and Culture", where only the first was open to the participation of Internet users.
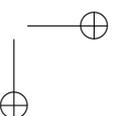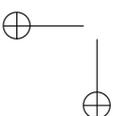
Figure 5 – Discussion forums

In the "Reform of the State and Public Administration" forum there was considerable participation by the public. We tallied 332 messages, with 61.4% of the participation coming from male Internet users, 37% from female users and 1.5% of the participants did not identify themselves.

What becomes interesting to check in these forums is that the views are read by citizens and then a reflective debate is generated between the participating members, as you can see in this message.

25.Set - Colocado por luis silva

caros amigos

com este forum ganhamos todos eu ganhei muito pois foi uma rara opurtunidade de ler opinioes de grande qualidade se tivesse que eleger as melhores seria a de Maria Penim pois partilha a sua opiniao sem a impor partilhando a sua sabedoria e informaçao foi um prazer ler as suas opinioes obrigado.

Figure 6 – Message from an Internet user[4]

---

[4] The message reads: "Dear friends, we all win with this forum and I have won a lot since
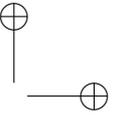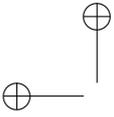
The promotion of chats was, in fact, a very innovative initiative on the portal of *Movimento Sócrates*, where the ministers participated and responded to the questions raised by citizens during thirty minutes. In a total of five chats 118 issues were raised. The first conversation took place on 28 April and the last was on 2 June 2009.

The first chat, with the participation of minister Antonio dos Santos Silva, had 27 questions answered while 74 remained unanswered. The minister replied to these later, leaving a written attachment with questions and answers from other participants who could no longer pose questions at the allotted time.

The average was 23.6 questions per debate. However, if we take into account that many questions were not put on the page, as for the 74 questions that still had to be answered from the first debate, and if all the questions were answered and participation had been the same as the first, then the average would be 97.6 questions per session.

These spaces for debate and discussion, with the possibility of public intervention and this contact with political actors, are welcome by Internet users. Furthermore, that is what differentiates Internet users from internauts, who merely consume information on the Internet and this fact is verifiable not only by the participation that we observed in *Movimento Sócrates*, but also in the comments left by the participants. The average number of participation by gender is of 32.5% for female internet users and 67.5% for male internet users.

In the "Transmissions" space, the emissions of three programs were shared: "The Debate between José Sócrates and Manuela Ferreira Leite", transmitted on SIC TV channel on 12 September, and two rallies, in Porto and Lisbon on September 20 and 25. People could, therefore, watch the programs not only in traditional media, but could also watch it live on the portal, or download the transmission and view it later.

---

it was a rare opportunity to read high quality opinions. If I had to choose the best, I would pick Maria Penim because she shares her opinions without imposing them and shares her wisdom and information. It was a pleasure to read your opinions. Thank you."
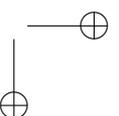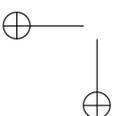
Figure 7 – Transmissions of other *media*

7.2 Analysis of the website "política de verdade" [politics of truth]

(www.politicadeverdade.com)

Figure 8 – *Política de Verdade* website

The website *Política de Verdade* was created on 28 April 2009. The failure to update the portal led to it being extinguished from the Web as well. Only the blog that was linked to the page can be consulted, noting that it has not been fed since October 2009.

Figure 9 – *Política de Verdade* blog

From cyberspaces available on portal, the "Multimedia" is one of the most interactive, because it includes the "Channel of Truth" with videos produced by the team that did the site, as well as other multimedia elements, and also the link to the Blog *Política de Verdade*, which was created on 30 April 2009.

The main page contained a menu on the left side with the main information of PSD's electoral campaign. It contained nine items: "Subscribe below", "Campaign", "Candidate", "European Contract", "Agenda", "News", "Photos", "Videos" and "Press". Under this menu there was a multimedia tool with the videos, called "Sounds and Images", with the airtimes that were transmitted in Portuguese television channels. An identical space was prepared on the right-hand side of the page, but the video content often relegated to news selected by the team that delineated PSD's online campaign.

The main menu is at the top of the page, below the photo of the candidate and the *Política de Verdade* campaign slogan: "Home", "Truth", "Policies", "Multimedia", "Press" and "European Elections", "Search" and "Rss".

The site also contained a space for supporters to make donations through bank transfer. In addition to this support, internet users could subscribe to the portal, thus receiving information and updates about the campaign through their e-mails.

In the "Home" section, in the "Message" cyberspace, Manuela Ferreira Leite presented her message for the candidacy of prime minister, with a welcome text for internet users. The written message had an accompanying video that clearly expressed an openness to the new media and a 2.0 Campaign.

> "This form of communication has the main objective of facilitating access to the project that we have for the country and to all the Portuguese. (...) The best way to combat the problems is to speak about them with clarity and truth, because only this way can we find good solutions." (Manuela Ferreira Leite)

These words in the message of the PSD candidate reveal the recognition of Web 2.0 as a means of informing the public about PSD's political campaign and as a means of political communication.

The electoral program could be consulted, in full, on the web site, or it could be downloaded along with the campaign flyer. In the central part of the page there was a space designated "Gallery", containing statements from

the party leader during the campaign. The part of the portal with more multi-media is the "Channel of Truth" which contained news with text, images and videos, and this is the space we will analyse. This cyberspace, similar to PS's "MovTV", contained videos produced by the team of professionals that made the online campaign.

In "Political Statements", a total of 14 messages were included in this cyberspace, 78.6% presented text and video, and only 21.4% were textual messages. The videos are independent of the text, with the hypertext not being an element that was used. In relation to the content of the messages, half were favourable to PSD and the other half criticized the opposition.

In the space "Overall Assessment", no messages were entered during the period under analysis. Only one video was inserted on September 26 with an overall assessment of the campaign.

In the "Interventions" section, there were speeches by the candidate Manuela Ferreira Leite and other personalities from PSD. Written messages were accompanied by videos produced by the "Channel of Truth". The 19th, 20th and 22nd of September revealed a greater influx of content, with 91.7% criticising the opposition and 8.3% being favourable to the party. The multimedia elements presented were a simultaneous text and video. The majority of the interventions concerned speeches by Manuela Ferreira Leite (66.7%) and the remainder were PSD personalities (33.3%).

In the "Interviews" section, there were emissions of two television interviews on 1 July 2009 and 20 August 2009.

In the subsection "VoxPop", there were six videos inserted between 9 April and 20 June 2009 and no video was included during the electoral campaign period. The content of the videos referred to the opinion of citizens, and of the views presented, 60% were in favour of Manuela Ferreira Leite's candidacy and 40% criticised the opposition. In relation to participants, 80% of the opinions were from males and 20% from females.

The "Airtime" had a total of 14 videos, with six of them referring to the legislative elections and the others made reference to the European Elections of 2009. The first campaign message for the legislative elections was placed on 13 September 2009 and the last was on the last day of the campaign, on the 25th. On this day there was a written message that said: "See the message by Manuela Ferreira Leite which will air on television at 7:00 pm". This means that, in the case of PSD's online campaign, the general strategy of the poli-

tical campaign aimed to complement the new media with traditional media, encouraging internet users to follow the campaign in another means of communication, such as television. All of the messages criticised the opposition and the multimedia elements were a simultaneous text and video.

Even in the cyberspace "Channel of Truth" there were videos of seven forums which took place between February and May 2009, in multiple district capitals. The aim of these forums, as in the initiatives promoted by PS, namely the forums "New Frontiers", aimed at hearing the opinion of Portuguese citizens about various subjects, generating a deliberative debate, in order to contribute to the formulation of the electoral program. The topics of discussion often relegated to current events, such as unemployment, health, education, inequality, etc. In addition to the debate generated in the sessions, they were open for internet users to participate in: "The Forum Portugal of Truth will go beyond the walls of the auditoriums where its sessions will be held, by accommodating the opinions and proposals of the 2.0 communities that are linked to the network" (PSD website[5]). In the cyberspace "Press", the subsections "News" and "Interviews" were included. The news and interviews posted on the site were selections of content that had been published in other media.

September 9, 10 and 16, 2009, had the greatest amount of press news, with 50.7% being favourable to PSD, 37% criticising the opposition, and 12.3% were for informational purposes. The most cited newspaper was the *Diário de Notícias* with 19.2% of the content inserted in this section of the portal.

In other words, this confirms the hypothesis that political sites may be newspapers manufactured by the parties themselves, thus creating a very specific language and communicational rhetoric, and taking advantage of the interactive and multimedia potential of Web 2.0.

There were 15 interviews placed in the subsection "Interviews", but none refer to the days of analysis. The last interview was placed on 23 August 2009.

---

[5] Available at: www.psd.pt (accessed in October 2009).

Figure 10 – Videos

In relation to the participation of citizens, the blog was the cyberspace that stood out the most, as well as the ability to send the contents of the portal via Facebook, Twitter or Hi5. Unlike the portal *Movimento Sócrates*, there was no cybercommunity that fed the site and identified itself with a particular profile. In this aspect, the *PSD* site did not prove to be as interactive as the PS site and it did not take maximum advantage of Political Communication 2.0. In this case the online campaign proved to be complementary to the party's campaign strategy.

On the blog there were comments by administrators practically every day of the period analysed. Some of them came from other blogs, such as the "Never" or "New Politics". The majority of messages were favourable to PSD (62.5%) and the remaining criticized the opposition (37.5%).

Conclusion

Thus, it appears that the messages left in both political sites were, predominantly, favourable to the parties or criticized the opposition. In the *Movimento Sócrates* 72.7% were favourable to PS, 20.5% criticised the opposition parties,

5.7% were for informational purposes or on other matter and only 1.1% criticised their own party since only one message criticized the PS in the cyberspaces analysed. In the portal *Política de Verdade*, the messages also mostly criticized the opposition, approximately 61.1%. About 36.3% supported the party and 2.6% were for informational purposes or other matters. The fact that the PSD discourse was more critical compared to the PS is because PSD was the opposition to the socialist majority Government. Hence, they had adopted a more critical discourse.

Thus, we also conclude that when the internet users participated, they generally shared the same points of view, because there was rarely any criticism to the party to which the portal belonged and the only one that came up was on the PS portal. Therefore, the participants of the sites must be sympathisers, militants or apologists of the parties they consult in cyberspace. This is in line with the Theory of Usages and Gratuities by the fact that internet users look for information that interests them among their peers.

In relation to participants, the majority of whom were male, the trend pointed out in the previously mentioned study was verified, in relation to internet users in Portugal, even if we are to speaking of those who search for specific information, which in this case is political. Thus, in the *Movimento Sócrates* site, 67.1% of the users are men, 29% are women and 3.9% are anonymous, or belong to groups or associations. In the *Política de Verdade* site, 80% of the participants were male and 20% were female. It must be remembered that in this portal there were few spaces for the participation of users and only one was analysed.

In relation to multimedia elements the text and video predominate, although we do not yet have concrete data to quantify the percentages which differentiate the multimedia elements arranged in the portals.

When it was possible to observe the location to which the participants belonged, we concluded that the majority lived in the areas of Lisbon and Setúbal (44.1%), or Beira Litoral (26%).

Participation in political sites, although there was no significant data in terms of participation, is starting to be very enriching for public debate. At least for the "release of the word" which is essential for the functioning of cyberdemocracy.

In this way, in order to enrich public debate and deliberate on various issues, the cybercommunities are fundamental to broaden the discussion of
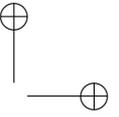
public affairs. Cybercommunities create forms of sociability that exceed certain obstacles that we find in a territorial space and which we do not find in cyberspace. This namely relates to space/time, access to the medium, interactivity and immediacy, which also becomes more rewarding for the users of a means of communication, because they become more active during the communicational process. The Web is more democratic than the traditional means of communication because it allows everyone to be producers of information without any intervention from mediators. It is for this reason that this medium is the *supra summum* of all other means of communication and it is the ideal channel for the exercise of citizenship and cyberdemocracy.

In cyberspace and, above all, on the Web, in a political site such as the ones analysed, internet users cooperate in the formation of virtual communities that share political senses and meanings and gather to communicate them, forming movements to support political candidates. This interaction contributes to the reinterpretation of symbolic forms and the reinterpretation of the relations of power and domination that exist in Portuguese society.

The design of a cyberidentity is one of the requirements of cyberspace, in which the individual merges with the interaction with technologies, assuming almost the body of a cyborg, half-man, half-machine. And the individual is fully aware of this when he constructs his cyberidentity. Even the relationship he has with his own body changes, because the body is no longer the image presented to others and starts to be protected by a screen, by an interface. Now, this gives power, which is very important, because internet users can assume attitudes that they would not have in the territorial space and this is evident, for example, in their participation on blogs. On sites there are certain individuals who intervene more by being protected by interfaces. They therefore create, at times, false identities to make their opinions known, and to express themselves without fearing adverse reactions or reprisals. However, we verified that the majority of participants identified themselves.

On the other hand, the political sites allow to create information about the parties, updating it with greater speed and allowing them to interact with citizens, re-adapting the messages, generating a more effective rhetoric and focusing also on possible readjustments of political decisions and, in this manner, it becomes more rewarding for the political actors. This is true with the inclusion of content that is favourable to the parties, or to criticism on the opposition parties.
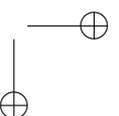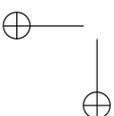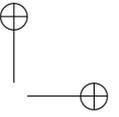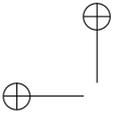
Nevertheless, this does not mean that the posted messages express a sincere public opinion, or even that all are included in the public debate, to which this becomes nothing but a mirror of society, at least at a representative level, because users may not represent minorities, or even the majority of citizens. Soon, the new media opens new paths but does not realize dreams of a true communication that is open, reflective, participatory, transparent and rational. The Internet as a medium would only reach the old utopias of global, rational and ideal communication if it were used by all, but there are always people who stand outside the process, whatever the reason.

Therefore, this type of communication and political procedure is a part of cyberpolitics, which, in turn, requires active citizens, internet users who participate, inter-acting and cooperating, so that they can Make Politics, so that they can organize, manage and govern the *polis* with the contribution and the legitimacy of a collective intelligence that dynamizes it. Thus, cyberspace enables the existence of a cyberdemocratic deliberation which will culminate in a new way of doing politics, in cyberpolitics, where the basis of communication is Communication 2.0.

References

Blanchard, G. (2006). *O uso da Internet a serviço da comunicação do partido*. *Libero* ano ix, nº18.

Fidalgo, A., *Blog Retórica*. Retrieved November, 2011 from http://retorica-pt.

Franklin, B. (1995). Packaging politics: causes and consequences for Britain's media democracy. In J. Lovenduski; J. Stanyer (Eds); *Contemporary Political Studies: Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Political Studies Association of the UK*, Belfast. Political Studies Association of the UK.

Gibson, R. K. and A. Römmele (2007). Political Communication. In D. Caramani (ed); *Comparative Politics* (pp. 473-492). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Norris, P. (2005). *Political parties and democracy in theoretical and practical*
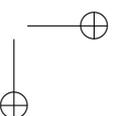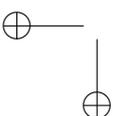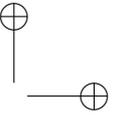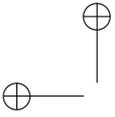
prespectives: Developments in party communications, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs.

Wip, A Utilização da Internet em Portugal. Retrieved October, 2011 from www.umic.pt.
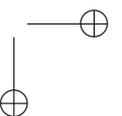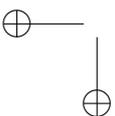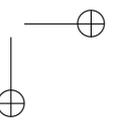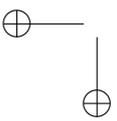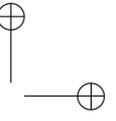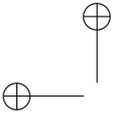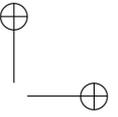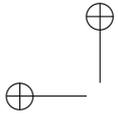
PART IV
THE WEBSITES OF
POLITICAL PARTIES
(ANALYTICAL MODELS)
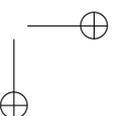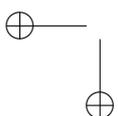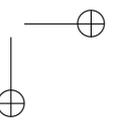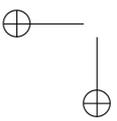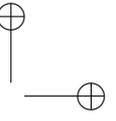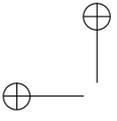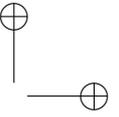
Online party communication: websites in the non-electoral context

Catarina Silva

Introduction

This study intends to analyse how the weakening of political parties and the consequent emergence of new communication channels for the masses (Swanson and Mancini, 1996, p. 17) – in the form of party websites – can be verified in the Portuguese case and during non-electoral periods.

Societies that are more individualized and dependent on new information and communication technologies (ICT) and are less connected or interested in politics. Also, the appearance of parties as weak internal organisations with low support levels from the masses, has made political communication evolve and adapt itself first to the demands of societies and secondly to the party needs kept active in the political arena.

Therefore, political communication has accompanied the evolution of political parties (Ferrell and Webb, 2002; Gibson and Römmele, 2001). It began by being personal and direct between the parties (candidates) and the masses, with the presence of the party press standing out. Afterwards, a new element appeared: media coverage of the means of mass communication such as radio, and primarily television. Thus, party communication became professional and assumed an impersonal and indirect nature between parties and their electorate. Currently, these forms of communication remain and a new mediator has been added: the internet (websites), which allowed party communication to move to alternative online channels that were potentially more appealing to the masses (Norris, 2001). Recently, Vergeer et al. (2011) added a fourth stage to party communication: communication on Web 2.0, where the characteristics of participation and interaction are privileged at three levels – politician-elector-politician – through social networks such as Facebook, for example.
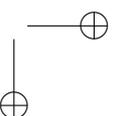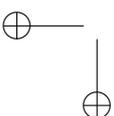
Table 1 – Political campaigns in a historical perspective and in relation to political types

	Premodern Campaigns	Modern Campaigns	Postmodern Campaigns	Personalized Campaigns
Tools	Written press, mass rallies, meetings	Political Marketing (Television, news, advertising...)	Internet and e-mail	Websites, blogs, social networks
Model	Intensive, interpersonal, and amateur work	Intensive investment, media coverage	Intensive investment, directed towards a target audience, continuous work	Low cost, mediated by a networked computer, personalized
Voter oriented	Mobilise voters loyal to the party = allies	Conversion and mobilisation of voters, loyal to the party and undecided	Interactivity with voters	Hyper-interactive with interested voters
Distribution of internal power	Local	National	Local / national, bifurcation	Centre, local / national, bifurcation
Political Parties	Parties and Elite / Mass Parties	Catch-all Parties	Catch-all Parties / Cartel Parties	Catch-all Parties / Cartel Parties

Source: Elaborated by the author and based on Gibson and Römmele, 2001, p. 34 and Vergeer et al., 2008, p. 6.

Therefore, the political use of the internet is justified, on the one hand, by the search for new ways to stimulate the involvement of the population in political themes; and on the other hand, by the need for parties to adapt to the evolution of society, taking advantage of the popularity that new technologies have gained in contemporary societies.

The internet was a means that quickly affirmed itself in party communication of various if not all of the countries in the world. This fact is justified by the numerous potentialities it allows. For one thing, it is faced as an excellent opportunity for citizen participation in political life (Norris, 2001, p. 218); then again, the control of communication for voters over the internet is the full responsibility of political parties (Hill and Hugles, 1998 and Norris,
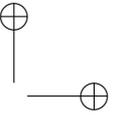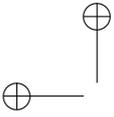
2001, p. 147). In addition, it improves party-voter interaction with the capacity of communication being either from a top-bottom or bottom-up approach (ibid.). To sum up, Norris (2001, p. 149) adds that the internet is a means that accumulates the three forms of communication that appeared throughout time and develops a new way to communicate:

> The new technology allows for forms of political communication that can be located schematically somewhere between the local activism of the premodern campaign (with direct town-hall meetings and political rallies) and the national passive forms of communication characteristic of the modern television campaign [. . .] as political use of the internet expands, the postmodern campaign does seem destined to add yet another distinctive layer of communication [. . .] supplementing other existing channels. (ibid.)

In this context, the study attempts to explore the third and fourth phases of party communication in the political use of the internet and interactive tools in party websites, respectively. Thus, the starting question in this study is:

Q: What is the usability of Portuguese party websites in non-electoral contexts from the point of view of information, participation, mobilisation and sophistication?

The dimension of information includes all the communications, news and documents that reveal party positions or knowledge about the party. Participation is related to the interactive, suggestive and opinionated features that the websites allow and motivate users to make. Mobilisation has to do with the ways the party is promoted on the internet by online voters. Lastly, sophistication refers to the ease of page navigation and access to additional resources on the websites.

Thus, the analysis will focus on six aspects: the relationship between website use and party objectives; the target audience of the websites; the production of internal party contents or republication of traditional media contents; the presence of frame of conflict; personalization of the means and message transmitted; and the relationship to a non-electoral context.
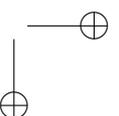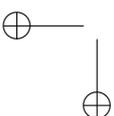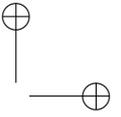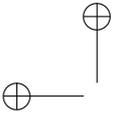
Communication and party objectives: any relationship?

In parallel, the analysis of the websites will be related to the party objectives because the use of websites varies according to the purposes and nature of the parties (Römmele, 2003, p. 8). The literature (Strøm, 1990) highlights three party objectives: maximising votes in order to reach power (vote-seeking party); participating in coalitions to hold public office (office-seeking party); and influencing public policies (policy-seeking party). The argument is that each party's objectives influence the way the website is used (Römmele, 2003, p. 12).

Therefore, the parties that maximise votes have "voters from all social groups" as their target audience, in addition to their electorate in an attempt to attract indecisive voters. Generally, these parties "distinguish voters and militants of the party", that is, they do not count on specific support groups since the electorate is the public they seek to attract. What becomes important is receiving the highest number of votes (ibid.). These characteristics resemble two party models: the catch-all parties (Kirchheimer, 1966) and the cartel parties (Katz and Mair, 1995). In Portugal, the parties that fall into these models are the Socialist Party (PS), the Social Democratic Party (PSD) and the Democratic and Social Centre – People's Party (CDS-PP) (Lopes, 2004 and Jalali, 2007).

On the websites of these parties, it is expected that information is from a predominantly top-bottom approach. There is also a tendency for the personalization or focus on the party leader as well as making the most of new technologies in the sense of greater interactivity with users (Römmele, 2003, p.12). Löfgen (2000, p. 15) adds that publications will always be controlled by the party in interactive spaces. In the case of party militants, there may be specific sections for them where they can participate, but the website's audience is the electorate in general (Römmele, 2003, p. 12). Comparatively, the parties whose goal is to hold public office are not totally different in terms of how they use their websites (ibid., p. 13). The party model is the same, but in the Portuguese case it is CDS-PP that best complies with the objectives of obtaining public office.

In relation to policy-seeking parties, the target audience of the websites includes militants and their worries as well as pre-defined and specific groups from society. The party models that belong here are the traditional parties
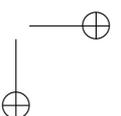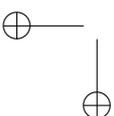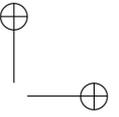
of the masses and those formed most recently (ibid., p. 14), such as, for example, the parties from the new left. In the Portuguese case, we identified three parties: PCP (Lisi, 2007), PEV and BE (Freire, 2006, p. 373; Jalali, 2007, p. 98 and Belchior, 2008, p. 134).

It is especially hoped that these parties use new technologies as a means of disseminating information about the party's ideological stance particularly to militants. It is also expected that the participation of affiliated members be inexistent or limited and that the website's focus be on the electoral programme as opposed to the candidate or party leader (Römmele, 2003, p. 14).

As for the second dimension of analysis, the target audience for whom the messages and documentation published on the websites is destined, the literature emphasises that yesilar to traditional means of party communication, the websites "bring militants together, mobilise supporters and attract indecisive voters" (Norris, 2003, p. 24). Farrell and Webb (2000, p. 6) conclude that alternative communication is used to direct messages to specific voter categories. However, Gibson et al. (2003a, p. 49) add that websites provide useful information about the party to voters, militants as well as journalists.

Thus, in general, it is expected that the websites be mainly intended for voters and militants. As we have seen, the vote-seeking and office-seeking parties direct their messages to the general electorate, but their aim is to attract indecisive voters. While the policy-seeking parties attempt to inform mainly militants and those affiliated to the party. Nevertheless, following the logic of Gibson et al. (ibid.), we expect that these party models, which in general have less importance in traditional means of communication, also use their websites to give information, including journalists.

One of the primary functions for websites is to transmit information. However, the literature points out that "political websites don't provide a lot of new information" (Gibson et al., 2003b, p. 235). Instead, they yesply republish content that was first transmitted on other communication channels. As previously described, we can study the relevance that parties confer to online pages to transmit information. If the pages only serve to "amplify the effect of media" (Cardoso, 2006, p. 310), or if they really serve as an organ of internal communication, interested in disseminating party information without journalistic mediation.

While potentially it "does not provide much new information", the websites' contents are the parties' responsibility. On the one hand, a positive image
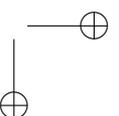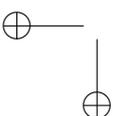
of the party is assured (Gibson et al., 2003b, p. 187); on the other hand, the sites have the incentive to function as an arena for cross-party debate (Norris, 2003, p. 21). Thus, the content of publications will tend to contain a "frame of conflict" (Neuman et al., 1992, p. 64) in relation to the tension and conflict between different individuals, groups, institutions and countries (ibid.). This concept allows us to analyse the "presence or absence of specific words, sentences or images" (Entman, 1993, p. 391) in the different party websites and to understand if the "frame of conflict" is present in the publications of online party pages.

The personalization of the means and messages is a characteristic of political communication that is emphasised in the literature. Swanson and Mancini (1996, p. 295) affirm that personalization relegates party loyalty and the candidates' ideological nature to second place. In this regard, personalization highlights a leader or candidate that speaks in representation of the party. Thus, the communications start to be centred on the party leader – "candidate oriented" – at the expense of communications centred on the party's ideology – "party based" (Lisi, 2008, p. 506).

As we have seen, the vote and office-seeking parties will have a bigger tendency to highlight the party leader in communications, videos, photographs and political actions on the websites. The personalization of these means implies a greater involvement in the relationship between party and voter. From the policy-seeking party models, it is expected that the party's ideological positions are highlighted with greater reference to the measures of the political party programmes and where there isn't only one top representative.

The websites are, in fact, a means that facilitate communication and allow control over communication (Bimber and Davis, 2003). They provide a selection of contents by the voters according to their interests; they allow the transmission of ideas to a wider public, receiving feedback about their perceptions; and there is an unlimited amount of space for communications (Klotz, 2004, p. 64). The literature tends to emphasise the use of the internet by political parties solely in the context of an election campaign (Norris, 2001). In the meanwhile, the World Wide Web gave a new concept to party communication and to the way parties communicate with society, which is now daily and regularly updated.

Online political communication on a website is an area that hasn't been fully exploited in Portuguese bibliography, mainly in regards to the non-electoral
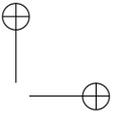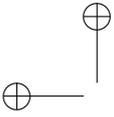
context. In this regard, the objective of this study is to make a contribution to increase knowledge about Portuguese party communication and to understand if party websites tend to substitute party press in Portugal. Therefore, the collection of data took place during March 2011, a non-electoral period. However, this coincided with a political crisis, the resignation of Prime Minister José Sócrates and the announcement of early elections for June 2011.

In addition to these, the analysis is organised into three sections. The first section develops a method to gather the data and presents the codebook and hypotheses for the study. The second section presents the results and describes the processing and discussion of the gathered data, which is then related to the generated hypotheses. Finally, the third section summarizes the conclusions taken from the data collection and the study in general.

Methodology

One of the particularities of this article is that the study is applied to a non-electoral context which allows for a more factual and systematic awareness of party websites than during electoral periods. As it is known, party communication during electoral periods is especially intense and comprehensive and it seeks the spotlight in all means of communication.

Thus, the month chosen for analysis was March 2011 which apparently had no foreseen elections. However, the scene changed and although March continued to be a month without elections, it was marked by the economic crisis and political uncertainty. Figure 1 shows a time line of the most relevant political events that were at the source of the controversy during that month.
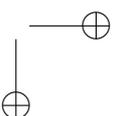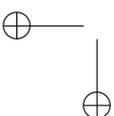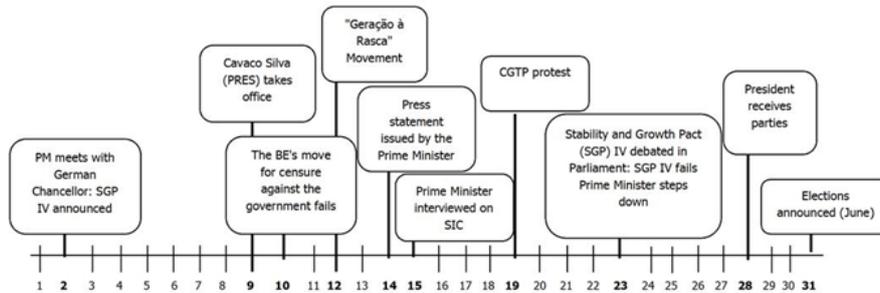
Figure 1 – Time line of political developments in March 2011

Therefore, although this was a month that apparently had no elections, the political environment created by the SGP IV and the Prime Minister's resignation, especially during the second half of the month, should be considered for the data collection and should be present and related to the results of the research because the context of analysis may justify some of the information gathered.

Hence, the political developments of the month of March 2011 allow the research to assume a "quasi-experimental" nature that reveal results before and after the political crisis. This means that the research can be observed from two points in time. The first is from March 1-21, which is considered the period without electoral characteristics. The second, which begins March 23 and ends on the 31st, is marked by political instability after the Prime Minister's resignation and the consequent environment of pre-election campaign. It is important to delineate these temporal spaces for the research because they allow the comparison of data between these two points in time: the initial non-electoral one and the second which is closer to pre-electoral characteristics.

For the study of Portuguese party websites, a content analysis was used since the objective is to analyse certain steady aspects on the sites. This analysis is comparative because the intention is to contrast the information collected between the various parties. For this type of analysis, Hsieh and Shannon (2005, p. 1281) designate as "structured content analysis" guided by an organized process that was previously established and based on previous works.

Thus, a qualitative content analysis will be used given the fact that this type of research allows for a deep understanding of the behaviour and diffe-

rences between groups, in this case between parties. Besides the fact that the qualitative analysis allows us to obtain more comprehensive information, the quantitative analysis would be limited, for example, in the analysis of the content published on the websites. However, the research will be articulated with the quantitative analysis because the identification of online tools can only be measured by quantifying its presence and because the intended comparison between political parties only occurs through the quantification of specific characteristics from the website.
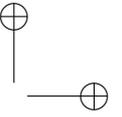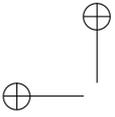
The following table presents the codebook that will help with the data collection, and describes which tools have to be considered for each dimension of analysis: information, interaction, mobilisation and sophistication.
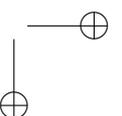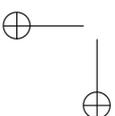
Table 2 – Codebook of information supplied

CATEGORIES	CHARACTERISTICS	REFERENCES
DOWNLOAD DOCUMENTS	- Electoral programme	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Schweitzer, 2008; Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Lilleaker and Jackson, 2010; Chen and Smith, 2008;
	- Regulations	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a;
	- Party newspapers	Schweitzer, 2008;
	- List of deputies	Chen and Smith, 2008;
BIOGRAPHIES	- Party leader	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Lilleaker and Jackson, 2010; Bentivegna, 2002;
	- Deputies	Bartien and Greffet, 2009;
PARTY	- History of the party	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Schweitzer, 2008; Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Lilleaker and Jackson, 2010;
	- Party Statute	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Lilleaker and Jackson, 2010;
	- Party structure	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Schweitzer, 2008; Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Lilleaker and Jackson, 2010;
	- Calendar of events	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Schweitzer, 2008; Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Lilleaker and Jackson, 2010;
	- Sections for specific groups (women, young people, immigrants, party members, workers)	Bartien and Greffet, 2009;
NEWS (H1)	- Press releases	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Schweitzer, 2008;
	- Party news	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Schweitzer, 2008; Bartien and Greffet, 2009;
	- Interviews	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Schweitzer, 2008; Bartien and Greffet, 2009;
	- Speeches	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Schweitzer, 2008; Bartien and Greffet, 2009;
	- Conferences	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Schweitzer, 2008; Bartien and Greffet, 2009;
	- Article archive / library	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Schweitzer, 2008; Bartien and Greffet, 2009;
FRAME OF CONFLICT (H3)	- Criticism towards opposing parties; the government's party; or both	Neuman, 1992; Schweitzer, 2008; Bartien and Greffet, 2009;
SHOVELWARE (H2)	- Transposition model - analogue to digital copy of contents;	Pavlik, 1997; Bentivegna, 2002;
	- Adaptive model - adaptation of contents;	Pavlik, 1997; Bentivegna, 2002;
	- Original model - contents produced for the Web by the parties.	Pavlik, 1997; Bentivegna, 2002;
PERSONALIZATION (H4)	- References to the leader or candidate's name in text, video and audio publications	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Chen and Smith, 2008; Bentivegna, 2002
	- Number of publications focusing on the leader or candidate in the videos, photographs, audio and texts	Chen and Smith, 2008; Bentivegna, 2002;
	- Highlight the image of a leader or candidate on the website	Chen and Smith, 2008; Bentivegna, 2002;
- UPDATES	- Frequency and interval of updates	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a;

Table 3 – Interaction codebook

CATEGORIES	CHARACTERISTICS	REFERENCES
LOW INTERACTION One-way communication: from the party to the receiver; or from the receiver to the party	- Space for suggestions or opinions	Bartien and Greffet, 2009;
	- Participation with surveys only	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a;
	- Subscribe to newsletters	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Lilleaker and Jackson, 2010; Chen and Smith, 2008; Bentivegna, 2002; Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Schweitzer, 2008;
	- Forms to contact different party organisms (young people, deputies, local headquarters)	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a;
AVERAGE INTERACTION Bidirectional communication: from the party to the receiver and from the receiver to the party	- Contact details of the party / leader (e-mail, telephone, address)	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Chen and Smith, 2008; Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Schweitzer, 2008;
	- Comments and replies to comments on the parties' behalf	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Lilleaker and Jackson, 2010; Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Schweitzer, 2008;
	- Send and receive information through text messages	Chen and Smith, 2008; Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Schweitzer, 2008;
HIGH INTERACTION Active communications in real time between both parts and in spaces for that effect	- Direct contact on the website with the party leader or personalities (chat room)	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Lilleaker and Jackson, 2010; Bentivegna, 2002; Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Schweitzer, 2008;
	- Participation in online forums, discussion blogs or sites for debating opinions	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Lilleaker and Jackson, 2010; Bentivegna, 2002; Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Schweitzer, 2008;

Table 4 – Codebook for mobilisation

CATEGORIES	CHARACTERISTICS	REFERENCES
OBTAINING RESOURCES **(Financial and Human)**	- Enrolment forms for party members	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Schweitzer, 2008;
	- Enrolment forms for volunteers	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Schweitzer, 2008;
	- Possibility to make online donations	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Chen and Smith, 2008; Schweitzer, 2008;
	- Selling merchandise	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Bartien and Greffet, 2009;
PARTY PROPAGANDA	- Material for offline political promotion (download and/or print logos, political party songs, posters, pamphlets)	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Chen and Smith, 2008; Bentivegna, 2002; Schweitzer, 2008;
	- Online political promotion (possibility of sharing the party's promotional material between users)	Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Chen and Smith, 2008; Bentivegna, 2002;
	- Possibility for user to share information (videos, photographs) on the website	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Lilleaker and Jackson, 2010; Bentivegna, 2002;

Table 5 – Sophistication codebook

CATEGORIES	CHARACTERISTICS	REFERENCES
ACCESS	- Option to share contents (other applications)	Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Schweitzer, 2008;
	- Option to print contents	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Schweitzer, 2008; Chen and Smith, 2008;
	- RSS connection to new applications	Bartien and Greffet, 2009;
	- Translation into other languages	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Schweitzer, 2008;
	- Option for PDF documents	Bartien and Greffet, 2009;
	- Plug-in (computer programme that adds more functions to the website after the user requests permission)	Bartien and Greffet, 2009;
	- Tool bar	Schweitzer, 2008;
LINKS	- Internal (social networks, blogs, online television, parliamentary group, local headquarters)	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Bartien and Greffet, 2009;
	- External (for websites that are related to the party but are external and independent from it)	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Bartien and Greffet, 2009;
	- Partisan (for other parties or organisations that share the same party objectives: coalitions, party-political families)	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a;
	- Reference (for neutral websites - without party influence - national organisations, international organisations, the government's official website, the official gazette, parliament)	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a;
	- Advertisement (for publicity sites)	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a;
NAVIGABILITY	- Number of search or research motors	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Schweitzer, 2008;
	- Icon of the homepage on all pages	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Schweitzer, 2008;
	- Menu bar on all pages	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Bartien and Greffet, 2009;
	- Existence of a site map	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Schweitzer, 2008;
MULTIMEDIA	- Audio / podcast contents	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Chen and Smith, 2008; Schweitzer, 2008;
	- Archive of audio contents	Schweitzer, 2008;
	- Video / party online television contents	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Lilleaker and Jackson, 2010; Chen and Smith, 2008; Schweitzer, 2008;
	- Video archive	Schweitzer, 2008;
	- Photographic contents	Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Schweitzer, 2008;
	- Photo gallery	Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Bentivegna, 2002; Schweitzer, 2008;
	- Contents being moved on the page	Gibson, 2000; Gibson and Ward, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a; Bartien and Greffet, 2009; Schweitzer, 2008;

Results and discussion

All the parties submitted for analysis present at least one website on the internet that is available and updated, which allows us to infer that websites are present in the political communication of Portuguese parties. The structure of the presentation of data will take place in function of the dimensions of

analysis, which will be related to the research hypotheses and the nature of Portuguese party politics.

Informative Dimension

By analysing Graph 1 we can verify that the policy-seeking parties (PCP, BE and PEV) have the highest number of daily publications when compared to the vote and office-seeking parties (PSD and CDS-PP). Special attention should be given to PS which presents values yesilar to those of the policy-seeking group. This data allows us to infer that in the case of the parties that maximize public policies the websites are a complement to the low media coverage received from the means of social communication. The data gathered from PS anticipates a professionalization of party communication that should be actively present in all means of communication and for all voters.

Graph 1 – Total no. of publications on party websites during march 2011
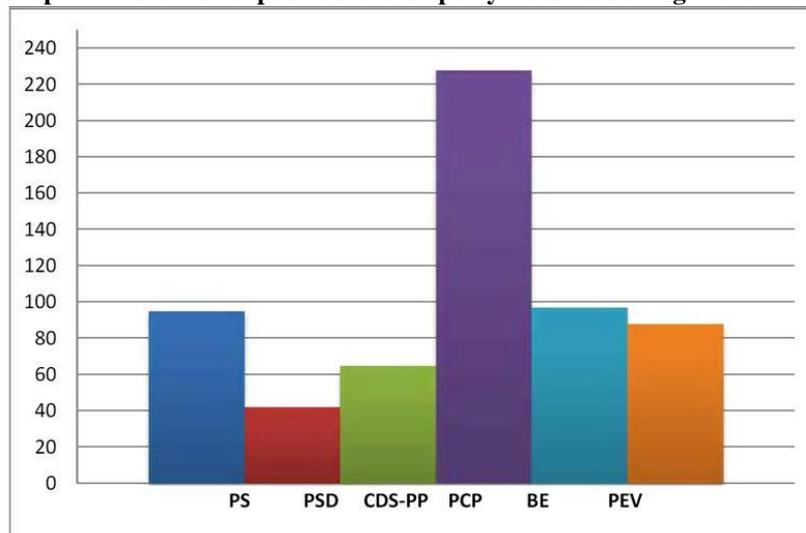
This data, grouped into Graph 2, allows us to evaluate the relationship between the political time line of the month of March 2011, presented in the previous section, and the publications on the websites. Thus, the highest

points of publication on party websites coincides with the main political developments highlighted in the month of March.

Graph 2 – Total no. of daily publications on party websites during march 2011
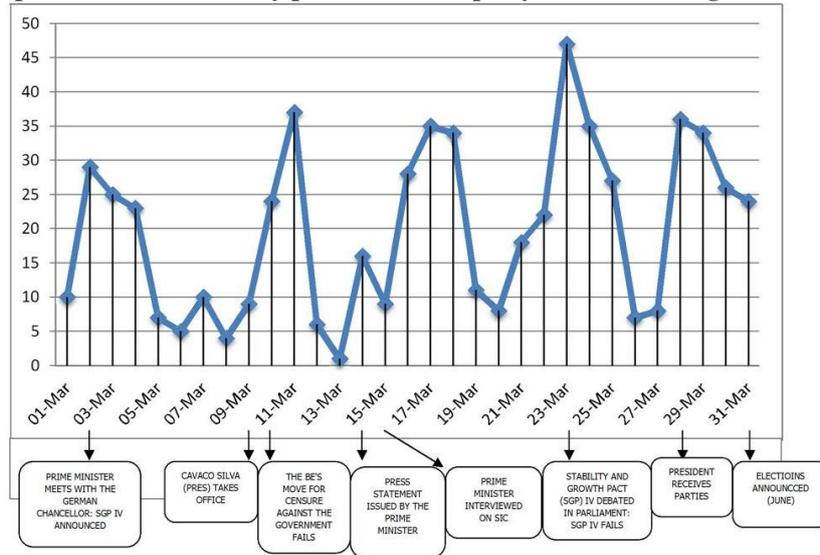
Graph 2 also shows a distinction between the two points of analysis set forth in the previous section. From March 1 to and including March 22, the number of publications was around 10 daily publications to a daily maximum of 35 publications during the moments already referred to. This milestone corresponds to a non-electoral period with various political events. From the 23rd of March to the 31st, the number of publications increased to about 20 minimum daily publications and a daily maximum of 45 publications. The latter interval of time corresponds to a period of political instability and a pre-election atmosphere. This makes it possible to infer that during non-election periods, the volume of published information is reduced and the websites' highlights are as evident as during election periods, where the volume of information increases and the website automatically has more work.

Graph 3, in turn, lets us perceive the regularity of updates and the intervals between them. None of the parties have daily updates. This leads us to believe that the parties in general do not confer great importance to party websites.

They use them and they are on the internet, however, there is no strategic party communication that allows the party to benefit from the websites on an up-to-date basis and with some frequency.

Graph 3 – Daily publications on the websites of each party
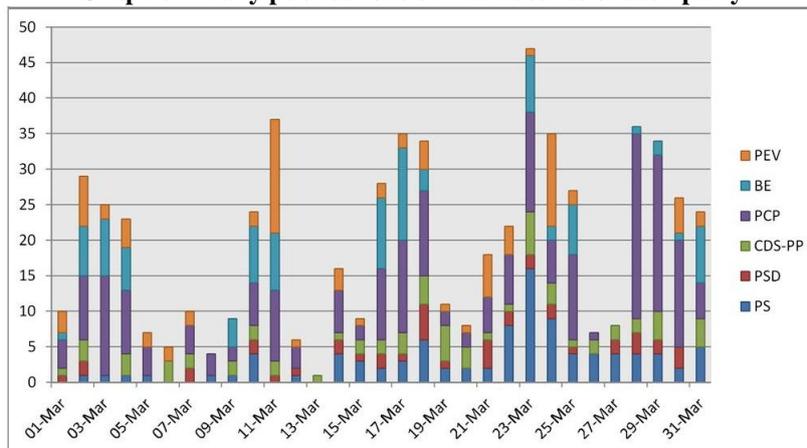
Daily publications: text and video, any differences?

After analysing the total number of publications on the websites of each Portuguese party, this section presents the results collected, separately, for publications in text and in video. This data is equally relevant because it allows us to conclude on the type of publications that predominate in Portuguese political party websites.

Text publications

Graph 4 represents the total number of daily text publications disseminated during the month of March. This data led to the conclusion that text publications are more prevalent on the websites of PCP, CDS-PP and PS. In the case of PSD and BE the values are considerably lower, between 27 and 15 publications, respectively.

Graph 4 – Total no. of daily text publications on party websites during march 2011
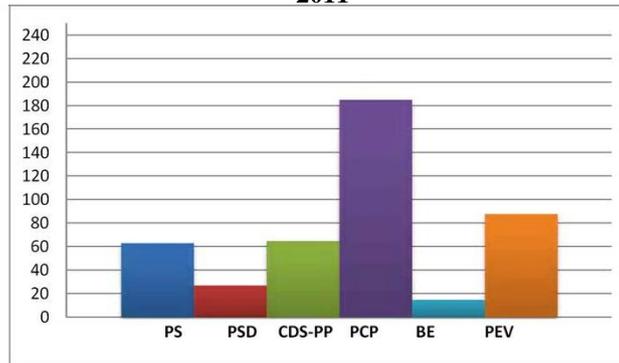
Within the textual dimension it is possible to verify a relationship between the interval of updates and the total number of publications – Graph 5. In this case, BE is the least regular and it is also the party with the least amount of published news. PCP, in turn, is the party with the most publications and the most frequent updates.

Graph 5 – Daily text publications on the websites of each party
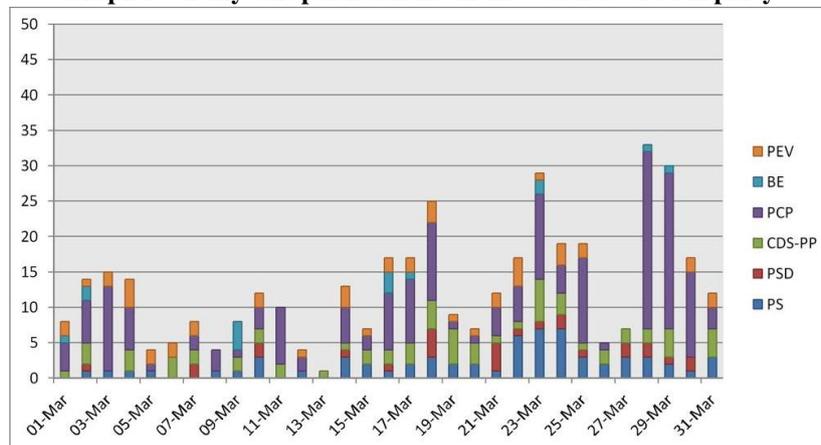
Audiovisual publications

Regarding videos, it should be pointed out that BE and PEV do not have videos on their website. Both have a link that refers to a video channel on "YouTube", where the partie's videos on the interventions in the Assembly of the Republic are published.

With this analysis we found that the parties who were predominant in textual publications – PCP, CDS-PP and PS – are not equally predominant in audiovisual content. The policy-seeking parties, in turn, are those which have more audiovisual publications, in contrast with the vote and office-seeking parties, with the exception of PSD, which present higher values for textual content.

Graph 6 – Total no. of daily video publications on party websites during march 2011
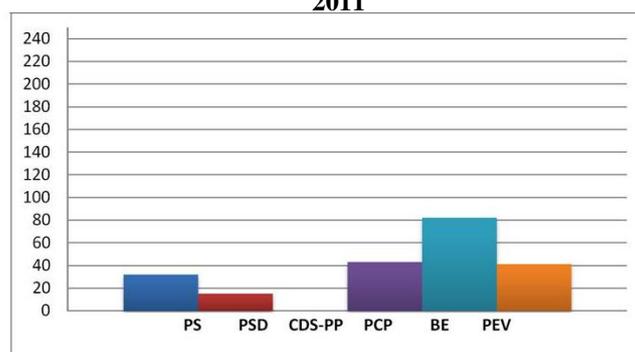
In relation to the updates of audiovisual publications, they are in general less frequent than the news in text form – Graph 7. The most consistent party is PCP. BE and PEV emerge as the less frequent parties. This data is relevant because the parties with more audiovisual publications are the ones that update their videos the least. It should be noted that the dates of the events of the videos do not match the dates of publication. Therefore, the videos are accumulated for several days which justify the many publications in a single day and the significant distance between them. One can infer that there is not one person working daily on the website, at least in terms of video uploading since this is not an important means, and because not much time is devoted to

it. This leads to the conclusion of the non-professionalization of party communication in both parties.

Finally, unlike the news published in text, audiovisual publications do not allow a relationship between the number of videos posted and the update interval. The party that publishes the most is BE, but the most regular party is PCP.

Graph 7 – Daily video publications on the websites of each party
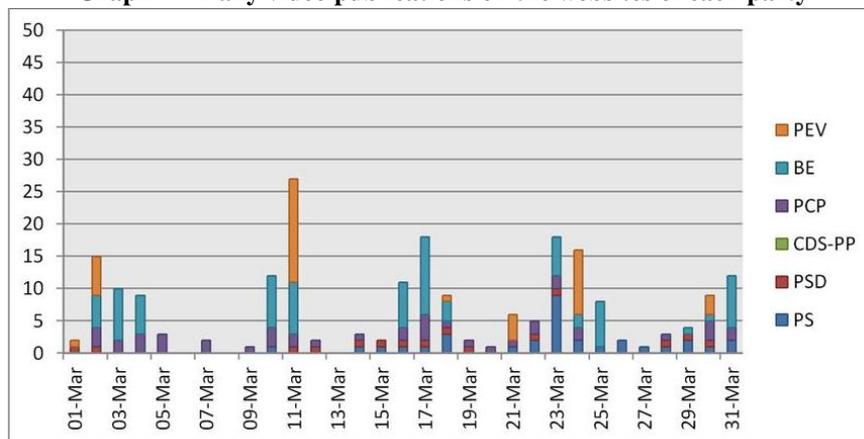
With this isolated analysis on the type of content published in party websites, we concluded that BE and PEV prefer audiovisual publications, although these are not directly accessible on the online pages. The other parties are more dominant in textual publications. Therefore, publications in text format are used more on Portuguese party websites than publications in video format.

Still on daily published information, the content analysis makes it possible to answer the research assumptions about the greater or lesser presence of *shovelware* in published content; about the presence of the frame of conflict in published communications; and about the personalization of the party leader in the news put on the websites.

Shovelware

With respect to H2, websites are "amplifiers of the effects of the media" (Cardoso, 2006, p. 310), however, websites have more publications that result from content produced internally by the parties for the site. The average number of publications reveals an insignificant difference between the transfer models (with 0.49) and the original model (with 0.51), allowing us to conclude that in the political parties' pages there is either news that is fully republished, or content produced directly for the site. Finally, Table 6 shows that there is no presence of Pavlik's (1997) adaptive model, in which the contents are adapted from traditional means for the website. This fact reveals that the news circulated in the media is used as sources of information for the parties, but the contents are not adapted and rewritten on the websites.

Table 6 – *Shovelware*

	TRANSFER MODEL		ADAPTIVE MODEL		ORIGINAL MODEL	
	%	**Total**	*%*	**Total**	*%*	**Total**
PS	73,7%	70	0	0	26,3	25
PSD	50%	21	0	0	50%	21
CDS-PP	100%	65	0	0	0	0
PCP	9,6%	22	0	0	90,4%	206
BE	85,6%	83	0	0	14,4%	14
PEV	46,6%	41	0	0	53,4%	47
TOTAL	–	302	–	0	–	313
AVERAGE	–	0,49	–	0	–	0,51

In conclusion, the data reveal that the vote and office-seeking parties republish more content than those that produce especially for their websites. In contrast, the policy-seeking parties exhibit higher percentages of internally produced content. Therefore, one can infer that the policy-seeking parties use their online pages to disclose information that the traditional media do not give importance to. In turn, the vote and office-seeking parties use the sites to amplify the media coverage given in traditional media.

This information raises the response from H1 on the orientation of the information for voters, militants or journalists. Thus, we conclude that party websites are not oriented to give information to journalists. As we have seen, most of the publications on the websites are from journalists of traditional means of communication. Although there are some press releases, this is not the preferred means that functions as a source of information for journalists. On the other hand, policy-seeking parties publish more internally produced information, especially about actions, speeches and the parties' positions, which gives them an orientation that is more focused on the militants. In the case of vote and office-seeking parties the greatest number of republications suggests that the websites are oriented towards voters, because the effect of the media is transposed to the internet so that the parties are present in all media and reach the greatest number of voters.

Shovelware: differences between text and video

When the data is analysed individually it allows other conclusions that are equally relevant. Table 7 shows that in textual content the parties with more shovelware are the vote and office-seeking parties.

Table 7 – Shovelware in textual contents

	TRANSFER MODEL[1]		ADAPTIVE MODEL		ORIGINAL MODEL	
	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total
PS	81%	51	0	0	19%	12
PSD	66,7%	18	0	0	33,3%	9
CDS-PP	100%	65	0	0	0	0
PCP	0	0	0	0	100%	185
BE	6,7%	1	0	0	93,3%	14
PEV	0	0	0	0	100%	47
TOTAL	–	135	–	0	–	267
AVERAGE	–	0,34	–	0	–	0,66

---

[1] The transfer model present in four of the six parties analysed – PS, PSD, CDS-PP and BE – was identified through the comparison between daily publications and news from traditional

In relation to audiovisual content, Table 8 indicates the inverse of textual content. BE and PEV have the totality of content reposted from the "ARTV" channel and PCP has 22 videos (51.2%) that are also reposted from "ARTV", out of the 43 published on the website. Still within this group of a higher amount of video reposts is PS, with 19 (59.4%) out of 32 videos confirmed as shovelware of other content that has already been disclosed.

Table 8 – Shovelware in video contents

	TRANSFER MODEL		ADAPTIVE MODEL		ORIGINAL MODEL[2]	
	%	**Total**	*%*	**Total**	*%*	**Total**
PS	59,4%	19	0	0	40,6%	13
PSD	20%	3	0	0	80%	12
CDS-PP	0	0	0	0	0	0
PCP	51,2%	22	0	0	48,8%	21
BE	100%	82	0	0	0	0
PEV	100%	41	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	–	167	–	0	–	46
AVERAGE	–	0,78	–	0	–	0,22

With this isolated analysis we can conclude that the average number of content reposts is greater in audiovisual publications – 0.78 – than in textual news – 0.34. In contrast, the average content produced internally increases for textual publications – 0.66 – and decreases with the videos – 0.22. In text posts, the vote and office-seeking parties are those that repost more content from traditional media, in contrast with the policy-seeking parties which stand out in the production of internal contents. Regarding audiovisual posts,

---

means of communication. This comparison was necessary for PS, PSD and BE, because in the case of CDS-PP, the party identifies the source from which their news was imported.

[2] Generally, the audiovisual reposts are interviews, official announcements and the parties' critical positions. The internally produced content refers to the party's internal actions, such as, for example, the elections for Secretary-General of the PS or the 90TH anniversary of PCP. When the videos are produced internally, these have the logo and the presentation of their own party.

policy-seeking parties are those that show themselves reposting content. Here, in relation to videos produced for the website, only PSD stands out.

frame of conflict

In relation to the frame of conflict (H3), the data in Table 9 confirm that all parties have content with frame of conflict. However, the average number of posts with interparty conflict is small – 0.29 – compared with the average posts without a frame of conflict – 0.71, despite the context of crisis that inspires greater competitiveness between parties. The vote and office-seeking parties are those which have the highest values.

Table 9 – Frame de Conflict

	%	TOTAL
PS	51,6%	49
PSD	50%	21
CDS-PP	36,9%	24
PCP	14,5%	33
BE	37,1%	36
PEV	18,2%	16
TOTAL	–	179
AVERAGE	–	0,29

Frame of conflict: differences between text and video

Separately, the results reveal other conclusions. The frame of conflict is more present in audiovisual content, than in text publications. Graph 8 shows that the main difference between text contents and video contents, for the issue of the conflict, is the alternation of positions between PS and PSD.

From this analysis we conclude that the vote and office-seeking parties are the parties with more frame of conflict in online publications, both in text and in video. In policy-seeking parties, the presence of frame of conflict in publications increases in audiovisual posts.

Graphic 8 – % Frame of conflict in textual content and audiovisual content
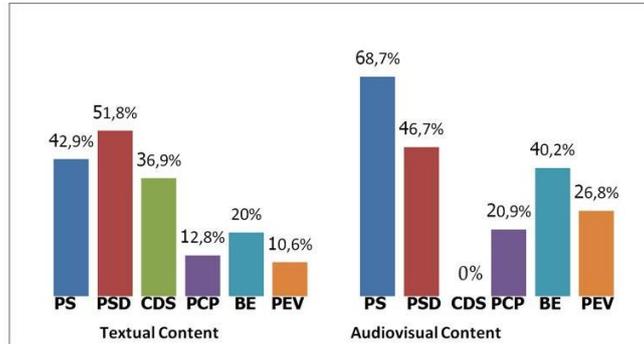
Personalization

Finally, Table 10 shows the data that proves H4 on the personalization of messages in vote and office-seeking parties, in contrast with policy-seeking parties.

Table 10 – Personalization

	%	Total
PS	31,6%	30
PSD	40,5%	17
CDS-PP	24,6%	16
PCP	8,3%	19
BE	11,3%	11
PEV[3]	53,7%	22
TOTAL	–	115
AVERAGE	–	0,19

---

[3] PEV has two members with parliamentary representation and the data for this party on audiovisual content alternates between the two party representatives.

Personalization: differences between text and video[4]

Tables 11 and 12 indicate that in relation to textual and audiovisual publications, PS and PSD are the parties that give greater prominence to their party leader.

The average number of audiovisual publications highlighting the party leader is higher – 0.25 – than the average of text publications – 0.19 – for the same feature. In this sense, the content which, generally, gives more emphasis to the party leader are the audiovisual content. The vote and office-seeking parties are those that mainly highlight the party leader, with PEV being the exception of contrast with the policy-seeking parties.

Table 11 – Personalization of text contents

	%	Total
PS	33,3%	21
PSD	33,3%	9
CDS-PP	24,6%	16
PCP	5,9%	11
BE	26,7%	4
PEV[5]	0	0
TOTAL	–	61
AVERAGE	–	0,15

---

[4] In addition to the differences between content in text and audiovisual posts, the data for photos and podcasts will be included. The percentages of customization of daily posts were measured by highlighting the name of the leader in publication, whether he was addressing the communication or was a reference in communications by other political leaders.

[5] PEV in textual communications does not present values because the daily communications are not personalized.

Table 12 – Personalization of video content

	%	Total
PS	28,1%	9
PSD	53,3%	8
CDS-PP	0	0
PCP	18,6%	8
BE	8,5%	7
PEV	53,7%	22
TOTAL	–	54
AVERAGE	–	0,25

The analysis of photographic contents, as well as the podcasts, confirms the aforementioned reports on personalization. In this regard, PS is the party that gives greater emphasis to the party leader in four of the seven photographs published (57.1%) of José Sócrates. CDS-PP highlights the leader Paulo Portas in four of the eight published photographs (50%). PCP highlights Jerónimo de Sousa in eight photographs, out of a total of 107 publications (7.5%). PSD, BE and PEV do not have any published photo albums. Regarding podcasts, PCP is the only party that has this option active and published contents during the month under analysis. From the 21 published audio contents, 19% are communications by the party leader, Jerónimo de Sousa.

All in all, this data actually confirms that vote and office-seeking parties – namely PS, PSD and CDS-PP – give more emphasis to the leaders by showing the image of the party leader on the website. On the other hand, there is little evidence of personalization for policy-seeking parties. Personalization exists but the main highlight is not exclusive to the party leader, as there are frequent publications about him or with other party representatives.

Institutional Publications

According to the institutional documents made available, Table 13 presents different types of documents and information which are available on the party websites.

Table 13 – Documents available

	PS	PSD	CDS-PP	PCP	BE	PEV	TOTAL
DOCUMENTS DOWNLOAD							
Party programme	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	6
Regulations [6]	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	4
List of deputies	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES	2
Party newspapers	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	5
Archive / Library	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	6
Total	4	4	3	4	4	4	23
PARTY							
History	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	5
Statute[7]	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	6
Structure	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	5
Events calendar	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	3
Groups section	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	6
Total	5	5	4	5	2	4	25
BIOGRAPHIES							
Party leaders	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	3
Deputies	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES	2
Total	1	1	1	1	0	1	3
TOTAL 14	10	10	8	10	6	9	

In relation to the available documents, PS (with 10), PSD (with 10) and PCP (with 10) are the parties that offer more institutional information on their websites. Regarding the documents for download, all parties give access to the party's programme, as well as an archive/library of content. CDS-PP is the only party that does not have the official party newspaper available on the website, while the remaining offer it, in PDF format, directly on the site or

[6]All the documents that could be accessed on the websites were codified by regulations. This referred to legislation applied to the party and its members, for example: electoral rules, financial regulation, membership fees regulation, admissions and transfer of militant regulation, the right to trend, opinion regulation, national bodies regulation, the national council regulation and the regulation on discipline.

[7] The documents accessible online were encoded by statutes that specifically addressed the internal organization of the party, as well as its principles.

via email. In relation to the list of members, only PCP and PEV exhibit their members on the party's website. Finally, in this category, the regulations are not available in PCP's and PEV's respective websites.

Within the category of party documents, the statutes and the section for specific groups are available in all parties. In turn, the party's history and structure are not accessible in BE's website. All the others have a tab with this information. Finally, the calendar of events is not visible in CDS-PP's, BE's and PEV's websites. On the contrary, the websites of PS, PSD and PCP offer the possibility of following the party's actions each month.

The section for groups specifically analyses the presence of distinct sections on the website for the party's aggregations, such as young people or workers, for example. In this regard, all parties have enabled this option. PS has 3 specific sections: "Women socialists", Socialist Youth (JS) and party militants. PSD also has a total of 3 sections: one for the Social Democrat Workers (TSD), one for Young Social Democrats (JSD) and another for emigrants. Similarly, PCP also has 3 sections and for the same public: workers, Portuguese Communist Youth (JCP) and emigrants. Also with 3 sections is BE which has a specific tab for youth, another for workers and one for LGTB individuals. With fewer sections is CDS-PP which has a tab for the Federation of Christian Democratic Workers and another for the Youth Christian Democratic wing (JP). PEV has only one tab for young people – *EcoloJovem*.

Regarding the biographies, only the vote and office-seeking parties offer the biographies of their party leaders – José Sócrates, Passos Coelho and Paulo Portas. On the other hand, policy-seeking parties do not provide this information. In the case of deputy biographies, only PCP and PEV indicate the deputies' trajectories of their respective parties. These data allow us to relate and strengthen the most evident personalization in vote and office-seeking parties, the only ones that offer the biographies of the party leaders.

From the analysis of Table 13 we conclude that the websites of political parties have as their main task the disclosure of institutional information and knowledge about the party's functioning and internal organization. Thus, without any major differences, the parties that are generally more oriented towards militants offer less of the party's institutional documents. On the other hand, the parties that are more interested in gaining/capturing voters (in this case, PS and PSD) provide access to more information and documents,
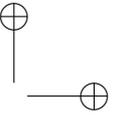
which shows the parties' greater interest in informing potential voters who remain undecided.

Interactive dimension[8]

From the analysis of Table 14, we noticed that the policy-seeking parties (PCP, BE and PEV) are the most basic in terms of interactivity, having only their newsletter and party contacts made available. On the contrary, the vote and office-seeking parties (PS, PSD and CDS-PP) are those that most strive to promote interactivity, which places them at an intermediate level.

---

[8]In this dimension, the interaction tools and contact between parties and voters will be analysed. Here, three levels are highlighted: basic, with the presence of communications in one direction only – from the party to the receiver or from the receiver to the party; medium, with bi-directional communication from the party to the receiver and from the receiver to the party; and high, with active and real time communications between both and in spaces for that purpose.
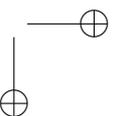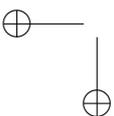
Table 14 – Type of interactivity

	PS	PSD	CDS-PP	PCP	BE	PEV	TOTAL
BASIC							
Spaces for opinions	NO	YES (1)	YES	NO	NO	NO	2
Online questionnaire	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	0
Newsletter	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	5
Contact form with different sectors	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	2
Total	2	3	1	1	1	1	9
AVERAGE							
Comments	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO (3)	NO	2
Reply to comments	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	0
Contacts	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	6
SMS	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	1
Total	2	2	2	1	1	1	9
HIGH							
Chat Room	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	0
Foruns	NO	YES (2)	NO	NO	NO	NO	0
Total	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
TOTAL 10	4	6	3	2	2	2	

(1) GENEPSD

(2) CRE – Commission of Statutory Review

(3) The website of Bloco.org doesn't allow comments, but as we have seen some of the posts referred to on the website esquerda.net and on this site comments are allowed. Either way, the news that was analysed did not have comments on the website esquerda.net.

At the basic level, PSD and CDS-PP are the only parties with a space for leaving feedback or suggestions. In the case of PSD, the party has an active tab (GENEPSD) where it is possible for those interested to send and participate with proposals for the construction and revision of the Party's Electoral Programme. In the case of CDS-PP, there is a space on the website that says "suggestions: leave your comments here". By filling out a form with an e-mail and subject it is possible to send the intended opinions or suggestions. These comments are not posted on the website.

In addition to these options, CDS-PP has another tab "I want to know"

where they can send "doubts, questions, criticism or suggestions" directly to the party, but these comments are also not available online for public discussion. Similar to this tab, PSD has another option on the website in the tab "Speak to us", where it reads "for the Social Democratic Party the opinion of its militants and sympathisers is important, just as the suggestions of all those who visit us, even if they do not share our ideas". However, these specific tabs, in the case of both parties, operate in the same manner as the tab for the general contacts of PS, PCP and BE. There is also a form where you can send any type of message, such as, an opinion, suggestion, or a comment. The big difference between these tabs is not its shape and organization, but the message of encouragement, both in CDS-PP and PSD, for voters to participate because that space is intended for this purpose.

At the intermediate level, all parties have their contacts available. PS, PSD and PEV are the three parties that provide contact information of their headquarters in various districts of the country. PSD also has the contacts of "autonomous structures", i.e. the Young Social Democrats and the TSD. However, PS and PSD are the only parties that leave open the possibility of contacting with specific departments of the party. In the case of PS, it is possible to send a message to the "department of communication and image"or to the "department of militants". PSD is more extensive and in the tab "Talk to us"it is possible to send or direct a message to various sectors of the party – legal support, council of national jurisdiction, documentation, emigration, militants' file, regional deployment, *Povo Livre (Free People)*, fees, public relations and financial services. PEV is the only party that offers the Parliamentary Group's contact information. PCP offers the general contact of its party headquarters. CDS-PP, via hyperlinks that refer to other online pages, has the contacts of "CDS mayors", of "Christian Democratic Youth", the "parliamentary group", the "Federation of Christian Democratic Workers"and of the party's counties. BE offers contact information of the party's general headquarters and a link to the "Parliamentary Group", where you can send questions or speak directly to the members of the group through a toll-free number.

In relation to comments, PSD and CDS-PP have enabled this function for the content published on the website. PSD has a total of 91 comments for the 27 news texts posted during the month of March and there are 15 comments for the published videos. Most of the comments, in the case of PSD, are messages with suggestions (21), opinions (43) or encouragement
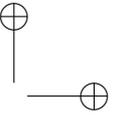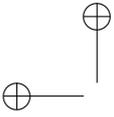
(12) and hope (11) and there are still questions asked of the party (7). There are also some sporadic messages of disapproval (12). CDS-PP has the option to comment on the tab "Open Party". In this space, the party submits the news of its choice for comment. During the analysis, six publications were available and only two recorded comments, adding up to a total of 24 comments on the two news pieces. Finally, at this intermediate level, PS is the only party that has the function to send written messages (SMS) with news updates, but this function is only valid for party militants.

Two other issues must be emphasised regarding the comments. First, the two parties that allow comments (PSD and CDS-PP), did not respond to the comments. What happens in some cases is that commentators respond or debate with each other. Second, to make comments, either on the PSD or CDS-PP websites, no registration is needed. One only needs to indicate the name, e-mail and make a comment, which is automatically made available without going through a process of authorization from the party.

In relation to the high level of interactivity, PSD is the only party with a forum to share and discuss issues. The tab available for this function is the "CRE"(Commission of Statutory Review); however, only militants can participate and the issues under discussion are about statutory reviews.

As a conclusion on this interactive dimension, the vote and office-seeking parties are those most committed to this, given that the other parties (policy-seeking) only have the contact information and newsletter available. PSD and CDS-PP stand out in this section because they allow comments on posts and this option stimulates greater participation from voters. However, comments by users arise, but both parties do not take advantage of this tool and do not participate in the discussion that emerges between users. Therefore, PSD and CDS-PP have a chance to interact actively with voters, but do not take full advantage. PS, however, is unique in the use of the SMS service, which is only available to militants but encourages the participation of its members in an original way. Finally, this dimension allows us to infer that the interactivity allowed on the party websites is not of free access to all visitors, and in most of the tools studied, there is the limitation of exclusivity for militants, even in vote and office-seeking parties, which according to the theory we expected to have a greater openness.
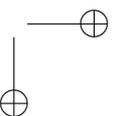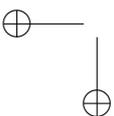
Dimension of Mobilization

With respect to incentives for Mobilisation in party websites, two categories were identified: the first on obtaining resources for the party and the second on the availability of party propaganda on the websites. In this regard, Table 15 allows us to observe that the party websites in terms of obtaining resources only enables the function of recruiting militants (in 4 parties). As for mobilisation through party propaganda, it is the most accessible function in Portuguese websites, with almost all of the parties having 2 out of the 3 options studied.

Table 15 – Incentive for party mobilisation

	PS	PSD	CDS-PP	PCP	BE	PEV	TOTAL
OBTAINING RESOURCES							
Party members	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	4
Volunteers	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	0
Online donations	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	0
Advertising	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	0
Merchandising	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	0
Total	1	1	1	0	1	0	4
ADVERTISEMENT							
Offline promotion	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	6
Online promotion	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	5
Multimedia sharing	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	4
Total	3	3	3	3	2	1	15
TOTAL 8	4	4	4	3	3	1	

In obtaining resources PS, PSD, CDS-PP and BE are the parties that have a form and information available and that is necessary for the affiliation of new party militants. On PSD's website, when opened for the first time, there is an automatic display of a video message from the leader Passos Coelho. It shows him expressing several ideas, and one of them encourages party membership. Therefore, in non-electoral periods, websites operate more as recruiters of new militants for the party, and do not have the options for raising financial resources. In relation to the other categories analysed (volunteers, online donations, advertising and merchandising) no party uses these tools.
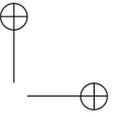
Different results reveal to us the data on the use of party websites for the dissemination of party propaganda. Here, all of the parties analysed have at least the logo available for download or printing. PSD and CDS-PP also provide party songs for download and PCP provides other folders with model forms, announcements, and party enrolment, also for download or printing. In general, these contents are also available for sharing via email. The exceptions occur in PSD, which in addition to sharing via e-mail, also allows dissemination through other online applications (Facebook or Twitter, for example); and PEV, which does not allow the sharing of these contents. For online viewing, there is also the broadcasting time for CDS-PP, PCP, BE and PEV.

In addition, PS, PSD, CDS-PP and PCP allow the sharing of videos and photos that users produce when going to rallies or street organizations and that may be disclosed in party websites. However, none of the parties allow visitors to publish such content directly on the websites. The sharing has to be made via e-mail, which is subject to prior supervision before being published online.

Thus, we can conclude that, in general, all parties are committed to sharing party propaganda even in non-electoral contexts. Despite this, the websites are not used for raising monetary funds, being confined to encouraging membership.

Dimension of sophistication

In relation to the sophistication of party websites, the collected data were grouped into four categories: access, connections, navigability and multimedia. The results for each category are displayed in Table 16.
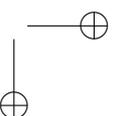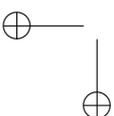
Table 16 – Type of sophistication

	PS	PSD	CDS-PP	PCP	BE	PEV	TOTAL
ACCESS							
Shares contents (other applications)	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	3
Print	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	5
RSS connection	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	5
Translation	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES	2
PDF	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	3
Plug-in	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	0
Tool bar	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	0
Total	2	3	3	5	3	2	18
LINKS							
Internal	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	6
External	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	2
Party	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES	2
Reference	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	4
Advertising	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	0
Total	3	2	2	2	1	4	14
NAVIGABILITY							
Search engines	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	6
Icon to start	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	6
Menu	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	6
Site map	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	4
Total	4	4	4	4	3	3	22
MULTIMEDIA							
Audio / Podcast	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	3
Audio archive	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	3
Online TV / Video	YES	YES	YES[9]	YES	NO	NO	4
TV archive	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	4
Photo gallery	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	3
Photo archive	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	3
Contents in movement	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	4
Total	6	5	5	7	1	0	24
TOTAL 23	15	14	14	18	8	9	
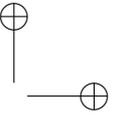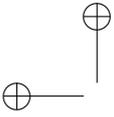
In relation to access, PCP is the party with more active access on the website (5), followed by PSD, CDS-PP and BE with the presence of three tools each. PS and PEV are the most basic in this category, with the presence of two of the seven tools analysed. Thus, the plug-in and the toolbar are not accessible in any of the parties. The print function and RSS feeds are available in five parties. The first is not available in PS and the second is not present in PEV. Finally, the tools for content-sharing and access to PDF documents are active in three parties. In the first case, it is present in PS, PSD and PCP; in the second case, it is available in CDS-PP, PCP and BE.

In relation to the links, all parties have internal links and no party has commercial links. The links of reference are present in four parties – PS, PSD, CDS-PP and PEV and the external and party links are only available in two parties: PS and PEV have external links and PCP and PEV have party links. Thus, we can conclude that PEV is the party with more links on its website (4). PS follows in the list, with the presence of three of the five types of possible links. PSD, CDS-PP and PCP have only two types of links on their websites and BE is the only party with one link.

On internal links, PS has a link to "PSTV", and for the websites of militants, socialist women, MEPs, Socialist Youth, the press officer of the Socialist Party, federations, counties, sections, blogs and Facebook, Twitter and You-Tube. PSD has internal links to districts, regions and sections, to the Social Democratic Youth, to the Social Democratic Workers, to CRI[10], the CRE[11] and the GENEPSD[12] and for Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and Sapo. CDS-PP, in turn, has internal links to the parliamentary group and the parliamentary group in Europe, in the Azores and Madeira. It also has links to the Popular Youth and Federation of Christian Democratic Workers, as well as the "CDSTV", YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Vimeo, Sapo and Flickr. PCP has links to the *Avante*, the *Militante* and to editions of *Avante*. It is the only party that does not have links to social networks. BE, however, has internal links to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Hi5 and MySpace and to "Blocosfera Local",

---

[9] CDS-PP has an online channel with an audiovisual archive of videos. Therefore, the fact that there were no registered publications during the month of March, does not cancel the presence of features on the website.

[10] CRI – Commission of International Relations.

[11] CRE – Commission of Statutory Review.

[12] GENEPSD – Revision of the Program of the Social Democratic Party.
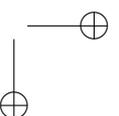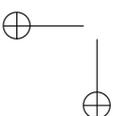
i.e. to the districts of the party. Finally, PEV has links to "green blogs", i.e. to the blogs of the party's districts in the Azores, Lisbon, Ribatejo, Setúbal, Centre, North and South, to YouTube and Facebook.

Regarding external links, PS has links for the Mário Soares Foundation and the Res Publica Foundation. PEV has external links to various national and international associations, summarized in Table 17.

Table 17 – External links of "The Greens"party

ADENE – the Portuguese Energy Agency

APA – Portuguese Agency of the Environment,

DGEG – Directorate General for Energy and Geology,

DGRF – Portuguese General Directorate of Forest Resources,

ICNB – Institute for Nature Conservation and Biodiversity,

INR – the National Residues Institute, Water Institute,

IRAR – the Water Services and Waste Regulator Institute,

Siddamb – Environmental Legislation,

SNIG – National System for Geographical Information,

Almargem – Association for the Defense of the Cultural and Environmental Heritage of the Algarve,

APEA – Portuguese Association of the Environment,

APRH – Portuguese Association of Water Resources,

Public Water Association,

Bafari – Scientific Association for the Conservation of Birds of Prey,

CETUS – Portuguese Association for the Conservation of Cetaceans,

CPADA – Portuguese Confederation of Associations for the Defense of the Environment,

ECOLINE,

FAPAS – Fund for the Protection of Wild Animals,

Ferrel 30 Years,

FPCUB – The Portuguese Federation of Cycletourism and Bicycle Users,

GEOTA – Group of Spatial Planning and Environmental Studies,

Wolf Group,

Portuguese League of Animal Rights,

LPN – League for the Protection of Nature,

No to Nuclear – Platform,
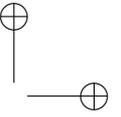
Platform for Transgenics Outside of the Dish,

QUERCUS – National Association for the Conservation of Nature,

SPE – Portuguese Speleological Society,

SPEA – Portuguese Society for the Study of Birds,

APD – Portuguese Association of Disability,

APREN – Association of Renewable Energies,

APSI – Association for the Promotion of Child Safety,

CNA – National Confederation of Agriculture,

CNOD – National Confederation of the Organisms dealing with Disability,

Portuguese Council for Peace and Cooperation.

CPPC – Portuguese Council for Peace and Cooperation.

Portuguese Social Forum,

ILGA Portugal,

Naturlink,

Opus Gay

Amnesty International,

Animal Welfare,

European Social Forum,

World Social Forum,

World Social Forum 2007 – Nairobi,

Global Climate Campaign,

Global Climate Campaign Portugal,

GREENPEACE,

IUCN - The World,

Conservation Union,

SOS LYNX,

WWF

Party links are exclusive to PCP and PEV for the Unitary Democratic Alliance (CDU) of which they are members. As for the links of reference, PS has a link to socialist parties in the world. PSD has eleven links of reference, including: the European Parliament, the European People's Party and European Democrats, the Presidency of the Republic, the Assembly of the Republic, the Government, the Constitutional Court, the Court of Auditors, the Attorney General of the Republic, the Ombudsman, the National Election Commission
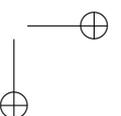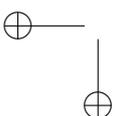
and the European Union. CDS-PP, in turn, has links of reference for the Group of the European People's Party and the International Democratic Union. Finally, PEV has links of reference for various national and international bodies, summarized in Table 18.

Table 18 – Reference links of "The Greens"party (2)

"The Greens"parties from various countries in Europe: Germany, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Scotland, Slovakia, Spain, Estonia, Finland, Scotland, FYEG, Greece, Green Group in the European Parliament, the Netherlands, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Norway, Poland, United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Romania, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and European Greens

"The greens"of other countries of the world: Africa, Australia, Brazil, USA, Canada

International institutions of reference: European Environment Agency, European Commission, Council of the European Union, UN Convention on Climate Change, Eurobarometer, Eurostat – European Statistics, FAO – United Nations Organization for Food and Agriculture, Community Legislation, WHO – World Health Organization, UN – United Nations, European Parliament, Council of the European Union, Portuguese Presidency of the European Union,

National institutions of reference: CGTP-IN, ANAFRE – National Association of Parishes, ANMP – National Association of Portuguese Municipalities, Assembly of the Republic, National Election Commission, The Official Gazette (Electronic version), Directorate General for Internal Administration, Government, Ministry of Environment, President of the Republic.

In relation to the degree of navigability of the online pages, Table 16 shows that the majority of parties has all of the analysed features, demonstrating that Portuguese party websites are relatively easy pages to navigate through and are accessible to all surfers. Thus, all sites have at least one form of searching for specific content on the website. Everyone has the icon (usually it is the party symbol) that once clicked refers to the website's home page (or entry). Finally, it is also common for all pages to have a menu with the website's tabs, in all of the entries, which facilitates the navigation and the search for content. The site map is available for PS, PSD, CDS-PP and PCP. It is generally at the bottom of the page and contains the information of the tabs from the menu page, since it is an easy way to find the desired content.

Table 16 also indicates the most used multimedia resources by the political parties analysed. In this regard, the presence of photos and videos are the most heavily used resources by PS, PSD, CDS-PP and PCP. BE and PEV are the
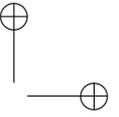
parties that have no reference to a gallery of photos or videos available on the online pages. In relation to the photographs, PS has a photo gallery, with seven shots, which is exposed in motion, on the party's home page. PSD refers to the photo albums in social networks such as Flickr, but it does not have any posted photos for the month under analysis. PCP and CDS-PP has the photo albums available on the website. PCP has eight published albums with a total of 107 photos during the analysis. They refer to protests, social concentrations, rallies and the 90th anniversary of the party. In the case of CDS-PP, an album was published during the month of March to document the party's National Congress.

PS, PSD and PCP are the only parties that have the podcast functionality available, i.e. hear audios on the party's interviews or statements. However, during the month of March, the audios were only published in two parties – PSD with a single publication (Miguel Relvas's reaction to the new increases proposed by the Government, in Antena 1); and PCP, with 21 publications, mainly on positions taken in the Assembly of the Republic, interventions or internal speeches.

Finally, Table 16 analyses the content in motion inserted on the websites. Content in movement can be photos presented as a slide show or news highlights in the footer. PS, CDS-PP, PCP and BE are the parties that use this option. CDS-PP, PCP and BE have moving images on the home page and these images accompany the highlight for four or five news stories. PS is the most innovative in this category. In addition to the slide show on the home page, on both the top and bottom of the website, it has a bar of contents that slides the titles of featured news. This bar accompanies all tabs when opened. PSD and PEV do not have any content in motion on their websites.

After the description of the data in Table 16, we infer that the parties are relatively similar in terms of website navigation. In terms of access, PCP has more access available and PEV is the party with more links on its website. The vote and office-seeking parties, however, and PCP use the various multimedia resources on the website the most.

A final analysis allows us to infer that the websites are somewhat similar in the organization and design of the online page. PS, PSD, PCP, BE and PEV have the website's background in white, with the exception being CDS-PP, which uses a blue background.

The differences between the parties are in the schematic presentation of
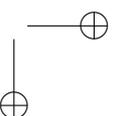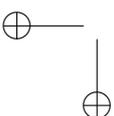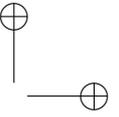
informational tabs. PS presents this section in shades of red and blue and has the symbol of the party at the upper-left corner. PSD also has the symbol in the upper left corner and the menus are orange in the upper right corner. PCP on the upper section of the website has a party image in the background and at the top centre is the party symbol, preceded by tabs which are red. The portal of BE has the party symbol in great prominence in the upper left hand corner and the menus accompany the image, which is highlighted between red lines. PEV has an image with the party symbol at the top of the website and the menus are green in the upper left corner, where you can also find the website's external links. Finally, CDS-PP, despite the blue background, does not differ much from other presentations. The party's logo is in the upper left corner and the menus follow the line of the symbol. In the upper right corner are the links to online social networks.

In this regard, the position defended by Cardoso (2006, p. 310) is not confirmed. The websites of the stronger parties are not more sophisticated than the other parties. PEV is the only one that stands out for its basic and not very dynamic website. However, the other parties do not have a significant difference between them.

In summary, the main conclusions of the analysis tell us that the websites in Portugal are used even in non-electoral periods and that there is a relationship between the party models and the use of the websites. Thus, in general, the vote and office-seeking parties (PS, PSD and CDS-PP) have more interactive and sophisticated websites than the policy-seeking (PCP, BE and PEV) parties. At the information level, PS, PSD and CDS-PP have a greater presence of "frame of conflict" and their websites operate more as content replicators of traditional media, than as a means of internally produced party communication. For the policy-seeking parties, the websites are more about transmitting information about the party's actions and positions, especially to militants.

In relation to other dimensions of analysis, the vote and office-seeking parties are those that reveal more interactive tools on their sites, as well as more sophisticated online pages. However, the dimension of sophistication and the mobilisation of data do not exhibit significant differences between parties. Everyone has tools for active Mobilisation, even in non-electoral periods and the pages are all similar in terms of navigation and organization of content.
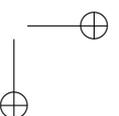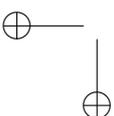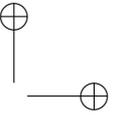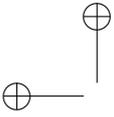
Conclusion

The article has sought to develop an empirical presentation of how Portuguese parties use one of the primary tools of information and communication technologies, in particular party websites. Here, two central inferences stand out: first, that parties have different approaches to websites, according to the party's nature. Second, that sites are relevant party communication tools outside of election periods.

In relation to the informative nature, we may confirm that party websites are a means to disseminate information to militants and voters, but they are not a source of information for journalists. The media is seen as the key element for the dissemination of the message and the party websites, as well as other means, are seen as alternatives that the parties should have. Still on the publications posted on the party websites in March, and that were analysed in the informative dimension, the vote and office-seeking parties are those which have higher percentages for frame of conflict, shovelware and personalization.

Thus, the data reveal that the websites seem to be a reinforcement of party communication disclosed on other channels, through the expansion of information available about the parties (Römmele, 2003, p. 15). In addition, it suggests the replacement of the party press which started to be accessible electronically. In particular, the vote and office-seeking parties do not disseminate too much new information as they resort to repeating much of the news that has already been published in other media. The policy-seeking parties have a different position because they use their websites to disseminate information that the media does not transmit. On the other hand, the websites of vote and office-seeking parties give greater emphasis to party leaders, while the policy-seeking parties, in spite of having this personalisation, are seen as highlighting the party leader less.

Regarding the participative nature, the vote and office-seeking parties are more engaged in promoting interactivity on their websites. PSD and CDS-PP are the parties that stimulate bi-directional communication, allowing comments, spaces for debate and the exposé of ideas on their websites. However, the interaction between party – voter - party is not verified because although those spaces exist, the parties did not participate in the discussions. Therefore, party communication on the websites of vote and office-seeking parties tends to go in two directions: from the party to the voters and from the voters to
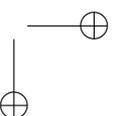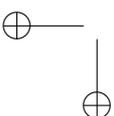
the party, confirming the argument that, in Portugal, the existing interactive spaces only promote one-way communication (Cardoso, 2006, p . 310).

Another form of participation can be measured by the mobilisation allowed by the website. In this case, even in non-electoral contexts, parties are generally committed to sharing party propaganda. On the other hand, there is no interest in raising funds and monetary donations, as there is solely an incentive for militancy in the party.

Finally, the size of the organization does not confirm a significant difference between "government parties" and "small parties". In general, they are very similar in the layout and organization of contents, as well as the navigation of their pages. In this category, PCP is the party that stands out by approaching vote and office-seeking parties in terms of website sophistication. Thus, the graphic quality and the resources available on the websites confirm the growing professionalization of party communication (Norris, 2001), in Portugal.

After this analysis we can say that party websites, as more than a trend, are necessary instruments, or even essential, for the dissemination of information about the party. The fact that the websites are available in national search engines helps to increase knowledge about the parties, even for those who are uninterested in politics.

However, other studies would be needed to test the impact of party websites on users, as well as the effectiveness of these new mechanisms for the transmission of party messages. For now, we know that the sites are used, updated and contain institutional information about the parties. It is inferred that they still do not represent a means of excellence for the transmission of messages, because that still belongs to the media, but the results leave that possibility open.

In short, this study has sought to open new discussions about the path that Portuguese party communication has followed, in particular the internet. Although party websites are still not a portal of intense, active, dynamic and interactive communication, the research allowed us to understand how the websites are used by Portuguese parties which perceive them as strong organs of party communication, when the professionalization and effectiveness of the means is verified.

References

Bastien, F. and Greffet, F. (2009). The impact of context features over the development of party websites: A comparative analysis of France and Canada in election campaign. Paper presented at ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops 2009, Wokshop 20 – Parliaments, Parties, and Politicians in Cyberspace.

Belchior, Ana, (2008). Democracia nos Partidos Políticos Portugueses: Uma análise do eleitorado, dos programas e dos estatutos dos partidos. *Sociologia, problemas e práticas*, 58. pp. 131-154.

Bentivegna, S. (2002). E-Campaigning in the 2001 Italy's Election. Paper presented at the *2002 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association*. Boston: American Political Science Association.

Bimber, B. and Davis, R. (2003). *Campaigning Online: The internet in US elections*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Cardoso, A. (2006). A Comunicação Política Digital na corrida às Eleições Presidenciais 2006 – Internet, Blogues e multimédia móvel. In P. Cardoso and A. Cairrão (Orgs.). *Cadernos de Estudos Mediáticos 04: Comunicação Política*. Porto: Edições Universidade Fernando Pessoa. pp. 296-317.

Chen, P. and Smith, P. (2009). A Canadian E-lection 2008? Online Media and Political Competition. *Canadian Political Science Association*. Ottawa: Ontario.

Entman, R. (1993). Framing: Towards classification of a fractured paradigm. In Danis McQuail (ed). *McQuail's reader in mass communication theory*. London: SAGE Publications. pp. 390-398.

Farrell, D. and Webb, P. (2002). Political Parties as Campaign Organizations. In R. Dalton and M. Wattenberg (eds). *Parties without Partisans: Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 102-128.

Freire, A. (2006). The Party System of Portugal. In Oskar Niedermayer, Richard Stöss and Melanie Haas (eds). *Die Parteiensysteme Westeuropas*. Vol. 2. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag. pp. 373-396.

Gibson, R. (2000). A Proposed Methodology for Studying the Function and Effectiveness of Party and Candidate Web Sites. *Social Science Computer Review*. Vol. 18. pp. 301-319.

Gibson, R. Margolis, M. Resnick, D. and Ward, S. (2003a). Election campaigning on the WWW in the US and UK: a comparative analysis. *SAGE Journals*. 9(1). pp. 47–75.

Gibson, R. Nixon, P. and Ward, S. (2003b). *Political parties and the internet: net again?* London: Routldege.

Gibson, R. and Römmele, A. (2001). A Party-Centered Theory of Professionalized Campaigning. *The Harvard International Journal of Press – Politics*, 6. pp. 31-43.

Gibson, R. and Ward, S. (2000). A Proposed Methodology for Studying the Function and Effectiveness of Party and Candidate Web Sites. *Social Science Computer Review*. Vol. 18(3). pp. 301-319.

Hill, K. and Hughes, J. (1998). *Cyberpolitics: Citizen Activism in the Age of the Internet*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Hsieh, H. and Shannon, S. (2005). Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis. *Qualitative health research*. Vol. 15. No. 9. SAGE Publications.

Jalali, C. (2007). *Partidos e Democracia em Portugal 1974-2005*. Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais.

Katz, R. and Mair, P. (1995). Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy: The Emergence of the Cartel Party. *Party Politics*. pp. 5-28.

Klotz, R. (2004). *The politics of internet communication*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publications, inc.
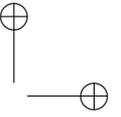
Krichheimer, O. (1966). The transformation of the Western European Party Systems. In J. LaPalombara and M. Weiner (eds). *Political Parties and Political Development*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. pp. 177-200.

Lilleaker, D. and Jackson, N. (2010). Towards a More Participatory Style of Election Campaigning: The Impact of Web 2.0 on the UK 2010 General Election. *Policy & Internet*. Vol. 2, Iss. 3, Art 4. pp. 69-98.

Lisi, M. (2007). O PCP e o processo de mobilização entre 1974 e 1976. *Análise Social*, 62 (182). pp. 181-205.

Lisi, M. (2008). Ao serviço do líder: as campanhas eleitorais do Partido Socialista. Análise Social. Vol. XI.III. pp. 505-529.

Löfgen, K. (2000). Danish Political Parties and New Technology: Interactive Parties or New Shop Windows?. In Jens Hoff, Ivan Horrocks and Pieter Tops (eds) *Democratic Governance and New Technology. Technologically Mediated Innovations in Political Practice in Western Europe*. New York: Routledge. pp. 57-70.

Lopes, F. F. (2004). *Os Partidos Políticos: Modelos e Realidades na Europa Ocidental e em Portugal*. Oeiras: Celta.

Norris, P. (2001). *Digital Divide: Civic Engagement, Information Poverty and the Internet Worldwide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Norris, P. (2003). Preaching to the Converted? Pluralism, Participation and Party Websites. *Party Politics*. Vol.9, nº1. pp. 21-45.

Neuman, W., Just, M. and Crigler, A. (1992). *Common Knowledge: news and the construction of political meaning*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Pavlik, J. (1997). The Future of Online Journalism: a guide to who's doing what. *Columbia Journalism Review* (July/August).

Römmele, A. (2003). Political Parties, Party Communication and New Information and Communication Technologies. *SAGE Publications*, 9. pp. 7-20.
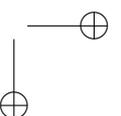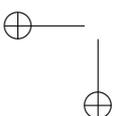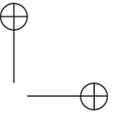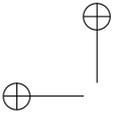
Schweitzer, E. (2008). Innovation or Normalization in E-Campaigning? A Longitudinal Content and Structural Analysis of German Party Websites in the 2002 and 2005 National Elections. *European Journal of Communication*. Vol. 23. pp. 449-470.

Swanson, D. and Mancini, P. (1996). Patterns of Modern Electoral Campaigning and their Consequences. In D. Swanson and P. Mancini (eds). *Politics, Media and Modern Democracy: An International Study of Innovations in Electoral Campaigning and their Consequences*. Westport: Praeger.

Strom, K. (1990). A behavioral theory of competitive political parties. *American Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 34. pp. 565-598.

Vergeer, M., Hermans, L. and Sams, S. (2011). Online Social Networks and micro-blogging in political campaigning: the exploration of a new tool and a new campaign style. *Party Politics*. London: SAGE Publications. pp. 1-25.
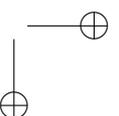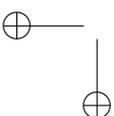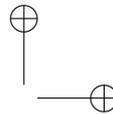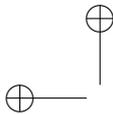
Type, visibility and functioning of participatory resources on the websites of Portuguese political parties: a preliminary analysis

Joaquín López del Ramo

Introduction

This article is part of the R & D project *New Media and Politics: citizen participation in the websites of Portuguese political parties*, (Ref. PTDC/CCI-COM/122715/2010), led by Joaquim Mateus Paulo Serra. It presents the preliminary results of the study of participatory resources on the websites of the Portuguese political parties with parliamentary representation (PSD, CDS-PP, PCP, BE and PS) and introduces the analysis tools used. The project's final aim is to understand if the participatory resources actually perform the function for which they are theoretically designed, therefore, if they are socially effective and useful.

Regarding the methods used to analyse the content, a two-dimensional recording sheet has been designed and adapted to each type of participatory resource. This sheet makes it possible to identify and categorise the resources, ascertain their visibility and Functionality and, finally, record the possible types of feedback and ways of processing the content generated from the resources.

It is important to bear in mind that the research project is still in its early stages and therefore the results shown here are subject to adjustments later. Nonetheless, the main conclusions drawn up to this point are clear and focus on the following: a) the websites of the Portuguese parliamentary parties have an acceptable quantity and variety of participatory resources, apart from access to blogs; b) They are generally clear and simple to use, although their visibility could be significantly improved; c) Based on the information on the websites themselves, and subject to further, deeper analysis, levels of user participation are low.
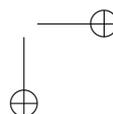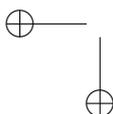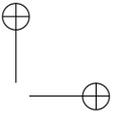
1. Political parties and the web

Political parties' interest in the Internet came relatively early on, although it was tentative and poorly defined at first. The direction and reach the Internet would have were still relatively unknown; it was a new, little-used space, which did not have its own content and did any affect public opinion. Since the emergence of the first party website in 1993, launched by the Liberal Party of Canada, the gradual evolution and development of ICT has led to more and more opportunities for communication and expression, encouraging new uses and more complex strategies. This has led to a change and a break away from traditional communication models since the emergence of the Web 2.0 concept.

We can talk about two main stages in use of the Internet in the political field. The first ran from 1993 to 2003 and was a time when use of websites and other Internet services (especially email) as dissemination and action tools for parties gradually increased. In that respect, the initiatives used by politicians in the United States were a guideline for the process. First came the websites for candidates in the 1994 Congressional elections, a phenomenon that was reproduced in Europe with the emergence of political party websites. During the presidential elections in 1996, there was another step forward: several candidates had their own website, and one of them, the Republican Bob Dole, announced the address of his website (`http://www.dole96.com`) in a debate with Clinton and encouraged the audience to visit it. It was more symbolic than anything else but it was the first public stake for political websites. By the 2000 presidential elections, all candidates had a website. George W Bush focused particularly on the Internet, although once again its actual impact was limited.

During this first stage, parties' use of the Internet by parties adhered to, above all, a strategy of "showing off" in a new technological area. The websites had static content and a one-directional design that at most included a contact email address, a tool that operated independently from the website and had been used extensively in political campaigning since 1998. In terms of the media, the importance of websites in relation to other electoral campaign channels was very much secondary, and could be said to be almost anecdotal.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the use and reach of the Internet in developed countries had become widespread, and the communications in-

frastructure continued to grow. Towards the middle of 2004, there was an extraordinary improvement in quality, which opened up the second stage of political Internet use. This improvement came with the emergence of the Web 2.0 phenomenon, which turned the web into a fully interactive, collaborative space, especially because of blogs and, later on, social networks.
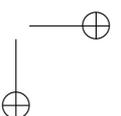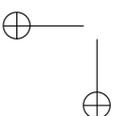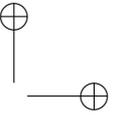
Political parties found new and powerful means of communication and quickly began to seize upon them. Howard Dean, who was a candidate in the American Democrat primaries in 2004, is considered to be the one who introduced the Web 2.0 concept to politics, since he was the first person to use blogs as a basic tool in his strategy, creating a campaign log that he used to create a dialogue, mobilise support, and increase and encourage participation. The use of Web 2.0 tools became more widespread and consolidated in the 2007 United States primaries, a situation that flourished spectacularly in Obama's 2008 presidential campaign. As Lucas (2012, p.183-184) points out, "the Democrat candidate Barack Obama is the one who best knows how to use new technology (...) The mybarackobama.com portal was at the heart; a platform that defined an electoral strategy involving millions of people that stretched to the limit the opportunities offered by the internet to create communities, encourage conversation, raise funds, etc.".

Websites have become multimedia platforms that include and link together different resources: video, audio, chat, email, comments, wikis, content syndication, blogs themselves, microblogging, etc. A variety of communities and social networks have emerged, which in a short space of time have taken on an extraordinary size. This entire network is at the same time independent and interconnected, as well as being constantly updated. From 2006 onwards, it became possible to read and comment on updated news stories, videos and audio recordings of public events, read blogs, and enter chats, forums and other resources on political parties' websites. However, more than a mere repository of participatory content, these websites have become conduits for a flow of communication that sees intervention from a greater variety and number of instruments. They are not isolated components, but rather form part of a common, interconnected strategy in which all the components support and complement each other.
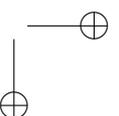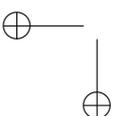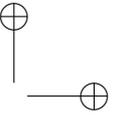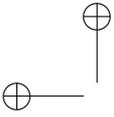
2. Interaction, personalisation and continuity

Among the capabilities and components of the so-called Web 2.0 model or participatory web model, there are two that are significant in the context of political communication and concern this project – interaction and personalisation – which should be joined by a third factor, particularly relevant in this context – continuity.

Interaction involves active participation and a change in the communication paradigm. As Cebrián Herreros (2008, p.353) points out, the traditional roles of sender and receiver switch places and even merge together to form only one, in a process of mutual action: "nobody feels like sender or receiver but rather a communicator in an exchange of messages". Users are no longer simply receivers or mechanically interacting parties, nor see themselves as such: "the great change arises from the opportunities they are given to create and produce information and messages" (*ibidem*, p. 349). The flow of communication shifts from vertical to horizontal, which means that users do not only consume information but generate it too.

Constanza (2011, p. 15) refers to the benefits of using Web 2.0 instruments in politics and states that

> "Two-directional conversations mean not only a more fluid, everyday relationship between representatives and represented, but, furthermore, the political parties that participate in these spaces manage to gain cheap, more direct access to an important channel of information about voters' needs and demands, and the same parties can also be influenced".

This more individualised and segmented view of the voter fits perfectly with Web 2.0's characteristic approach and involves the need to adapt to users' particular expectations.

In spite of their many similarities and relationships, there is an important distinction between campaign and party websites: their continuity over time, limited to the election period for the former and permanent for the latter. This is a particularly important aspect because, as Canavilhas (2012, p.23) states,

> "Knowing that the discontinuity characteristic of election cycles gives citizens the feeling that they only count when it is time to
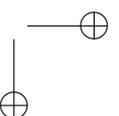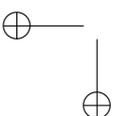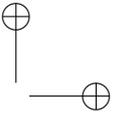
vote, any method that allows constant, personal, two-directional contact becomes an efficient way of bringing citizens back into political discussion".

Election periods are short and intense, but political development is a continuum and citizens are (or should be) always the central subject of democracy, not just at the time they exercise their right as voters.

Most previous studies on political communication through websites have centred on their interest in election periods or campaign websites (Schweitzer, 2005; Foot, Schneider & Dougherty, 2007; Dader, 2008; Smith & Raine, 2008; Sebastião, 2012; Canavilhas, 2012, etc.). The number of studies on political websites under normal conditions is much smaller; among them, in an area that is relatively nearby, we can cite the study performed by Padró-Solanet and Cardenal (2008) on Catalan parties' websites. The present study shares the same perspective. It studies websites outside election periods and analyses their participatory resources, but in this case the websites belong to Portuguese political parties with parliamentary representation: PSD, CDS-PP, PCP, BE and PS.

3. Aims

Bearing in mind that the general aim of the overall research project is "to provide theoretical and practical knowledge that allows political parties and citizens to improve political communication through websites", the following specific aims have been established for the study dealt with here:

1. To identify and classify the resources found on websites that allow content to be exchanged, created and shared.

2. To establish the levels of Presence-Variety, Visibility and Functionality of these resources in relation to their prevalence, greater capacity and ease of use, knowing which resources have the highest rating in comparison with an ideal standard and what their shortcomings are.

3. To examine how the content generated by readers is processed, according to the options that appear on the site without the need for user interaction.
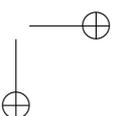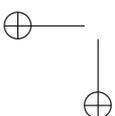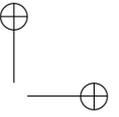
4. To ascertain the general trends in the use of the variables mentioned and to perform a comparison between the results obtained on the different websites studied.

4. Method

Participatory resources have been examined in studies that pre-date the existence of Web 2.0 tools. This is the case of Schweitzer's research (2005, p. 333), which identifies participation as one of the four main functions of German political parties' websites, linking them with "elements for generating political interest and action among internet users who are not members of the party: chats, newsgroups, online petitions, etc.". Later, in the Web 2.0 era, Padró-Sonalet and Cardenal (*ibidem*, p.55-56) also refer to participation as one of the essential aspects of party websites, and understand that it consists of three subcategories: a) openness (extent to which websites show openness to input from users - comments, suggestions, criticism); b) feedback; c) debate (to what extent the websites encourage debates monitored by visitors and not by the party). Canavilhas (*ibidem*, p. 30) discusses interaction as an element of variable communication on political websites and links it to the existence of four tools: forums, the leader's blog, presence on Facebook and Twitter, and the candidate's own profile. Caldevilla (2009, p. 35-37), on the other hand, highlights four basic communication mechanisms that he calls the "Manual for good use of 2.0 in politics: blogs, social networks, microblogging and video."

In this study, which is not bound by the objectives previously mentioned, a model has been sought, based on previous studies, to make it possible to carry out a complete, ordered, systematic analysis of the participatory resources on the websites and break down their fundamental characteristics. The aim was to obtain a model that identified the different types of participatory resources and provided a quality index for them, as in similar studies, such as the research by Navarro and Humanes (2012) in the context of corporate blogs.

With that aim, the most suitable choice of method here is content analysis. As Igartua (2006, p. 181) states, "Content analysis is a research technique that allows us to uncover the DNA of media messages, since this type of analysis lets us reproduce their architecture, understand their structure, their basic com-

ponents and the way they work." Furthermore, it is a flexible methodological mechanism that can be applied to a wide range of communication products (which clearly include the web). It also produces quantifiable results, from which it is possible to check hypotheses and draw logical inferences about the data obtained.
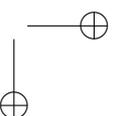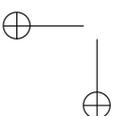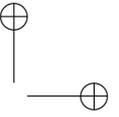
In terms of instruments, a specifically-designed, two-dimensional data recording sheet (see Annex) has been created and used as the fundamental tool in this study. The structure of the sheet may be modified and is open to future improvements, especially bearing in mind the dynamic and expanding nature of the Internet and its technology.

The data recording sheet consists of two axes:

a) The x-axis includes the different types of participatory resources and the specific variants or subtypes possible for each resource. The following resources are taken into consideration: contact details (email, telephone number and postal address), comments, suggestions/enquiries (general and specific), social networks (own profile, share and rating), blogs, surveys (general and specialised), chats/debates and RSS content syndication (general or specific content). Evaluation of the Presence-Variety aspect is made according to the inclusion of these resources on the websites.

b) The y-axis includes the other three aspects that it is relevant to check: Visibility, Functionality and Processing. Each aspect is broken down into several variables that carry descriptors in line with the objectives established. If a variable is not logical or applicable to a certain type of resource, the corresponding cell is marked with a dash.

Using a common model as a base for the sheet, in order to facilitate and clarify the data recording, individual sheets were created to analyse the different participatory resources and their particular characteristics separately. Additionally, optimal values are provided (from the user's point of view and based on the criteria of good practices for functionality accepted by the scientific community) for each variable, in order to compare the results obtained with ideal standards.

The unit of analysis is set as the website as a whole, since it has been necessary to check where the participatory resources are located within it.
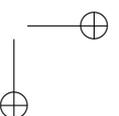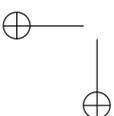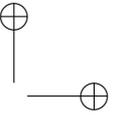
However, it is important to bear in mind that the modular, template-based design used on all websites makes it possible to include (and therefore easily locate) the resources that are present on multiple pages, within a specific structure or on the entire website. In terms of procedures, the party websites studied were visited from March 2012 onwards, to update possible variations in the participatory resources included on them. The latest data used as the basis for the results shown here were obtained during the weeks of 24-30 September and 1-5 October 2012.

5. Results

The results presented below are preliminary and shall be revised and contrasted in later stages of the research project. The results are almost exclusively related to the Presence-Variety, Visibility and Functionality aspects, since evaluation of most indicators on Processing and the most significant results in terms of interaction and feedback shall begin in the first months of 2013, using a procedure that is still in the development stage. In spite of this limitation, it was decided to include a separate section for the results obtained so far on Processing.

In order to present the results tables as clearly as possible, the participatory resources included on each website are listed and linked to the four aspects analysed: Presence-Variety, Visibility, Functionality and Processing. The calculation for each aspect is obtained by how close the values on the data recording sheet are to the optimal values for the range of variables included in it. For example, the variables sections, situation and clarity act as indicators for the Visibility category. The variables are assigned a binary value: 1 if they reach the optimal level and 0 if not. The overall index for each aspect in relation to the ideal standard is given as a percentage, with 100% as the maximum score. If different types of tools are used within the same resource (for example, the contact details resource includes email, telephone number and postal address tools) and different values are obtained for the same variable, the most common value is used.

In relation to the Presence-Variety aspect, two components are identified: a) inclusion of the participatory resource itself and b) its possible modes or variants. The criteria adopted place greater emphasis on the existence of the
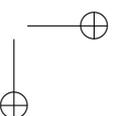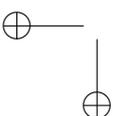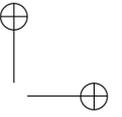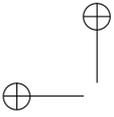
resource than on its variants, assigning equal importance to all the variants as a whole. Therefore, this aspect (PV) is measured using a weighted system that assigns 65% to inclusion of the resource on the website (E factor) and 35% to the diversity of subtypes or variants (S factor), resulting in the formula PV= (E x 65/100) + (S x 35/100). In turn, the E factor is obtained by dividing the number of variants or subtypes considered for the resource by the number that the website actually has. Finally, the total for this aspect on each website is calculated in relation to the total number of participatory resources considered by the study that have variants or sub-types (all except Comments), whether there are any or not on the website.

5.1. Results by party

Firstly, the results obtained for the websites of the five parties studied are shown. The percentage is calculated by dividing the number of indicators with optimal value by the total number of indicators assessed in the corresponding aspect for the resource in question; the positive indicators/total indicators ratio is shown in brackets.
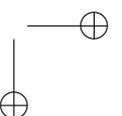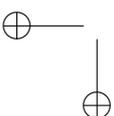
Social Democratic Party (PSD)

Resource	Presence-Variety (1)	Visibility	Functionality
Contact details	100%	33% (1/3)	83,3% (5/6) (2)
Comments	65%	33% (1/3)	71.4% (5/7)
Suggestions/enquiries	82,5%	33% (1/3)	57,1% (4/7)
Social networks	100%	66,6% (2/3)	100% (3/3)
Blogs	No	No	No
Surveys	No	No	No
Chat/debates	No	No	No
RSS Syndication	No	No	No
Average	43,4% (3)	41,1% (4)	77,9% (4)

Table 1: Adequacy level of PSD participatory resources.
Source: developed by the author.

(1) According to the PV calculation formula PV= (E x 65/100) + (S x 35/100)

(2) There is no form for sending email, it is sent through the local email manager

(3) Calculation obtained in relation to the total number of possible resources, whether they are found on the website or not

(4) Calculation obtained in relation to the resources found on the website

As Table 1 shows, this website is missing four types of participatory resources: blogs, surveys, debates and content syndication. Of those it has, the highest score is for social networks and the lowest for comments. As a whole, it has an average of less than 50% of the optimal level for the Presence-Variety aspect. The greatest shortcomings are in Visibility, which is the aspect with the lowest level. The most notable aspect is Functionality, which has the closest score to the ideal standard of all the websites studied.

Social Democratic Centre/Popular Party (CDS/PP)

Resource	Presence-Variety (1)	Visibility	Functionality
Contact details	100%	33% (1/3)	83,3% (5/6) (2)
Comments	65%	33% (1/3)	71.4% (5/7)
Suggestions/enquiries	82,5%	66,6% (2/3)	85,7% (6/7)
Social networks	88,3%	100% (3/3)	100% (3/3)
Blogs	No	No	No
Surveys	No	No	No
Chat/debates	No	No	No
RSS Syndication	No	No	No
Average	52,2% (3)	56,5% (4)	85,1% (4)

Table 2: Adequacy level of CDS/PP participatory resources.
Source: developed by the author.

(1) According to the PV calculation formula PV= (E x 65/100) + (S x 35/100)
(2)There is no form for sending email, it is sent through the local email manager
(3) Calculation obtained in relation to the total number of possible resources, whether they are found on the website or not
(4) Calculation obtained in relation to the resources found on the website

In this case, we can see that three types of resource are missing: blogs, surveys and chats. The score closest to the ideal standard is found in social networks, and the most incomplete is comments. The Presence-Variety aspect is greater than 50% but has the worst result, followed by Visibility. The Functionality aspect stands out as having notably better results than the others. The overall reading of the results shows a marked imbalance in treatment of

the different characteristics studied and, as a result, a lack of coherence in its treatment of participatory resources.

Portuguese Communist Party (PCP)

Resource	Presence-Variety (1)	Visibility	Functionality
Contact details	100%	66,6% (2/3)	83,3% (5/6)
Comments	No	No	No
Suggestions/enquiries	82,5%	66,6% (2/3)	85,7% (6/7)
Social networks	76,5%	66,6% (2/3)	66,6% (2/3)
Blogs	No	No	No
Surveys	No	No	No
Chat/debates	No	No	No
RSS Syndication	82,5%	66,6% (2/3)	–
Average	42,6% (2)	66,6% (3)	78,5% (3)

Table 3: Adequacy level of PCP participatory resources.
Source: developed by the author.

(1) According to the PV calculation formula PV= (E x 65/100) + (S x 35/100)
(2) Calculation obtained in relation to the total number of possible resources, whether they are found on the website or not
(3) CCalculation obtained in relation to the resources found on the website

The PCP website is the only one of those studied that does not give users the chance to make comments. It also lacks blogs, surveys and debates, and does not even have its own profile on social networks. This last aspect makes it a singular case, setting it completely apart from the general prevailing trends in the participatory web context. Of the resources is does have, the contact details aspect has the most favourable results and social networks the least favourable. The aspect that has the greatest shortcomings is Presence-Variety, which does not even reach 50% of the ideal standard, as can be seen in Table 3. Nevertheless, the results are much better in the other two aspects, especially Functionality. In summary, treatment of participatory resources is highly unequal, and by not having its own profile on social networks or including comments, the website has a non-transparent, even archaic character.

Left Bloc (BE)

This website (www.bloco.org) consists of several independent, interlinked sub-websites (www.esquerda.net, www.beparlamento.net and autarquias.bloco.org). The general rule for recording its results has been considering all the websites as a single unit, so if there is a resource or feature with one of its characteristics on the main website or any of the sub-websites, it is taken as valid and is recorded. If resources are repeated over the websites, the values of the main website are used as a reference.

Resource	Presence-Variety (1)	Visibility	Functionality
Contact details	100%	33,3% (1/3)	66,6% (4/6)
Comments	65%	66,6% (2/3	66,6% (4/6)
Suggestions/enquiries	82,5%	66,6% (2/3)	71,4% (5/7)
Social networks	88,3%	100% (3/3)	66,6% (2/3)
Blogs	No	No	No
Surveys	No	No	No
Chat/debates	No	No	No
RSS Syndication	82,5%	100% (3/3)	–
Average	52,2% (2)	73,2% (3)	67,8% (3)

Table 4: Adequacy level of BE participatory resources.
Source: developed by the author.

(1) According to the PV calculation formula PV= (E x 65/100) + (S x 35/100)
(2) Calculation obtained in relation to the total number of possible resources, whether they are found on the website or not
(3) Calculation obtained in relation to the resources found on the website

According to Table 4, the BE does not use three types of participatory resources: blogs, surveys and debates. Its treatment of content syndication is closest to the ideal standard and treatment of comments is furthest from it, although all the resources available overall show good levels. As in most of the websites already discussed, the lowest-scoring aspect is Presence-Variety, although it does exceed 50% of the ideal standard level. The overall results for the Visibility and Functionality aspects are quite similar, but Visibility is slightly better than Functionality, and the former is the most positive result of all.

Socialist Party (PS)

Resource	Presence-Variety (1)	Visibility	Functionality
Contact details	100%	100% (3/3)	50% (3/6)
Comments	65%	33% (1/3	71,4% (5/6)
Suggestions/enquiries	82,5%	33% (1/3)	57,1% (4/7)
Social networks	100%	100% (3/3)	100% (3/3)
Blogs	No	No	No
Surveys	82,5%	66,6% (2/3)	60% (3/5)
Chat/debates	82,5%	100%	57,1% (4/7)
RSS Syndication	82,5%	100% (3/3)	–
Average	74,3% (2)	76% (3)	65,9% (3)

Table 5: Adequacy level of PS participatory resources.
Source: developed by the author.

(1) According to the PV calculation formula PV= (E x 65/100) + (S x 35/100)
(2) Calculation obtained in relation to the total number of possible resources, whether they are found on the website or not
(3) Calculation obtained in relation to the resources found on the website

Notably different, the PS website has the greatest number of participatory resources of the five websites studied, and the only aspect missing is access to blogs. In terms of overall treatment, it can be seen that social networks have an optimal level, something that is not the case for any other resource on this or any other website studied. The resource with the worst treatment is comments, although its score is still higher than 50% of the ideal standard. The Visibility aspect is the most positively ranked, although there is a notable disparity between some resources and others. Another significant and important factor on this website is the homogeneity of the overall results, which generally show little deviation among the three aspects, giving it a solid image and strong internal coherence.

5.2. Results by resource

Here, the Presence-Variety aspect gives way to the Usage ratio, since this factor is considered to be more significant for rating the participatory resources

over the range of websites. Furthermore, the Presence-Variety aspect already includes the existence of the participatory resource itself, although at individual website level, which may create undesirable redundancy and distortion in the results.

Resource	Usage ratio	Visibility (1)	Functionality (1)	Overall treatment (2)
Contact details	100% PSD, CDS-PP, PCP, BE, PS	53,1%	73,3%	75,4%
Comments	80% PSD, CDS-PP, BE, PS	**49,6%**	70,2%	66,6%
Suggestions/ enquiries	100% PSD, CDS-PP, PCP, BE, PS	53,1%	71,4%	74,8%
Social networks	100% PSD, CDS-PP, PCP, BE, PS	93,3%	**86,6%**	**93,3%**
Blogs	0%	No	No	–
Surveys	20% PS	66,6%	60%	**48,8%**
Chat/debates	20% PS	**100%**	**57,1%**	59%
RSS Syndication	80% CDS-PP, PCP, BE, PS	79,1%	–	79,5%

Table 6: Adequacy levels of participatory resource on the range of websites studied.

Source: developed by the author.

(1) Calculation obtained from the sum of all the websites on which this participatory resource is found

(2) The average is obtained from the Usage ratio, Visibility and Functionality

Note: Light shading indicates the highest scores, and dark shading indicates the lowest scores.

A first look at the data in Table 6 shows that the participatory content resources found on all the websites are: contact details, suggestions/enquiries and social networks. Comments and content syndication take in second place (80% of the websites). Surveys and debates are only found on the PS website, which represents 20% of the sample. The most conspicuous result is perhaps the absence of links with blogs on all websites, probably because this resource is more commonly used in the political sphere as a log for candidates' campaigns and are used, therefore, mostly during election periods and require continuity at normal times.

Analysing the results of the different resources, we can see that social networks are the resource that receives the best treatment on the websites of Portuguese political parties (93.3% of ideal standard level). This matches the massive scope and enormous prominence they currently enjoy. Social network scores show high adequacy levels in all the variables considered. It is the best-positioned resource in terms of Functionality, but its greatest strengths are in Usage ratio and Visibility. The difference in comparison with the other resources is substantial: almost 20 percentage points higher than the next resource.

After social networks, there are three resources with relatively similar scores, whose results would be remarkable if they were represented on a decimal scale. RSS content syndication is the second-best treated overall (79.5%), although it suffers by not being used on 100% of websites. The Functionality aspect is not assessed because of the resource's own logical design, and it has a considerable Visibility level. The contact details aspect is in third place (75.4%) in the study and, like social networks, it also features on all the websites studied. They have a good Functionality score but suffer in terms of Visibility, although their score can be considered to be within an acceptable limit. Suggestions/enquiries are another resource found on all the websites and have an adequacy level of 74.8%. Their main strong point is Functionality and once again there is a negative imbalance in the Visibility aspect.

In the middle of the scale we find comments, whose Usage ratio is 80% of websites. The Functionality of this resource is good, although there is a very high imbalance in relation to Visibility, which is treated poorly, at lower than 50% of the ideal standard level.

Surveys and debates are used infrequently, and are limited to the PS website. This is the main negative restriction for the two resources, since in both Visibility and, to a lesser extent, Functionality, its results are at average levels.

5.3. Overall results

Party	Aspects			Totals
	Presence-Variety (1)	Visibility	Functionality	
PSD	43.4%	41.1%	77.9%	54.1%
CSD-PP	52.2%	56.5%	85.1%	64.6%
PCP	42.6%	66.6 %	78.5%	62.5%
BE	52.2%	73.2%	67.8%	64.4%
PS	74.3%	76%	65.9%	71.9%
Average	52.9%	62.6%	75%	63.5%

Table 7: Adequacy level for participatory resources by category.
Source: developed by the author.

Note: Light shading indicates the highest scores, and dark shading indicates the lowest scores.

Reading Table 7 reveals that the three aspects of participatory content taken into consideration exceed 50% of the optimal level. The aspect with the highest score is Functionality, followed by Visibility and Presence-Variety, and the best total adequacy level for the whole range measured is 63.5%.

By party, the PS results stand out, since this website has the best scores in two of the three aspects studied: Presence-Variety and Visibility. This is particularly notable for the former, which has an enormous difference in relation to the other websites, with an advantage of more than 20 percentage points. Paradoxically, it has the lowest level for Functionality. It also has the highest overall score of the websites studied: 71.9%.

The CDS-PP website has the best result for Functionality, which has the highest adequacy score of the entire table. Its main shortfall is in the Presence-Variety aspect, and its overall score is 64.6%, the second best of all the websites studied.

The BE website does not have the highest or lowest scores in any aspect, although it suffers rather in Presence-Variety. In any case, it does not have very significant imbalances in terms of treatment. Its overall score is 64.4%, the third in descending order.

The PCP has the lowest score in the Presence-Variety area, where it has the greatest shortcomings, although it has a good score in Functionality. Its overall score is 62.5%, fourth in descending order.
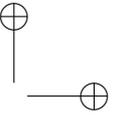
Finally, the PSD website has the lowest overall score of the group, at 54.1%. Its worst aspect is Visibility, which has the lowest score of the entire table.

For the Processing aspect, which is dealt with separately from the others for the reasons mentioned above, the results available at the moment only deal with one of the participatory resources: Comments. Within that category, it deals with the variables Publication (Yes/No), Average (of the last 10 commented entries), Comment rating (Yes/No), Identification of the author (Yes/No) and Possibility to reply (Yes/No). The results obtained in this indicator are distributed among the parties in the following way:

PSD: 60% (Ratio: 3 scored variables of 5 studied)

CDS-PP: 60% (Ratio: 3 scored variables of 5 studied)

PCP: 0%

BE: 80% (Ratio: 4 scored variables of 5 studied)

PS: 60% (Ratio: 3 scored variables of 5 studied)

As these figures show, adequacy levels exceed 50% in all cases except the PCP website, since it does not allow comments to be made. Nonetheless, it is important to point out a very significant detail, which is the fact that only one of the websites studied (Left Bloc) had comments on the last 10 entries published, and even so, it had a low average: only 20%. Although the data is still incomplete and may change, it still illustrates low citizen participation levels. This may be due to different reasons, both internal to the web or external, such as a social trend towards low use of party websites, as some studies carried out on the matter show. This is the case in a study performed in Spain on the consumption of political information on the Internet (Anduiza et al., 2010), referring to the year 2007. It showed that among Internet users, 55% never use it to obtain information about politics, and among those who do, 81% have never visited a party website.

7. General conclusions

1. The inclusion of participatory resources is widespread over the range of websites studied, although there are differences in number and characteristics. Only three of the eight resources considered by the study are found on all party websites: contact details, suggestions and social networks, while comments
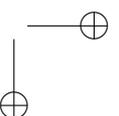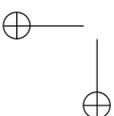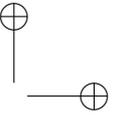
and content syndication are found on 80% of websites, forums and surveys appear on only one, and blogs on none at all.

2. The best-treated participatory resource, whose score is close to what may be considered optimal level, is social networks, which is in itself an enlightening result in terms of the value assigned to them by parties as a political tool. Some distance below, but also at a reasonable level, we find content syndication, contact details and suggestions, and comments slightly below. Surveys and debates are the least used resources, and they are penalised as a result.

3. Of the three aspects focused on by the study, the one with the highest adequacy score is Functionality, which is characterised in general by its simplicity and homogeneity. Visibility of the resources varies greatly between resources and websites; it would need to be improved to ensure that they were easier and quicker to use. The aspect with the poorest result is Presence-Variety, especially because of the lack of important participatory tools on several parties' websites already mentioned.

4. In terms of the Processing aspect, the indicators evaluated reveal a very notable trend: a very low level of participation (or publication) in terms of comments on news stories in the sample used. Only one of the websites studied (BE) uses this technique, and even then only infrequently. A factor that explains the low number and frequency of comments, as well as the almost non-existence of debates on the websites, is the possible effect that social networks have in replacing these resources. It seems that the exchange of political opinions on the Internet has shifted from websites to social networks, because of their enormous prevalence, ease of use and intrinsically conversational nature.

5. Of all the websites studied, the PS website stands a long way out from the others, since it includes the greatest number of participatory resources, treats them very well in all their different aspects and maintains internal coherence, while there are more shortcomings and imbalances in the others. In spite of this, the adequacy score for all websites exceeds the 50% threshold. Although the website with the lowest overall score is the PSD website, there are significant negative points on both the BE and PCP websites. The former for its inconsistent structure, since it actually consists of one main website and three independent sub-websites, which creates dispersion and a certain incoherence in the participatory resources. For the PCP website, the lack of
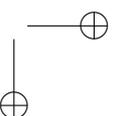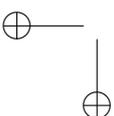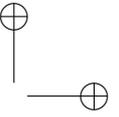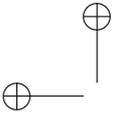
comments and its own profile on social networks gives it a restrictive and opaque nature that does not fit the naturally open approach of Web 2.0.

8. Discussion

It has already been made clear in previous sections that the results shown here are only the result of the first part of the *New Media and Politics: citizen participation in the websites of Portuguese political parties* research project and they are, therefore, subject to further revision and updates. There is a possibility of deepening research on new aspects, and considering some other variants and specific features of participatory resources that have not been dealt with now for logical time and space restrictions, and there will be time to include them later.

The results collected here refer to an analysis of data observable on the surface of the websites as simple, passive users. They can be used to get to know the participatory resources that exist, how they are presented, if they are easy or not to access and how they work. The major stage of the project starts now, and will focus on getting to know the real value of using them. This involves testing how user-generated content is processed, evaluating the types and level of feedback given, the types of answers to differently-focused questions and the way in which this content is published (or not) on the website itself. It means empirically proving to what extent the Web 2.0 paradigm is met on political party websites or if it is merely a superficial "window dressing"strategy that follows current trends.

References

Anduiza, E., Cantijoch, M., Colombo, C., Gallego, A, and Salcedo, J. (2010). Los usos políticos de Internet en España. In *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas* nº129, 133-146.

Caldevilla Domínguez, David, (2009). Democracia 2.0: La política se introduce en las redes sociales. *Pensar la Publicidad*, III (2), 31-48.

Canavilhas, J. (2012). E-campanhas eleitorais em Portugal: a Internet nas Europeias de 2009. In Rita Figueiras (org). *Os Media e as Eleições:*
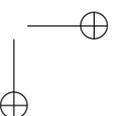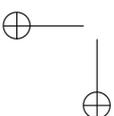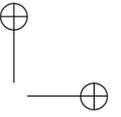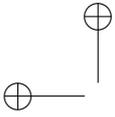
europeias, legislativas e autárquicas de 2009, (pp. 23-42). Lisboa: Universidade Católica Editora.

Cebrián Herreros, Mariano (2008). La Web 2.0 como red social de comunicación e Información. *Estudios sobre el Mensaje Periodístico*, 14, 345-361.

Dader, J.L. (2009). Ciberpolítica en los websites de los partidos políticos. La experiencia de las elecciones 2008 en España ante las tendencias transnacionales. *Revista de Sociología e Política*. 17 (34), 45-62. Accessed at www.scielo.br.

Foot, K., Schneider, S. & Dougherty, M. (2007). Online structure for political action in the 2004 US congressional electoral web sphere. In Kluver, R., Jankowski, N. Foot, K. and Scheider, S. (eds) *The Internet and National Elections: A Comparative Study of Web Campaigning* (pp. 92-104). London. Routledge.

Igartua, J.J. (2006). *Métodos cuantitativos de investigación en comunicación*. Barcelona, Editorial Bosch.

Lucas, M.A. (2012). Campaña en la Red. Estrategias de marketing electoral en Internet. *REDMARKA UIMA-Universidad de A Coruña – CIECID*, 8 (1), 177-199. Accessed at: www.redmarka.org.

Mazzina, Constanza (2011). New information and communication technologies and their impact on new politics. *Notas D Marketing*, 1 (1), 13-22.

Navarro Ruiz, Cristina and Humanes, Mª Luisa (2012). Los blogs corporativos en las empresas españolas. Diseño y aplicación de un índice de calidad (ICB). *Comunicación y Sociedad* (In press).

Padró-Solanet, A. and Cardenal, A.S.(2008). Partidos y política en Internet: un análisis de los websites de los partidos políticos catalanes. *IDP. Revista de Internet, Derecho y Politica*, 6, 46-65.

Pedro Sebastião, Sonia (2011). *The cases of the Portuguese Social Democratic Party (PSD) and the Socialist Party (PS) in the 2009 Parliament Campaign*. (1-15) In: *EUPRERA Spring Symposium 2011*. Accessed at: www.euprera.org.
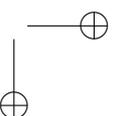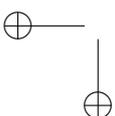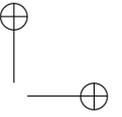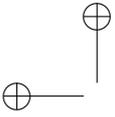
Schweiter, Johanna (2005). Election Campaining Online: German Party Websites in the 2002 National Elections. *European Journal of Communication*, Vol 20, 3, 327-351.

Smith A. & Rainie, L. (2008). Pew Internet and Americam Life PProject: The Internet and the 200 election. Accessed at: www.pewinternet.org.
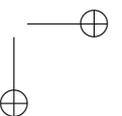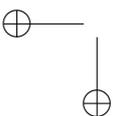
Annex: Data recording sheet

Type or resource: Contact details		Email	Telephone number	Postal address
Visibility	Sections (1)	All	All	All
	Location (2)	Above the fold	Above the fold	Above the fold
	Clarity (3)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Functionality	Requires registration	No	-	-
	Addressee (4)	Identified	-	-
	Types of field	Least variety (no more than text boxes)	-	-
	Writing area	Expandable	-	-
	Sent confirmation	U	-	-
	Information requested (* compulsory)	No more than 2-3: name or subject, email address, message	-	-
	Pre-set answers	No	-	-
Processing	Reply	Yes	-	-
	Reply time limit	Shortest	-	-
	Reply channel	Indifferent	-	-
	Publication	Yes	-	-
	Deadline	Shortest	-	-

(1) Specific pages or sections where this resource appears
(2) Location of the resource on the page (above or below the fold)
(3) If access is clear: legible or identifiable
(4) If it shows the name/position to whom the message is addressed

Type of resource: Comments		
Visibility	Sections (1)	All
	Location (2)	Above the fold
	Clarity (3)	Yes
Functionality	Requires registration	No
	Addressee (4)	Identified
	Types of field	Least variety (no more than text boxes)
	Writing area	Expandable
	Sent confirmation	Yes
	Information requested (* compulsory)	No more than 2-3: name or subject, email address, message
	Pre-set answers	No
	Specifies limitations	Yes
Processing	Are comments published?	Yes
	Average (5)	Highest
	Maximum number published (6)	Highest
	Type of opinion given	All types
	Rating/Comment rating	Yes
	Is author identified?	Yes
	Are authors regular participants? (7)	No (for an adequate rating, it must be ascertained if the space is dominated by regulars and if there are few or many regulars)
	Possible to reply?	Yes
	Is our comment published?	Yes
	Publishing deadline	Shortest

(1) Specific pages or sections where this resource appears

(2) Location of the resource on the page (above or below the fold)

(3) If access is clear: legible or identifiable

(4) If it shows the name/position of the person to whom the message is addressed

(5) Average on the last 10 news stories/topics published on the website: measures the activity level

(6) Maximum number of comments per entry

(7) If it is the same people who participate frequently

Type of resource: Suggestions/enquiries		General	Specific
Specific addressee:		Yes	Yes
Visibility	Sections (1)	All	All
	Location (2)	Above the fold	"
	Clarity (3)	Yes	"
Functionality	Requires registration	No	"
	Addressee (4)	Identified	"
	Types of field	Least variety (no more than text boxes)	"
	Writing area	Expandable	"
	Sent confirmation	Yes	"
	Information requested (* compulsory)	No more than 2-3: name or subject, email address, message	"
	Pre-set answers	No	"
	Limited topics	No	"
Processing	Are comments published?	Yes	"
	Publication frequency	Lowest	"
	Maximum number published (5)	Highest	"
	Type of opinion given	All types	"
	Is author identified?	Yes	"
	Are authors regular participants? (6)	No (for an adequate rating, it must be ascertained if the space is dominated by regulars and if there are few or many regulars)	
	Commitment to replying	Yes	"
	Are there replies?	Yes	"
	Deadline for reply	Shortest	"
	Channel for reply	Indifferent	"
	Is our suggestion published? Deadline	Yes, shortest	"
	Is our suggestion implemented?	Yes	"

(1) Specific pages or sections where this resource appears

(2) Location of the resource on the page (above or below the fold)

(3) If access is clear: legible or identifiable

(4) If it shows the name/position of the person to whom the message is addressed

(5) Maximum number of suggestions per topic/entry

(6) If it is the same people who participate frequently

Type of resource: Social networks				
	Type of use:	**Own profile**	**Share**	**Rating ("Likes")**
	Networks	Yes	Idem	Idem
	Type of content (share)	-	Greatest variety	-
Visibility	Sections (1)	All	"	"
	Location (2)	Above the fold	"	"
	Clarity (3)	Yes	"	"
Functionality	Clearly defined function (4)	Yes	"	"
	Widgets (identifying networks) (5)	Yes	"	"
	Separate window (6)	Yes	"	"
Processing	Since these tools run on their own web space, outside the party website, they are not analysed here. The study should include an examination of management by the party's community manager or person responsible for each social network on which the party has its own profile.			

(1) Specific pages or sections where this resource appears

(2) Location of the resource on the page (above or below the fold)

(3) If access is clear: legible or identifiable

(4) If there is any indication so that users know if they are accessing networks to share/disseminate or networks with a party profile

(5) If Widgets are published to identify the networks where the party has its own profile, with direct access to its content

(6) If link to access to the network opens in the same window/tab or if it opens in a new one.

Type of resource: Blogs		
Visibility	Sections (1)	**All**
	Location (2)	**Above the fold**
	Clarity (3)	**Yes**
Functionality	Separate window (4)	**Yes**
Processing	Since this is a separate web space, this aspect is not analysed here.	

(1) Specific pages or sections where this resource appears
(2) Location of the resource on the page (above or below the fold)
(3) If access is clear: legible or identifiable
(4) If link to access to the network opens in the same window/tab or if it opens in a new one.

| Type of resource: Surveys		General	Specialised
Topic:		-	Greatest variety
Date		Greatest quantity	Idem
Visibility	Pages (1)	All	"
	Location (2)	Above the fold	"
	Clarity (3)	Yes	"
Functionality	Are surveys launched?	Yes	"
	Survey frequency	Highest	
	Requires registration	No	"
	Fields grouped by category	Yes	"
	Length greater than 1 screen	No	"
	Adaptation fields-questions	Yes: all fields	"
	Writing area	Expandable	"
	Sent confirmation	Yes	"
	Information requested (* compulsory)	No more than 2: name, email address	"
	Pre-set answers	No	
Processing	Are the results published? Deadline	Yes, shortest	"
	Visibility of the results (4)	Correct	
	Do the results coincide with the party line? How often? (5)	Varied	"

(1) Specific pages or sections where this resource appears

(2) Location of the resource on the page (above or below the fold)

(3) If access is clear: legible or identifiable

(4) The same parameters as the Visibility section but in reference to publishing results

(5) If the results of several surveys are published, quantify how often they coincide with the party line.

Type of resource: Chat/debates		General	Specific topic
	Date	Highest frequency	Idem
Visibility	Pages (1)	All	"
	Location (2)	Above the fold	"
	Clarity (3)	Yes	"
Functionality	Requires registration	No	"
	Addressee (4)	Identified	"
	Types of field	Least variety (no more than text boxes)	"
	Writing area	Expandable	"
	Information requested (* compulsory)	No more than 2: name, message	"
	Pre-set answers	No	"
Processing	Are chats and debates published with threads and posts?	Yes	"
	Publication frequency	Highest	"
	Maximum number published (5)	Highest	"
	Type of opinion given	All types	"
	Is author identified?	Yes	"
	Are authors regular participants? (6)	No (for an adequate rating, it must be ascertained if the space is dominated by regulars and if there are few or many regulars)	"
	Is there an answer to our post?	Yes	"
	Deadline for reply	Shortest	"
	Who replies? (7)	All types of trend	"
	Dominating trend (8)	Neutrality	"

(1) Specific pages or sections where this resource appears
(2) Location of the resource on the page (above or below the fold)
(3) If access is clear: legible or identifiable
(4) If it shows the name/position of the person to whom the message is addressed
(5) Maximum number of replies per entry/chat or debate topic
(6) If it is the same people who participate frequently
(7) Indicate if it is an administrator, in favour or against the content of our post
(8) If it is dominated by party policy, those against party policy or neither in particular

Type of resource: Content syndication		General syndication	Specialised syndication
	Syndication topic	Greatest variety	Idem
	Aggregators/Technology	Greatest variety	"
Visibility	Pages (1)	All	"
	Location (2)	Above the fold	"
	Clarity (3)	Yes	"

(1) Specific pages or sections where this resource appears

(2) Location of the resource on the page (above or below the fold)

(3) If access is clear: legible or identifiable
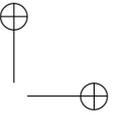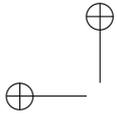
CONTRIBUTORS

## Web 2.0 and Political Participation

About the Editors

J. Paulo Serra has a Graduation in Philosophy, a Master's Degree and PhD in Communication Sciences. He is Professor at the Department of Communication Sciences of University of Beira Interior (Portugal), researcher in the Online Communication Lab (Labcom), and Director of the PhD in Communication Sciences (UBI). He authored the books *Information as Utopia* (1998), *Information and Sense* (2003) and *Communication Theory Handbook* (2008), and co-authored the book *Information and Persuasion on the Web* (2009). Along with journal articles and book chapters, he recently co-edited the books *Rhetoric and Mediation: From Writing to the Internet* (2008), *Pragmatics: Advertising and Marketing* (2011), and *Philosophies of Communication* (2011). He is currently leading the research project "New media and politics".

Eduardo Camilo has a PhD in Communication Sciences, University of Beira Interior. Currently he is a researcher at Labcom – Communication Lab/Universidade da Beira Interior – In the fields of strategic communication (political communication and advertising). He has written several books about strategic communication, local power communication strategies as well as advertising discursivity and theories.

Gisela Gonçalves has a PhD in Communication Sciences from the University of Beira Interior (Covilhã, Portugal) where she is the Coordinator of the Master of Strategic Communication and Lecturer in Public Relations. She is an integrated researcher at LabCom – Online communication Lab, and a team member of the research project "New Media and Politics". Her main areas of interest are Public Relations Theories, Communication Ethics and
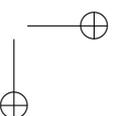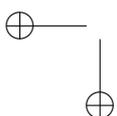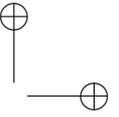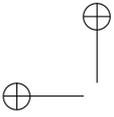
Professional Ethics. Along with journal articles and book chapters, her more recent publication includes *Public relations ethics* (2013), and the co-edited volume *Organizational and Strategic Communication: European perspectives* (2013). In 2012 she was elected Chair of the 'Organizational and Strategic Communication' Section of the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA).

Notes on Contributors

António Fidalgo is full Professor of Communication Sciences at the University of Beira Interior and Director of LabCom – On line communication Lab. He studied philosophy in Lisbon, Portugal and Wurzburg, Germany, where he obtained his PhD in the area of phenomenology. He has developed research in the areas of Semiotics, Rhetoric, Journalism and New Media, and Theories of Culture.

Carlos Jalali (D.Phil, Oxford) is a lecturer at University of Aveiro, where he coordinates the master in Political Sciences. His main areas of research are: Portuguese political institutions in a comparative perspective; political parties and systems; and electoral behaviour. He was the coordinator of the FCT research project "Political Patronage in Portugal". His recent publications include *Political parties and Democracy in Portugal, 1974-2005*, and the co-edited volume *State, Society and Public Administration*.

Catarina Silva is a journalist. She has a graduation in Communication and a Master Degree in Political Science from the University of Aveiro. Her research focuses on the area of online political communication, party websites analysis and professionalization of strategic political communication.

Daniela Fonseca has a graduation in Media Studies from University of Minho, Braga, and a Master Degree in Journalism. She is finishing a PhD thesis on "The role of Public Relations in the modernization of Portuguese Unions", in the University of Beira Interior, Covilhã. She has worked for two years as a communication advisor for the North of Portugal Social and Civil
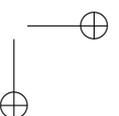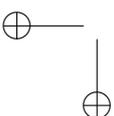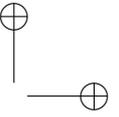
Servants Union (STFPSN), in Porto. Currently, she teaches in the University
of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro.

Elsa Santos has a graduation in Social Communication and a Master De-
gree in Communication and Journalism from the University of Coimbra. She
worked as a journalist, in television and radio, and later in advertising and so-
cial networking manager. Currently, she teaches marketing and advertising in
polytechnic higher education. Since 2012, she is a PhD student and researcher
at LabCom/ University of Beira Interior, Covilhã.

Giovandro Ferreira is Professor and Director of the School of Communi-
cation at the University Federal da Baia (UFBA) and coordinator of the Center
for Communication, Democracy and Citizenship. He has a PhD in Informa-
tion Sciences, from the French Institute of Press and Communication, Univer-
sity Paris 2 (Panthéon-Assas). He is a Professor in the graduate programmes
of Communication and Contemporary Culture at UFBA.

Joaquin Lópes del Ramo is professor at the School of Communication,
University Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid. He has a Phd in Jounalism and a wide
experience in funded research projects about educative innovation. His area of
expertise focuses on journalistic information, web design, usability, interfaces
and interaction.

Nuno Francisco is a journalist, currently occupying the position of Di-
rector at the *Jornal do Fundão*. He holds a PhD in Communication Sciences
with a thesis entitled "Television and Cultural Consumptions", granted by the
University of Beira Interior. He teaches at the Department of Communication
and Arts in the University of Beira Interior.

Peter Dahlgren is professor emeritus at the Dept. of Communication and
Media, Lund University, Sweden. His work focuses on media and democracy,
using the horizons of late modern social and cultural theory. Most recently he
has focused on the internet and civic identities, looking at how the net, com-
bined with other factors, can promote or hinder civic participation, especially
among young people. He is active in European academic networks and has
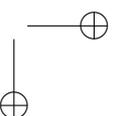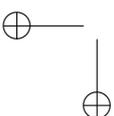
also been a visiting scholar at several universities in Paris, Grenoble, Stirling, South Africa, as well as at the Annenberg School for Communication. Along with journal articles and book chapters, his recent publications include *Media and Political Engagement* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), and the co-edited volume *Young People, ICTs and Democracy* (Nordicom, 2010), as well as the collection *Young Citizens and New Media* (Routledge, 2007).

Rachel Gibson joined the Institute for Social Change in December 2007 having held previous appointments as Professor of New Media Studies at the University of Leicester, Senior Research Fellow in the ACSPRI Centre for Social Research (ACSR) in the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University and Lecturer in politics at the University of Salford. Completed her PhD thesis on the rise of anti-immigrant parties in Western Europe in the late 20th century at Texas A&M University in the US. She have also had held visiting research positions at the Mannheim Centre for European Social Research (MZES) and at the Department of Politics, University of Durham. She have been a Principal Investigator on the Australian Election Study (AES) and the Australian Survey of Social Attitudes (AuSSA) and on a series of Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and Australian Research Council (ARC) funded projects dealing with the impact of the new media on politics. She is a member of the Editorial Board of a range of political science and new media journals including the Journal of Elections, Public Opinon and Parties, the Journal of Information Technology and Politics, Information Polity and the Australian Journal of Political Science and serve as a reviewer for funding bodies including the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), the Leverhulme Trust and the British Academy.

Rodolfo Silva has a graduation in Communication Sciences and a Master Degree in Communication Sciences from the University of Beira Interior. He worked as journalist for nine years. Currently, he is a research assistant in the FEDER European project "Public and Private in Mobile Communications" at LabCom – Laboratory of Online Communication in University of Beira Interior, Portugal. Since 2009, he is a PhD student at University of Beira Interior. His main areas of research are journalism e Internet.
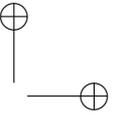
Rosália Rodrigues has a graduation in Communication Sciences from the University of Beira Interior where she is currently a doctoral student. Her main area of research is online political communication, especially the interactivity of Portuguese political websites. She has taught Cyberculture, Semiology and political Systems and Media at the University of Beira Interior.