8.

Party-citizen online challenges: Portuguese parties' Facebook usage and audience engagement

Sofia Serra-Silva
Diana Dias Carvalho
Júlio Fazendeiro

INTRODUCTION

Despite the formal and theoretical importance of political parties and their roles in representative democracies, several opinion polls have been revealing signs of political apathy, disaffection and discontent among European citizens regarding political institutions; and parties are not immune to this trend (Norris 1999; Dalton and Wattenberg 2000; Dalton 2004; Pharr, Putnam and Dalton 2000; Torcal and Montero 2006; Inglehart 2016). This has led institutions to re-evaluate their current practices and seek new approaches to connect with citizens, by developing strategies to increase political participation, including ways to take advantage of new technologies and the internet to reach the "digital natives" (Furlong 2009). Accordingly, many political actors and institutions across the world have undergone considerable reforms over the last two decades, more recently by using internet channels and tools, to support a deepening of public engagement (IPU 2009; Hansard Society 2011; Leston-Bandeira 2009).

Currently, a myriad of informational and communicative possibilities are available for politicians and the public, such as resorting to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Skeptics and cyber optimists have been discussing the consequences of the Internet on democratic politics. Skeptics believe that the rise of the internet will not bring about any significant changes. This so-called normalization thesis contends that, contrary to predictions that it would revolutionize our everyday lives, expansion of the Web has done little more than provide a new medium through which established patterns, in all aspects of social life, persist (Margolis and Resnick 2000, 73). While "*cyberoptimists*" believe that in an era of almost unlimited Internet access, citizens can be better informed of public issues. Thus, the Internet has the potential to strengthen the connection between the public and intermediary organizations, including political parties and social movements. The public space would be reactivated through these new forms of vertical and horizontal communication without hierarchies (Norris 2011).

However, the full impact of the new ICT on parties and the political process is not yet clear (Gibson and Ward 2010), as well as whether digital technologies are widening the pool of the politically active or exacerbating existing democratic biases (Cantijoch et al. 2015). Nevertheless, although no consensus has been delivered, literature increasingly points to the conclusion of a positive but small impact of Internet use on engagement (Boulianne 2009).

Nonetheless, the widespread use of Internet and ICT among citizens is undeniable. And with the transition from a one-way top down channel (Web 1.0) to a more conversational and interactive tool (Web 2.0), social media are becoming more important. In particular among youth who satisfy their above-average political interests via the internet (Emmer et al. 2011). *Millennials* (individuals born after 1980 and until about 2000) are heavy users of social media, relying on platforms such as Facebook (FB) and Twitter to connect, and spend much more time on their mobile devices and on the web. However, political online communication is no longer a marginal phenomenon among young, urban, and high-income cohorts, but a widely known and regularly practiced one (Klinger 2013).

In a closed list and party-based system, such as the Portuguese (Leston-Bandeira 2009), the political party plays a major role in spelling out politics, since there are no incentives for candidates to build a personal image. Therefore, parties are in charge of the overall communication strategies in the election and non-election periods. Within this framework, along with the widespread access of Internet and social media in Portugal, this study resorts to a social media metrics set to assess *how Portuguese political parties use social media and how people engage with parties online.* We analyse parties' FB usage across a time span of 7 years (2010-2017) and examine how users' engage with parties online.

Portugal has often been somewhat marginalized in the study of parties' online communication strategies. The increase in ICT usage in the country (internet diffusion increased by 32.3% between 2005 and 2016), along with the current presence of all parties in one or more social media platforms, makes it a worthy case study. While plenty of research has provided important insights on the use of the Internet by political parties during election campaigns, effectively providing us with periodically skewed data, recent research has been focusing on "permanent" (Jackson and Lilleker 2004) or "postmodern" (Vaccari 2008) campaigning – indicating the need to look at these activities beyond election season. As we consider a time span of 7 years (2010-2017), this study contributes to this recent and growing literature by approaching the ways in which Portuguese parties use FB as a communication tool and how the public responds to this new way of political communication. This chapter contributes to the volume's purpose of addressing the contemporary challenges to citizenship by looking at the current relationship between parties and citizens in the digital context, a space where political action and active citizenship is increasingly undertaken. The chapter is structured in three main

sections. The first reviews the literature on how political parties use ICT and social media. The second outlines the methodological phases of the empirical study. Finally, the third presents the findings and discussion.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: POLITICAL PARTIES AND INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

Today parties are no longer the fulcrum of political life in democracies. Citizens can now influence the decision-making process without going through a party by forming interest groups (Dalton et al. 2003). Furthermore, there is a consensus around the idea that parties are experiencing hard times and their representative functions do not work as they used to (Mair 2013). There is a clear decline in party membership (Katz et al. 1992; Mair and van Biezen 2001; Delwit 2011; van Biezen, Mair and Poguntke 2012), concomitant with a growth in popular disenchantment with parties and a citizen disengagement with politics (Gallagher et. al. 2005; Mair 2006, 2013; van Biezen and T. Poguntke 2014). Likewise, in Portugal political parties are also experiencing a decline in citizens' support (Lopes and Freire 2002; Martins 2004; Magalhães 2006; Jalali 2007; Lisi 2011; Fazendeiro 2017). Additionally, political distance seems to have increased in recent times, suggesting that the crisis has reinforced the general feeling of political apathy (Lobo et al. 2015).

Regardless, parties continue to perform to some extent several important functions in democracies, namely "to integrate and, if necessary, to mobilize the citizenry; to articulate and aggregate interests, and then to translate these into public policy; to recruit and promote political leaders, and to organize the parliament, the government and the key institutions of the state" (Mair 2013, 203). Even if they are no longer the only vehicles of citizens' representation, parties remain critical actors in democratic politics.

Today, at the same time citizens recoil from participation within formal organized institutions (Pickard, Nativel, and Portier 2012), there is a far vaster array of political action and activity undertaken, including online forms of action. The online participatory experience (Caron 2014) takes many shapes: "the use of Facebook and other social media to follow candidates and parties, discuss political issues, to organize various political actions, political expression on blogs, Twitter and YouTube" (Gallant 2018, 79). For instance, in the United States the percentage of citizens following candidates, politicians,

or political parties on social media increased from 6% of registered voters in 2010 to 16% in 2014.

The use of ICTs and the internet by political actors is not a new phenomenon. Especially since the mid-1990s, political actors have begun to use Internet-based tools such as e-mail and websites (Norris 2001). When compared with traditional media, the internet offers the potential to give politicians direct contact with voters; create ongoing dialogue; reach different voter groups more easily; inform and mobilize voters more effectively; increase visibility; and decentralize the party campaigning. In this cyber optimist perspective, Internet increases the opportunities of interaction and is considered a tool capable of revitalizing the citizen-based democracy and challenging the monopoly of the existing political hierarchies by empowering and amplifying the ordinary people (Rheingold 1993; Taylor and Burt 1999).

Political actors, including political parties, have not been indifferent to the opportunities offered by the innovative technologies and began to use them to achieve their goals. However, some studies have been showing how political parties and actors have been using the internet as another top-down channel to provide information and communication, and less as a two-way platform to encourage interaction, discussion and dialogue (Baxter et al. 2011; Klinger 2013; Magin et al 2017). Even though Internet facilitates direct communication between leaders and ordinary members (Heidar and Saglie 2003), many political actors show some reluctance to respond to questions or engage in interactive online communication or discussions with the electorate (Baxter et al. 2011). Observing election campaigns worldwide, it is notorious that politicians are considering the internet a "Swiss Army Knife of political communication" (Lachapelle and Maarek 2015, 175), in which they can communicate bypassing party organization or any other hurdles posed by journalists or media gatekeepers. Margetts' "Cyber-Parties" (2006, 530) clearly displays how parties could benefit from the use of ICTs to "strengthen the relationship between voters and party rather than traditional notions of membership". Probably structuring what Gibson (2015) calls "citizen campaigners", which are citizens who do not belong to the party but perform several actions through the web that help parties and their campaigns. Maybe this is part of the solution parties have found to address their decline and loss of relevance in contemporary societies (Bardi et al. 2014, 8).

Even though there is broad agreement among researchers that institutional political actors have missed opportunities offered by the internet, maybe it

is too soon to draw this kind of conclusion (Vaccari 2013). It is known that parties are more willing to publish information than allow it to be discussed, meaning that parties (like others political actors) are very cautious when allowing citizens, or even members, to discuss and participate in political issues (Nixon, Ward, and Gibson, 2003). As in the earlier days when TV dominated the media communication, parties are slowly adapting to the ICT and Web 2.0[1], instead of radically changing the way they communicate with their sympathizers. In Cristian Vaccari words, "early conclusions about the adoption of digital media by political actors may simply have been premature because fully implementing innovations throughout complex organizations requires time" (Vaccari 2013, 50).

Due to the role of social media in the exposure of information, consumption of news, and network contagiousness, these platforms can be seen as ways to increase opportunities to participate in civic and political life or to promote citizens' knowledge of political information; having therefore a positive impact on political participation (Boulianne, 2015). Social networking sites have been representing new dynamics of political participation: granting politicians new ways of communication and interacting with followers, and offering citizens more opportunities of information exposure and political discussion, as well as allowing an evaluation through a community perspective (Douglas et al. 2015). Via FB, parties address their messages directly to the electorate (Bimber and Davis 2003), a strategy particularly important for small and newer parties (Lilleker et al. 2015; Larsson 2016).

Unlike communication via mass media, FB provides a feedback channel, thereby enabling parties to engage in discussions with voters, which might provide valuable information for modifying their campaign strategies. FB provides tools for target-audience-specific mobilization (e.g., photos and videos that are well-suited to being shared). Furthermore, FB as an information resource, and can easily reach the politically uninterested segments of voters who otherwise tend to avoid political information in the current high-choice media environment (Lachapelle and Maarek 2015; Bene 2017).[2]

1   The term web 2.0 refers to tools that use a bottom-up approach whereby people can share content and collaborate with people online, building social media (Cormode and Krishnamurthy 2008; O'Reilly 2005).

2   The dominance of "accidental exposure" to political information on FB has been found in the USA, Italy, Great Britain, and Germany, which may also influence political behavior, mostly on voters with low political interest (Valeriani and Vaccari 2015).

Although it has been argued that using Social network sites (snss)[3] facilitates the creation of new virtual spaces to mobilize people in the political arena, this has not yet been the subject of extensive empirical study (Gibson and Ward 2010), nor has it been applied to the Portuguese context, by looking at the political parties. Initially, Portuguese political parties developed Websites, and thereafter moved on to the Web 2.0. Currently, the majority are fully present at different snss, including FB and Twitter. While it might be useful to also know why a party is choosing to engage in social media as part of its communication strategy (Jackson and Lilleker 2009; Kalnes 2009a; Mascheroni and Minucci 2010), it is more important to know how they are doing it, and explore how their strategies are being received.

How parties adapt and use the new communication technologies is intrinsically associated with their own political characteristics. Svåsand linked the changes in the communication technologies to the age of the party: "older parties therefore will assume organizational characteristics of newer parties. In many of the new democracies, parties have developed in a technological environment that makes the traditional communication function redundant" (Svåsand 2013, 267). These findings highlight that party characteristics interplay with parties' online communication strategies.

At the organizational level, Vaccari (2013) identifies two important party characteristics that interact with parties' online communication usage: incentives and resources. For instance, parties that are internally organized through grass-roots activists, in bottom-up endeavours, find it easier to adapt and use online communications tools, such as social media (Löfgren and Smith 2003). Another relevant incentive may be the party's challenger status. Parties in power do not have the same incentives to go online as parties in opposition, whose electoral failure may trigger ambition and the urge to change and innovate in the hope of returning to government (Gibson and Römmele 2001).[4] Regarding the party resources, there are two opposing assumptions in the literature: the equalization thesis argues that small parties try to compensate

---

3   Social network sites are web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system; articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection; and, view and traverse their list of connections, and those made by others, within the system (Boyd and Ellison 2008).

4   In the same direction the electoral system will produce different incentives, whereas the proportional system presents more incentives than the majoritarian ones (Vaccari 2013, 55).

their structural disadvantages by attracting the voters' attention through direct and low-priced channels (Larsson 2016). By contrast, the normalization theory (Margolis and Resnick 2000) assumes that the disparities between parties in the offline context are mirrored in the online. Hence, large parties with greater financial and personal resources are better able to generate effective online communication than small parties (Klinger 2013; Gibson and McAllister 2011).

Finally, some findings have shown an ideological divide among parties: those of particular ideological families may find it easier than others to adapt to digital media (Vaccari 2013; Åström and Karlsson 2013; Vergeer et al. 2011). However, this is not true for every country. A few mechanisms may be responsible: key decision makers and organizational structures are more inclined toward the type of communication fostered by the internet, and/or the voters' profile is more likely to be online or more willing to engage online (Vaccari 2013). Various studies have claimed that extremist parties, especially those on the radical right, may be more likely to take advantage of online tools because they have more difficult access to the mainstream media, and cultivate relatively small cadres of dedicated supporters who eagerly engage within the comfortably segregated echo chamber of the internet (Copsey 2003; Bratten 2005). Also, previous studies have noted that green party elites and their voters also tend to be particularly at ease with online communication (Vaccari 2013).

METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGY

This study explores how Portuguese political parties make use of Facebook (FB) and how citizens engage with parties on this platform.

The empirical research was carried out through a quantitative research design. We collected and analyzed parties' FB pages, in the following stages: (1) identifying the official FB accounts of political parties; (2) collecting data from the pages identified; (3) setting up a metrics tool to measure how parties use FB and their associated level of users' engagement.

FB was chosen as the platform of our data collection because it is one of the most used social media platforms in the world, as well as in Portugal. In Portugal, in 2017, there were 4.7 million FB users, representing 70% of the residents on the mainland between the ages of 15 and 64. FB is the most active social media platform in Portugal (Marktest 2017). In fact, a recent study of

2014/2015 found that among the most used sources of information on policy/governance issues, social media such as FB and Twitter were the third most frequent source, used by 34.4% of the respondents (Cardoso 2015).

Accordingly, we first identified the official FB accounts of political parties that took part in the last general elections in Portugal (2015 General Election) and that won at least one parliamentary seat (Table 8.1). For this purpose, the official FB accounts of the following political parties were examined: The Ecologist Party (PEV), The Left-Bloc (BE), People-Animals-Nature Party (PAN), Socialist Party (PS), Social-Democratic Party (PSD), and CDS-People's Party (CDS-PP).

During our data collection (which was carried out until October 30th of 2017) the Communist Party did not have an official FB page. However, while writing this chapter the party started a FB page.[5] Although PCP was not included in the analysis, the recent creation of its FB page is already, in itself, revealing a change in the party's online communication. While there was an FB account of the Democratic Unitarian Coalition (CDU, i.e. the electoral coalition of the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) and the Ecologist Party (PEV)), the two maintain fairly different party programmes. Moreover, the CDU FB page was inactive for all the non-campaign periods, so we decided to exclude it in our analysis. Table 8.1 presents detailed information on the parties under analysis and their social media presence.

As table 8.1 shows, among the parties that are present in social media, the common element is FB. Every Portuguese party is on FB. Besides FB, the majority of parties have invested in other SNSs such as Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, and Pinterest. PSD is clearly betting for a multi-channel strategy. While PAN, the most recent party in the Portuguese political system, is only on FB, which may be a result of the fact that it has fewer resources. These data reflect a consolidation of the social media platforms: of the vast array of platforms available, only a small part has been selected and applied, which points to the question of whether there are sufficient resources to manage social medias' demands or parties perceive them as established channels (Klinger 2013).

5   PCP was the first in Portugal to have a web page, which has been considered the most important source of information to their members and sympathizers, according to their manifestos. In their general congress resolution reports, they have not stressed SNSs at all (2008) or have acknowledged them as something negative, because they favour individual action over collective (2012). More recently (2016), they mention the need to embark in the new technological environment, where SNSs play an important role, in which the webpage is the centre of all information.

Table 8.1   *Political parties and Facebook*

PARTY NAME	FB ACCOUNT	ACCOUNT CREATION DATE	NUMBER OF PAGE LIKES/ FOLLOWERS (OCTOBER, 2017)	LIKES GROWTH (MONTHLY AVERAGE)	OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE (OCTOBER 2017)	PARTY FOUNDATION YEAR	FIRST ELECTION YEAR
The Portuguese Communist Party (PCP)	No	NA	NA	NA	NA	1921	1975
The Ecologist Party (PEV)	Yes	2011 (Feb.)	9.424	11.6%	YouTube; Twitter	1982	1982
The Left-Block (BE)	Yes*	2011 (Nov.)	58.733	81.5%	YouTube	1999	1999
People-Animals-Nature (PAN)	Yes	2015 (May)	136.171	469.5%	No	2011	2011
Socialist Party (PS)	Yes	2011 (Jan.)	59.707	72.8%	YouTube; Twitter	1973	1975
Social-Democrat Party (PSD)	Yes	2010 (May)	147.096	165.2%	YouTube; Twitter; Instagram; Pinterest; Flickr	1974	1975
CDS-PP	Yes	2015 (Jan.)	30.284	89.0%	Twitter; Instagram	1974	1975

Note: * The Left-Bloc FB page "esquerda.net" is on FB under the category of News and Communication and not as a political organization, such as the rest of the parties' FB pages. However, since it is the only FB page owned by the party we chose to include it.

In the second phase of our empirical strand, data were collected through the *Rstudio Rfacebook package* by extracting all the posts made by each FB account, from the beginning of the page's existence until October of 2017. Thus, this time lapse includes not only campaign and non-campaign periods (including the legislative, presidential, european, and local elections), but also different political and economic contexts. We collected 20,618 posts published by the parties. The number of likes, comments received, and shares made, for each post, were registered for all parties, as well as the FB tools parties used to communicate. It is important to stress that algorithmic automated processes play a part in the content presented to each individual user on FB, thereby deciding whether it deserves to be highlighted in news feeds. Also, the existence of fake FB accounts is one of the issues raised when considering the quality of FB data collection (Kosinski et al. 2015).

To measure the FB users' engagement with parties we carried out an analysis of the *popularity, commitment, and virality* of parties' FB posts following the metrics developed by Bonsón and Ratkai (2013). This metrics set was first used to measure the stakeholder engagement in the private sector. Later, Bonsón et al. (2015) used it for public engagement for municipalities. Since then, it has been applied to measure citizen engagement in social media of local governments in the US and Canada (Galvéz-Rodríguez et al. 2016), in Spain (Haro-de-Rosario et al. 2016), and the party-public engagement of political parties (Sobaci and Hatipoglu 2017).

Popularity is measured by the number of "likes." Commitment refers to the number of "comments" made by users. Finally, virality shows the effectiveness of viral messages/posts, which is measured according to the number of "shares" of posts. As Table 8.2 shows, for each dimension of analysis there are

Table 8.2		*Metrics set*	
POPULARITY	P1	Total likes/total posts	Average number of likes per post
	P2	(P1/number of fans) x 1000	Popularity of posts among fans
COMMITMENT	C1	Total comments/total posts	Average number of comments per post
	C2	(C1/number of fans) x 1000	Commitment of posts among fans
VIRALITY	V1	Total shares/total posts	Average number of shares per post
	V2	(V1/number of fans) x 1000	Virality of posts among fans
ENGAGEMENT INDEX	P2+C2+V2		Party's Facebook Engagement Index

Source: Based on Bonsón and Ratkai (2013).

two measures: 1) an absolute average of likes, comments, and shares per post (P1, C1, and V1) and, 2) an additional measure that weighs the data by the number of "likers"/friends the page has (P2, C2, and V2). The last measure was designed mainly to create a composite and acumulative index of the three dimensions for the measurement of the engagement level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

PARTIES' FACEBOOK USAGE

How do Portuguese parties use FB? Which are the most active? When did they join social media? From the outset, it is important to recognize that Portuguese parties have come a long way regarding social media usage.[6]

The first Portuguese party to start a FB page was PSD, in 2010. In March of that year, the PSD leadership changed with the victory of Pedro Passos Coelho at the party's internal elections, who subsequently won the 2011 Portuguese general election and became the prime-minister of Portugal until 2015. The page was created around May of 2010, two months after the change in party leadership and a year before the 2011 electoral campaign, reflecting also a shift in the party's communication channels and strategies.

In the following year, all parties with parliamentary seats had created an FB page, with the exception of CDS-PP, which started in 2015. This seems to clearly represent the idea that "party organizers look to innovations made by other parties", meaning that sometimes external factors pull parties toward convergence by imitation (Heidar and Saglie 2003, 233). The last party to join social media was PAN, the most recent party in the Portuguese party system. It was founded in 2011 but won its first parliamentary seat in the 2015 general election. In the same year, four months before the election, the party created its FB account.

In order to examine trends, post numbers are calculated per party, per month (Figure 8.1). First, apart from the first year on FB, parties published a relatively similar and constant volume of content per month over the years. Additionally, we observe an increasing investment throughout 2017 for all

---

6   Nowadays, beyond the parties' official FB pages, there are other pages related to parties' activity, for instance to party districts' pages or party leaders' pages and even specific pages for electoral purposes such as "Costa 2015", or electoral coalitions such as "Portugal on the Front", both created for the general election of 2015.

Figure 8.1   *Volume of posts per month published by parties*
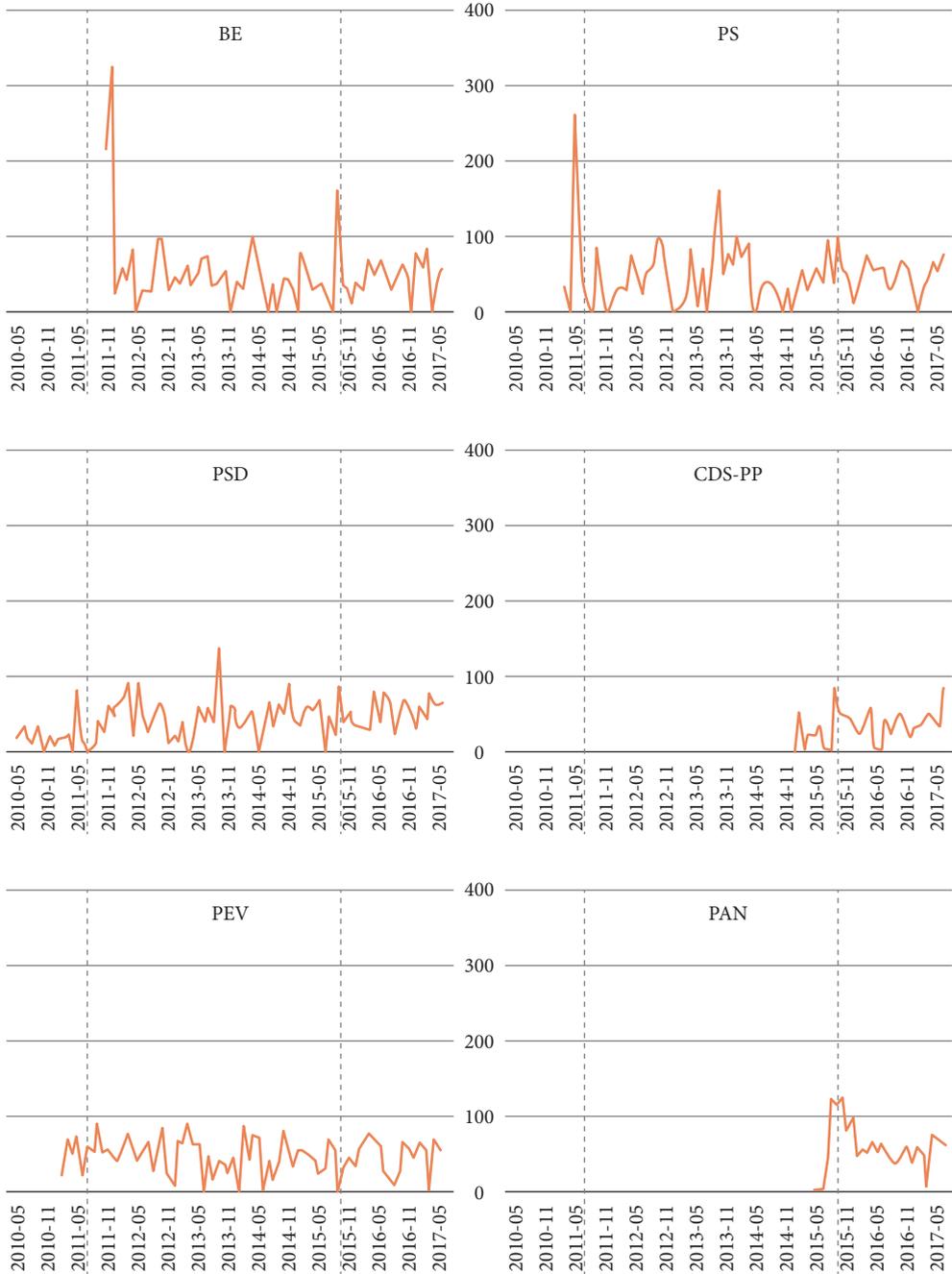
Source: Data collected by the authors through RStudio. The dotted lines represent the elections dates.

parties: the average volume of posts increased to 2.5 per day for most parties. This reflects that Portuguese parties have, to some extent, clear, uniform, and consistent, social media strategies regarding their presence and input on FB, thus fulfilling the expectation that political parties extend their campaign and political communication strategies to the online world and adapt to the new media logic (Klinger 2013).

Second, theory suggests that the number of posts would increase during the time leading up to election, given that publishing election information would happen only during these periods (Steinberg 2017). In our data we are able to observe an increase in the number of posts preceding election dates, that is, the June 5th 2011 and the October 4th 2015 (marked on the graph with dotted lines), especially for PS in 2011 and the BE and PAN for 2015.

FB is a platform that enables multimodal communication including status updates (text), notes (text), publishing an event, sharing hyperlinks, and publishing images or photos and video content (visual). Visual elements are generally associated with a higher degree of involvement compared to text, which is sometimes attributed to a more immediate perception of content (Eisenlauer and Hoffman 2008) and a stronger reliance on association and higher emotional response (Muller and Kappas 2011). This suggests that different types of content can further increase involvement or not, leading to a higher degree of actual user interaction (Hoffmann and Bublitz 2017). Table 8.3 sheds light on the tools used by parties.

BE uses mostly FB to share information hosted in their websites, redirecting their "likers"/friends to them[7]. This suggests a view of their page as an aggregator rather than a source of original content. Whereas PEV made extensive use of status updates[8] as from 2016, the use of image and video increased, approximately half becoming the publication of images. The PS and the PSD showed similar patterns: both used a wider array of available tools, especially links, photos, status updates, and videos, aside from the years 2013 and 2014, when they relied mostly on photos (representing almost all of its content). Both parties have relied more on videos in the last three years. CDS-PP has also used a wider array of content: photos, videos, and links. PAN presents a more constant and balanced diversification strategy: links, photos, and videos, emerging as a very interesting case that has been investing in different formats.

---

7   BE has three different websites (http://www.bloco.org/; http://www.esquerda.net/; http://www.beparlamento.net/) which are regularly updated, thus, this pattern was not surprising.

8   A status update means text-only posts.

Table 8.3		*Facebook tools used by political party over the years*					

		FACEBOOK TOOLS (%)					
		Event	Link	Note	Photo	Status	Video
	2011	0.0	85.4	0.2	4.6	0.0	9.8
	2012	0.0	56.6	0.2	19.5	.7	23.0
	2013	1.0	43.0	0.3	50.1	1.0	4.5
BE	2014	1.0	48.6	0.2	48.4	1.0	.8
	2015	.5	20.1	0.0	52.6	0.0	26.8
	2016	1.3	62.3	0.0	18.9	0.0	17.5
	2017	1.2	79.7	0.0	4.6	0.0	14.5
	2011	0.0	42.5	0.2	10.4	45.2	1.7
	2012	0.0	60.0	0.0	32.3	2.0	5.7
	2013	0.0	5.0	0.0	93.3	.7	1.0
PS	2014	0.0	.5	0.0	99.2	0.0	.3
	2015	0.0	0.0	0.0	48.8	0.0	51.2
	2016	.2	14.9	0.0	36.8	.7	47.5
	2017	0.0	16.2	0.0	61.8	.9	21.1
	2011	0.0	5.2	0.5	16.6	67.4	10.4
	2012	0.0	3.7	0.2	17.0	70.5	8.7
	2013	0.0	.5	0.0	28.5	70.8	.2
PEV	2014	0.0	6.9	0.2	17.9	73.2	1.8
	2015	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.9	82.4	.7
	2016	.2	3.5	0.0	50.8	31.8	13.7
	2017	3.3	7.7	0.1	57.7	.3	30.9
	2015	7.3	48.7	0.0	35.4	.3	8.3
PAN	2016	5.6	39.3	0.0	36.8	.3	18.0
	2017	5.6	41.8	0.1	35.1	.4	17.0
	2010	0.0	17.3	0.0	21.4	43.5	17.9
	2011	0.0	16.5	0.0	37.8	7.6	38.1
	2012	0.0	6.5	0.2	61.1	10.5	21.7
PSD	2013	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
	2014	0.0	0.0	0.0	99.8	0.0	.2
	2015	0.0	0.0	0.0	68.1	0.0	31.9
	2016	0.0	0.0	0.0	54.5	0.0	45.5
	2017	0.0	10.7	0.0	40.3	.9	48.2
	2015	.2	10.7	0.0	67.8	4.2	17.1
CDS-PP	2016	1.1	9.0	0.4	38.7	4.2	46.6
	2017	2.9	15.5	0.0	14.6	3.8	63.3

Source: Data collected by the authors through RStudio.

Recently, for most parties, we can observe a new strategy to publish content in a more interactive way. The use of newer and fancier tools, such as video and photos, may be suggestive of a better understanding of how to take advantage of social media to get the most value from a post (Steinberg 2017). This strategy also follows the growing demand for videos on the internet. In fact, in 2014, 64% of the world's data traffic on the internet consisted of videos (excluding peer-to-peer movie swaps and video on demand previews). This value will be 80% by 2019.[9] This is partly due to young people watching considerably more video content on YouTube and other Internet sources than TV. While this recent change to include more video content is evident, most parties do not produce original video content for SNSs. Instead, they often use the content created by the Parliament TV Channel, which is then edited and shared in the parties' various networks, including YouTube and FB.

FACEBOOK USERS' ENGAGEMENT: POPULARITY, COMMITMENT, AND VIRALITY

To truly assess how citizens are interacting with parties on FB we need to look at the public's feedback to their posts. Responses by those who view the posts serve as a measurement of engagement between the "likers"/friends and the party. An individual respondent can engage with parties' posts on FB by clicking "like", by commenting, or by sharing a post.

It is without any surprise that we found that, in general, for all parties, at least 99% of their wall posts were liked. Regarding the percentage of posts commented or shared, there are significant differences between parties and among dimensions of engagement, showing different dynamics of user's engagement. In the case of CDS-PP, 88.3% of the posts were discussed and 95% were shared. The Esquerda.net page of the Left Bloc presents the following statistics: 58.6% of the posts were discussed and 94.9% were shared. In the case of The Greens, 36.8% of the their posts were discussed while 74.9% were shared. The posts published by the PSD were likewise discussed on FB (81.7%) as shared (88.8%) by their FB users. Contrary to the previous parties, the PAN had more content discussed (89.3%) than shared (75.7%). Similarly, the Socialist party had more posts discussed (92.7%) on its page than shared (86.0%). The fact that the highest levels of engagement were achieved in the dimension of popularity,

9   In Cisco Visual Networking Index™ (Cisco VNI™), accessed at http://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/solutions/collateral/service-provider/ip-ngn-ip-next-generation-network/white_paper_c11-481360.html.

above commitment and virality, is probably because it requires less effort to press a "like" button than to write a comment, and it is less compromising and more impersonal than a share, which is shown on the user's timeline. Indeed, as Steinberg (2017) emphasizes, when individuals respond by making a "comment," they are making more of an effort to communicate, which implies a greater degree of engagement than "liking" or just reading the post.

In relation to the *dimension of popularity*, we can examine the likes of the parties' posts across the months and years, by looking at the average number of likes per post (every post was equally considered, regardless of their format).

Looking at Figure 8.2, overall, all parties saw their posts' popularity increase over the years, but fall since 2015. We can also see a slight increase in PSD's post popularity in the 2011 election, but a greater effect was noticed regarding the recent election of 2015.

The party with the highest average post popularity is the PAN for 2016 and 2017. CDS-PP, which started its FB page in the same year as PAN, in 2015, shows less users' engagement, falling considerably. In turn, the PEV is the party with lowest popularity. Even though the party publishes almost the same number of posts as the others (Figure 8.2), it is clear that their posts are not engaging its audience. As Steinberg (2017) stresses, the value of the "like" metric is that it provides guidance to the party organization regarding which messages appeal to its members.

Looking at Figure 8.3, we can observe similar patterns in the *commitment dimension*. On average the PAN has the highest number of comments made by post and PEV is the party with the lowest user engagement. Again we can see a slight increase in commitment during election times, in 2011 for PSD and in 2015 especially for PAN, PS, and PSD.

The only two posts with more than 1,000 comments are both visual and belong to PAN and PSD. The most discussed (1,364 comments) is a photo referring to a high-profile case on social media about a young boy mistreating his dog. While the second most discussed post (1,328 comments) is a recent video published by PSD with Pedro Passos Coelho announcing that he will not compete in the next internal party elections, leaving its leadership.

The last engagement *dimension is virality*, measured according to the number of "shares" of posts. Sharing is the soul of FB communication and anything can be shared: a moment, an experience, an opinion, public information, content from others, links etc. Users create communication networks, including mostly their offline acquaintances, kept alive by the activity of sharing content (Bene 2017).
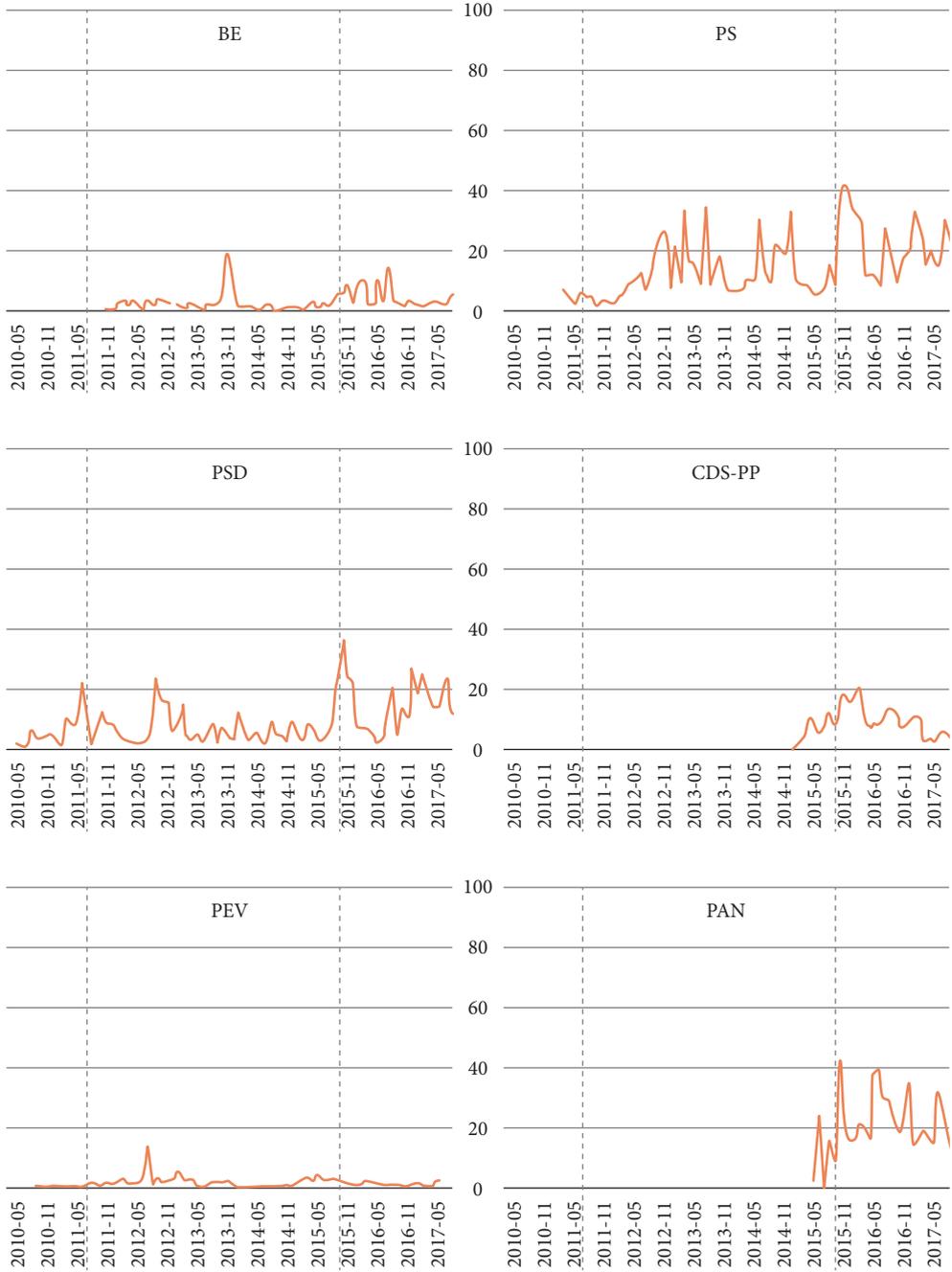
Figure 8.2   *Popularity per month among parties and over years*
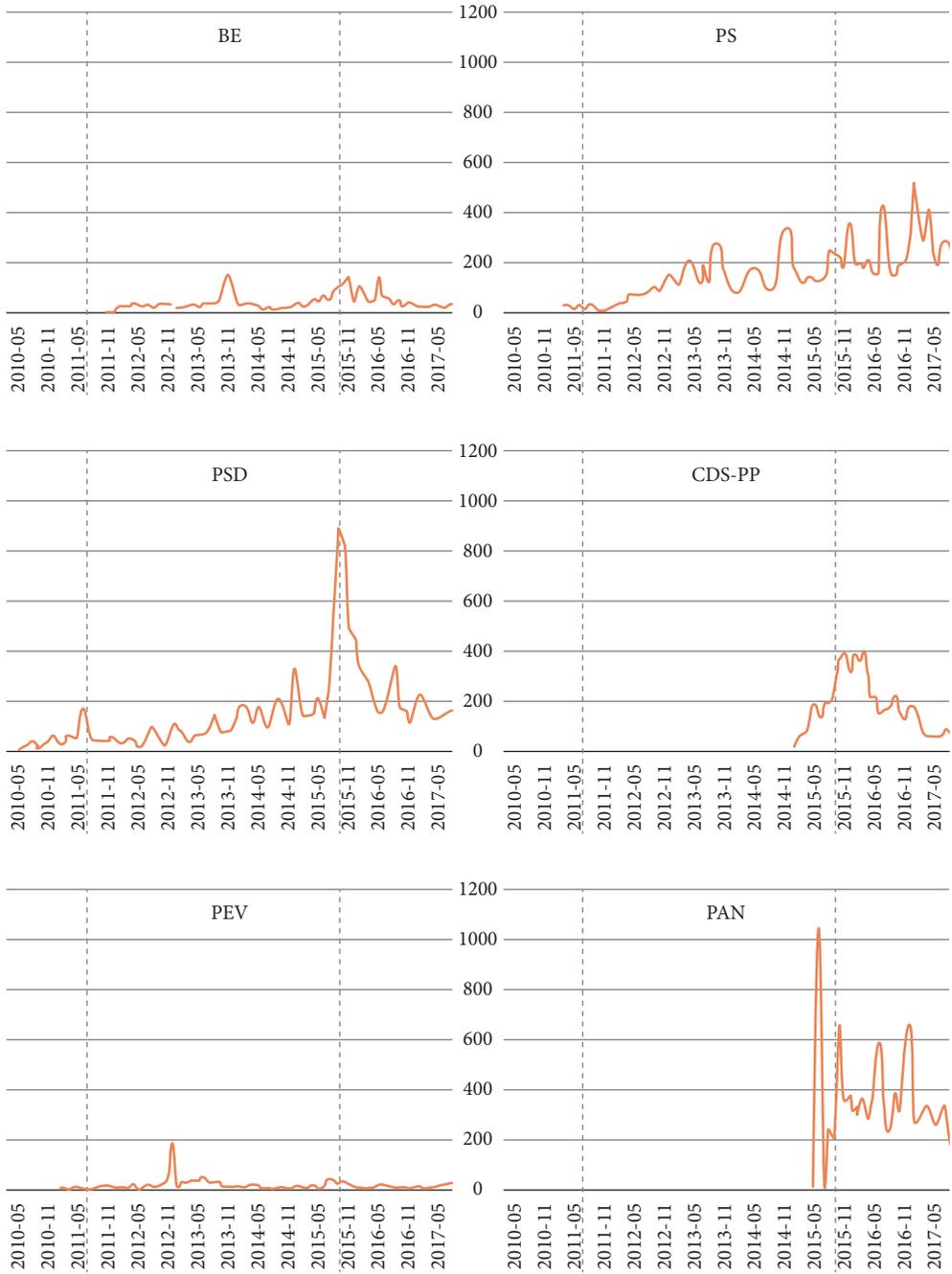
Source: Data collected by the authors through RStudio. The dotted lines represent the elections dates.

Figure 8.3   *Commitment per month among parties and over years*

Source: Data collected by the authors through RStudio. The dotted lines represent the elections dates.

The distribution logic of network media is virality (Klinger and Svensson 2015). The term is taken from marketing and defined as "network-enhanced word-of-mouth" (Nahon et al. 2011). This definition captures the dual meaning of sharing, namely an act of communication as well as an act of distribution. Broadly speaking, it means being shared in many different communication networks. The more people share a content, i. e. use it within their ongoing communication with members of their networks, the more extended is the reach and influence it can achieve.

Regarding this dimension (Figure 8.4), the difference between PAN and the rest of the parties is even more notable. The PAN is the party with the most viral content on FB. Additionally, unlike the other user engagement dimensions, no association can be observed between election times and virality of parties' posts.

The most shared, discussed, and liked posts belongs to the PAN. The post that gathered the most shares (30,310) and likes (16,362) is a photo celebrating the approval of a new law that put an end to the slaughter of dogs and cats in municipal kennels. As well the most discussed post (1,364 comments) is also a photo, as mentioned before.

PEV continues to be the least successful party in engaging its FB users. Interestingly, BE presents better users' engagement on content virality than the rest of the parties (with the exception of PAN).

Concluding, in order to be effective, political communication on social media also has to engage with FB users, obtaining *popularity*, *discussion*, and *virality*. In fact, in the online world, sharing is a common, low-limit, but potentially very effective, mass-centric form of parties' mobilization (Wallsten 2010). It is now clear that the posts that obtained more likes, comments, and shares are visual posts such as photos or videos. A strategy mostly used by PAN, which can help explain why it emerges as the most successful party regarding FB users' engagement.

The above data provided a closer look into how FB users engage with parties in absolute terms, not considering the active population of the audience reached by the Parties' FB pages. We calculated the same metrics but taking into account the active population of the audience regarding popularity, commitment, and virality, by dividing the average number of likes, comments, and shares per post for all the years by the number of page likers at the time of data collection.[10] An Index was composed with the sum of these values,

---

10   Since it is not possible to assess the number of FB "likers"/friends for each year considered in the analysis, the analysis is based on the number of "likers"/friends at the time of data collection (October 2017).

**Figure 8.4**   *Virality per month among parties and over years*
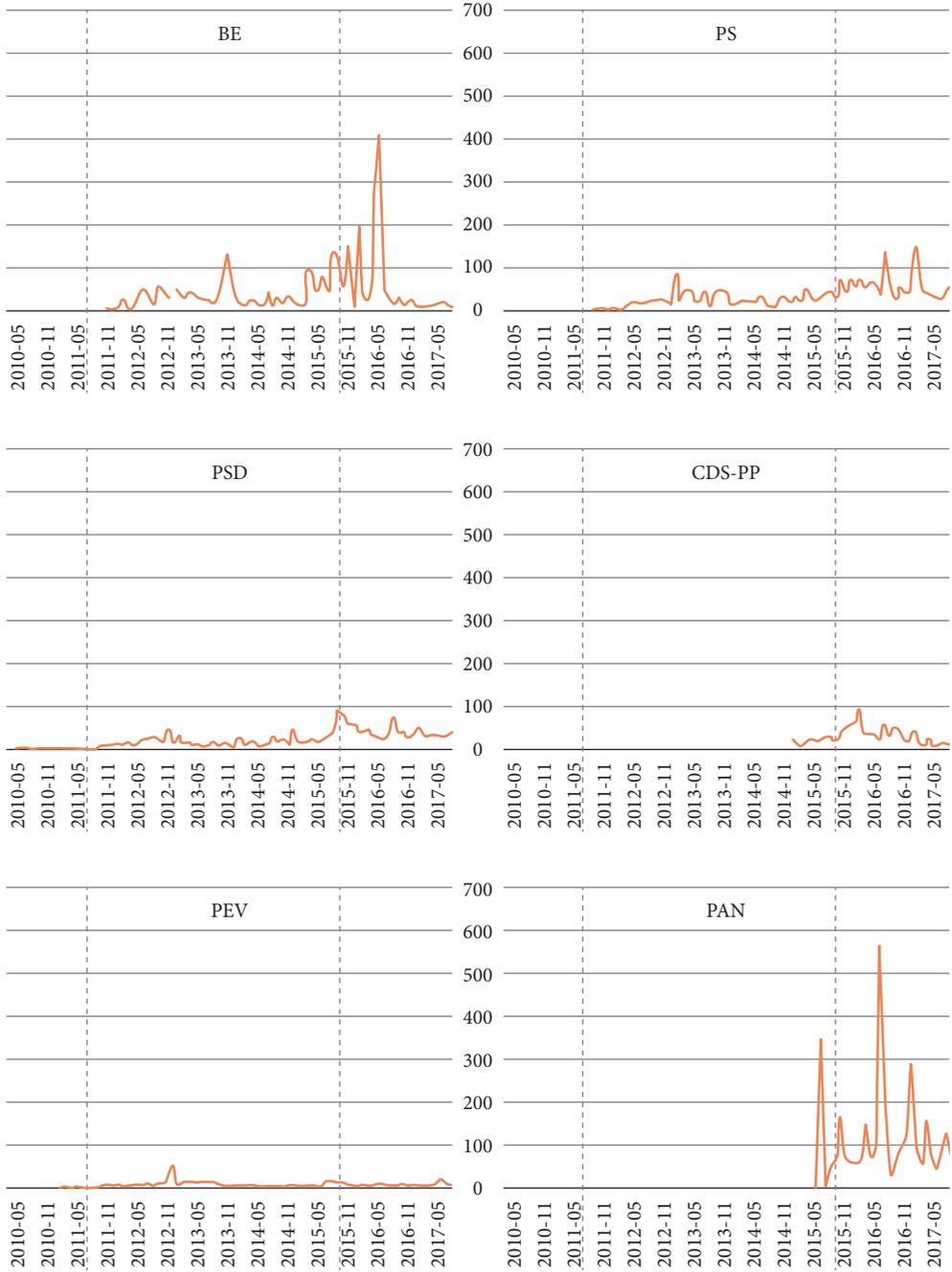
Source: Data collected by the authors through RStudio. The dotted lines represent the elections dates.

resulting in an aggregate measure of Parties' engagement level with its public on FB. Multiplication by 1,000 was performed in order to offer the possibility of a better comparison, as the original results were close to zero (Bonsón and Ratkai 2013). This index has limitations and is far away from being perfect, but in this context it provides a relatively proxy measure to understand the overall engagement at the same time (popularity, commitment, and virality) taking into account the number of the audience of parties' FB pages. The index raw values per se does not give us much information but it can inform us about the relative differences among parties.

Looking at Figure 8.5 we can observe a scenario different from the previous ones. Taking into account the number of "likers"/friends provides a relative measure of engagement that acknowledges the active audience reached by each party. By active audience we mean the FB users who have liked the party's page and potentially receive its updates in their timeline. However, it should be stressed that FB users who do not follow the party's FB page are able to interact and engage with the party in the same way. Moreover, a "non-liker"/ friend could also receive the party updates in her/his timeline through other means, for example, if a friend has shared, commented, or liked a post.

In relative terms, CDS-PP presents the highest engagement level and PSD presents the lowest. Comparing PSD and PAN, which have a similar number of "likers"/friends on FB, the difference of engagement with the public is clear.

Figure 8.5 *Engagement Level across parties*
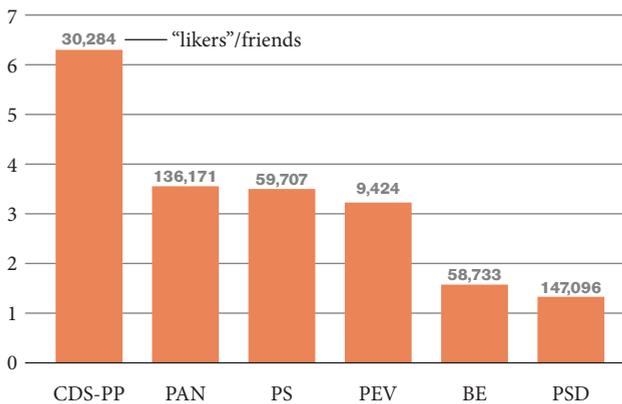
Source: Data collected by the authors through RStudio.

Moreover, the higher users' engagement level with PAN may be a result of the fact that the party invests more in social media since it receives less coverage in the traditional media comparing with the other parties.

CONCLUSIONS

Our study reports on the recent widespread use of social media by Portuguese political parties, namely via FB, acknowledging its importance for party communication. Since PSD's adoption in 2010, almost all parties, apart from PCP, joined FB the following year. This reveals the contagious effect among parties in relation to their communication presence and strategies.

Findings regarding how parties use FB show a fairly consistent social media communication strategy, shared among parties: the volume of published content was relatively stable across the years and 2017 saw an increased investment in FB content. For us it is still not clear about the extent to which this strategy is a response to the recent and growing signs of political apathy.

Looking in depth at the type of posts, we similarly observe congruent patterns between parties, as well as diversity. Parties use various Facebook tools to get their messages across, but they still rely on links to their own websites or other text-based websites to provide information, rather than make full use of multimedia technology such as photos and videos. However, in recent years most parties have been moving toward a strategy to increasingly include more multimedia content.

Regarding user's interaction with the parties' pages, several levels of engagement were observed. Discrepancies between different dimensions, and across parties, emerged. The popularity dimension is clearly the most frequent, in a much greater proportion than the remaining forms of engagement (commitment and virality), due to it being less demanding and compromising. Additionally, the choice of tool can lead to differing levels of engagement: posts that stood out for having more likes, comments, and shares had a visual component in the form of photo or video. This probably helps justify the recent trend found for an investment in video tools by portuguese political parties on their FB pages.

An increase in posting, as well as popularity and commitment (of posts), before both elections was observed. Moreover, when comparing

the two election periods, 2011 and 2015, there was a greater impact of FB on parties' campaign in 2015, which needs to be confirmed by further robust analysis.

There is no question that PAN stood out as an interesting case. Despite being a small and recent party, when taking into consideration the relative number of "likers"/friends, it showed the second highest level of users' engagement. In adition, it is the party with the most likes growth, i.e. montly average, in its short FB presence (see table 8.1) This result highlights how the use of new technologies can favour new parties and help them overcome their limitations. PAN's successful FB communication might be explained because it emerged in a more recent technological context when compared to parties, such as PCP, PS, and PSD, which developed at a time when the printed mass media were the dominant communication channels between leaders and citizens. For these parties it will take more time to adjust to the new technological environment (Klinger 2013). Additionally, literature has shown that newer parties rate the importance of social media higher than established ones (Lilleker et al. 2015), which helps to explain the investment PAN has made in Facebook. This is likely to be strengthened in a context like the Portuguese one, with a party system that has remained quite stable since the first legislative election in 1976 and it is characterized by a two-party dynamic (Van Biezen 2003), leaving little space for new players.

It is indisputable that Portuguese parties are investing in social media communication and trying to take advantage of its possibilities and potential. However, there are some challenges ahead. Studies have shown that FB algorithms bury much of the content from a political page in users' news feeds, compromising the very purpose of parties being on FB (Kalsnes 2016). Thus, in order to become visible, parties have to encourage fans to be very active, in addition to buying visibility, and to do so, they need to engage in an interactive and dynamic communication strategy instead of using it as a top-down channel.

SOFIA SERRA SILVA
Instituto de Ciências Sociais, Universidade de Lisboa
Av. Prof. Aníbal Bettencourt 9 — 1600-036 Lisboa, Portugal
sofiaraquelserra91@hotmail.com
orcid.org/0000-0002-7731-7183

DIANA DIAS CARVALHO
Centro de Administração e Políticas Públicas,
Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas, Universidade de Lisboa
dianadiascarvalho@gmail.com
orcid.org/0000-0002-6826-0664

JÚLIO FAZENDEIRO
Instituto de Ciências Sociais, Universidade de Lisboa
julio.fazendeiro@gmail.com
orcid.org/0000-0002-2242-7238

§   REFERENCES

Åström, J., M. Karlsson. 2013. "Blogging in the shadow of parties: exploring ideological differences in online campaigning". *Political Communication*, 30 (3): 434-455.

Bardi, L., S. Bartolini, and A. Trechsel. 2014. "Party adaptation and change and the crisis of democracy". *Party Politics*, 20 (2): 151-59.

Baxter, G., R. Marcella, and E. Varfis. 2011. "The use of the internet by political parties and candidates in Scotland during the 2010 UK general election campaign". *Aslib Proceedings*, 63 (5): 464-483.

Bene, M. 2017. "Sharing is caring! investigating viral posts on politicians' facebook pages during the 2014 general election campaign in Hungary". *Journal of Information Technology and Politics*, 14 (4): 387-402.

Bimber, B., R. Davis. 2003. *Campaigning Online. The Internet in US Elections*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bónson, E., E. Carvajal-Trujillo, and T. Escobar-Rodríguez. 2015. "Corporate Facebook and stakeholder engagement". *Kybernetes,* 44 (5): 771-787.

Bonsón, E., M. Ratkai. 2013. "A set of metrics to assess stakeholder engagement and social legitimacy on a corporate Facebook page". *Online Information Review*, 37 (5): 787-803.

Boulianne, S. 2015. "Social media use and participation: a meta-analysis of current research". *Information Communication and Society*, 18 (5): 524-538.

Boulianne, S. 2009. "Does Internet use affect engagement? A meta-analysis of research". *Political Communication*, 26 (2): 193-211.

Boyd, D., N. Ellison. 2008. "Social network sites: definition, history, and scholarship". *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13 (1): 210-230.

Bratten, C. 2005. "Online zealotry: la France du peuple virtuel". *New Media & Society*, 7 (4): 515-532.

CANTIJOCH, M., D. Cutts, and R. Gibson. 2015. "Moving slowly up the engagement: a 'spill-over' model of internet participation". *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 18 (1): 26-48.

CARDOSO, G., et al. 2015. *A Internet e o Consumo de Notícias Online em Portugal*. Lisbon: OberCom.

CARON, C. 2014. "Les jeunes et l'expérience participative en ligne". *Lien social et politiques*, 71: 13-30.

COPSEY, N. 2003. "Extremism on the net: the extreme right and the value of the internet". In *Political Parties and the Internet: Net Gain?*, eds. R. Gibson, P. Nixon, and S. Ward. London: Routledge, 218-231.

CORMODE, G., B. Krishnamurthy. 2008. "Key differences between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0". *First Monday- Peer Reviewed Journal of the Internet*, 13 (6): 1-19.

DALTON, R. 2004. *Democratic Challenges, Democratic Choices: The Erosion of Political Support in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

DALTON, R. J., M. Wattenberg, eds. 2000. *Parties Without Partisans*. New York: Oxford University Press.

DALTON, R. J., R. I. Maclister, and M. P. Wattenberg. 2003. "Democracia e identificação partidária nas sociedades industriais avançadas". *Análise Social*, XXXVIII: 295-320.

DELWIT, P. 2011. "Still in decline? Party membership in Europe". In *Party Membership in Europe: Exploration Into the Anthills of Party Politics*, ed. E. van Haute. Brussels: ULB, 25--42.

DOUGLAS, S., et al. 2015. "Community matters: how young adults use Facebook to evaluate political candidates". *Information Polity*, 20 (2-3): 135-150.

EISENLAUER, V., C. R. Hoffman. 2008. "The metapragmatics of remediated text design". *Information Design Journal*, 16 (1): 1-18.

EMMER, M., G. Vowe, and J. Wolling. 2011. *Burger Online. Die Entwicklung der politischen Online-Kommunikation in Deutschland*. Konstanz: UVK.

FAZENDEIRO, J. 2017. "O declínio da filiação partidária em Portugal: respostas e estratégias das lideranças partidárias". In *Militantes e Ativismo nos Partidos Políticos: Portugal em Perspectiva Comparada*, eds. M. Lisi, P. do Espírito Santo. Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 69-97.

FURLONG, A. 2009. "Civic engagement and disengagement". In *Handbook of Youth and Young Adulthood*, ed. A. Furlong. New York: Routledge, 291-292.

GALLAGHER, M., M. Laver, and P. Mair. 2005. *Representative Government in Western Europe*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

GALLANT, N. 2018. "The 'good,' the 'bad' and the 'useless': young people's political action repertoires in Quebec". In *Young People Re-generating Politics in Times of Crises*, eds. S. Pickard, J. Bessant. Gewerbestrasse: Palgrave Macmillan, 77-94.

GALVÉZ-RODRÍGUEZ, M., A. Haro-de-Rosario, and C. Caba-Perez. 2016. "A comparative view of citizen engagement in social media of local governments from North American countries". In *Handbook of Research on Citizen Engagement and Public Participation in the Era of New Media*, orgs. M. Adria, Y. Hershey. Information Science Reference: 139-156.

GIBSON, R., I. Mcallister. 2011. "Do online election campaigns win votes? The 2007 Australian "YouTube" election". *Political Communication,* 28 (2): 227-244.

GIBSON, R., A. Römmele. 2001. "A party centered theory of professionalized campaigning". *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics,* 6 (1): 31-44.

GIBSON, R., S. Ward. 2001. "Virtual campaigning: Australian parties and the impact of the internet". *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 37 (1): 99-129.

GIBSON, R. 2015. "Party change, social media and the rise of 'citizen-initiated' campaigning." *Party Politics,* 21 (2): 183-97.

HANSARD SOCIETY. 2011. *Parliaments and Public Engagement: Innovation and Good Practice around the World*. London: Hansard Society.

HARO-DE-ROSARIO, A., A. Sáez-Martín, and M. Caba-Pérez. 2018. "Using social media to enhance citizen engagement with local government: Twitter or Facebook?". *New Media & Society*, 20 (1): 29-49.

HEIDAR, K., J. Saglie. 2003. "Predestined parties? Organizational change in Norwegian political parties". *Party Politics*, 9 (2): 219-239.

HOFFMANN, C., W. Bublitz. 2017. *Pragmatics of Social Media*. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter.

INGLEHART, R. F. 2016. "The danger of deconsolidation how much should we worry?". *Journal of Democracy*, 27 (3): 18-23.

IPU. 2009. *Guidelines for Content and Structure of Parliamentary Web Sites*. Le Grand-Saconnex/Geneva: Inter-Parliamentary Union Publication.

JACKSON, N., D. Lilleker. 2004. "Just public relations or an attempt at interaction? British MPs in the press, on the web and 'In Your Face'". *European Journal of Communication,* 19 (4): 507-533.

JACKSON, N. A., D. Lilleker. 2009. "Building an architecture of participation? Political parties and web 2.0 in Britain". *Journal of Information Technology and Politics*, 6 (3-4): 232-250.

JALALI, C. 2007. *Partidos e Democracia em Portugal: 1974-2005: da Revolução ao Bipartidarismo*. Lisbon: Instituto de Ciências Sociais.

JENKINS, H., N. Carpentier. 2013. "Theorizing participatory intensities: a conversation about participation and politics". *Convergence*, 19 (3): 265-286.

KALNES, Ø. 2009. "Norwegian parties and web 2.0". *Journal of Information Technology and Politics*, 6 (3-4): 251-266.

KATZ, R. S., et al. 1992. "The membership of political parties in European democracies, 1960-1990". *European Journal of Political Research,* 22 (3): 329-345.

KLINGER, U. 2013. "Mastering the art of social media". *Information, Communication and Society*, 16 (5): 717-736.

KLINGER, U., J. Svensson. 2015. "The emergence of network media logic in political communication: a theoretical approach". *New Media & Society*, 17 (8): 1241-1257.

KOSINSKI, M., et al. 2015. "Facebook as a research tool for the social sciences: opportunities, challenges, ethical considerations, and practical guidelines". *American Psychologist*, 70 (6): 5-43.

LACHAPELLE, G., P. Maarek, eds. 2015. *Political Parties in the Digital Age: The Impact of New Technologies in Politics*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

LARSSON, A. O. 2016. "Online, all the time? A quantitative assessment of the permanent campaign on Facebook". *New Media & Society,* 18 (2): 274-292.

LESTON-BANDEIRA, C. 2009. "Dissent in a party based parliament: the Portuguese case". *Party Politics*, 15 (6): 695-713. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068809334556.

LILLEKER, D. G., J. Tenscher, and V. Štětka. 2015. "Towards hypermedia campaigning? Perceptions of new media's importance for campaigning by party strategists in comparative perspective". *Information, Communication & Society*, 18 (7): 747-765.

LISI, M. 2011. *Os Partidos Políticos em Portugal: Continuidade e Transformação*. Coimbra: Edições Almedina S.A.

LOBO, M. C., V. S. Ferreira, and J. Rowland. 2015. "Emprego, mobilidade, política e lazer: situações e atitudes dos jovens portugueses numa perspectiva comparada". Lisbon: Observatório da Qualidade da Democracia and Observatório Permanente da Juventude.

LÖFGREN, K., C. Smith. 2003. "Political parties and the impact of new information communication technologies". In *Political Parties and Democracy in the Information Age: Net Gain?*, eds. R. Gibson, P. Nixon, and S. Ward. London: Routledge, 39-52.

LOPES, F., A. Freire. 2002. *Partidos Políticos e Sistemas Eleitorais: Uma Introdução*. Oeiras: Celta.

MAGALHÃES, P. 2006. "Disaffected democrats: political attitudes and political action in Portugal". *West European Politics*, 285: 973-991.

MAGIN, M. et al. 2017. "Campaigning in the fourth age of political communication. A multi-method study on the use of Facebook by German and Austrian parties in the 2013 national election campaigns". *Information Communication and Society*, 20 (11): 1698- -1719.

MAIR, P. 2006. "Ruling the void? The hollowing of Western democracies". *New Left Review*, 42 (November/December): 25-51.

MAIR, P. 2013. *Ruling the Void: The Hollowing of Western Democracy*. London: Verso.

MAIR, P., I. Van Biezen. 2001. "Party membership in twenty European democracies, 1980- -2000". *Party Politics*, 7 (1): 5-21.

MARGETTS, H. 2006. "Cyber parties". In *Handbook of Party Politics*, eds. R. Katz, W. Crotty. Sage Publications: 528-535.

MARGOLIS, M., D. Resnick. 2000. *Politics as Usual: The Cyberspace Revolution*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

MARKTEST. 2017. "Barame Internet, 2017, Grupo Marktest, Lisbon". Retrieved on October 30 2017 from http://www.marktest.com/wap/a/grp/p~40.aspx

MARTINS, M. M. 2004. *Participação Política e Democracia – O Caso Português (1975-2000)*. Lisboa: ISCSP.

MASCHERONI, G., S. Minucci. 2010. "Le elezioni europee sul web: campaigning 2.0?". *Comunicazione Politica*, 2 (1): 107-113.

MILLETTE, M. 2015. *L'usage des médias sociaux dans les luttes pour la visibilité: le cas des minorités francophones au Canada anglais*. Doctoral Dissertation. Montréal: Université du Québec à Montréal.

MÜLLER, M. G., A. Kappas. 2011. "Visual emotions – Emotional visuals. Emotions, pathos formulae, and their relevance for communication research". In *The Routledge Handbook of Emotions and Mass Media*, eds. K. Döveling, C. von Scheve, and E. A. Konijn. London: Routledge, 310-331.

NAHON, K., et al. 2011. "Fifteen minutes of fame: the power of blogs in the life cycle of viral political information". *Policy & Internet*, 3 (1): 6-33.

NIXON, P., S. Ward, and R. Gibson. 2003. "Conclusions: the net change". In *Political Parties and Democracy in the Information Age: Net Gain?*, eds. R. Gibson, P. Nixon, and S. Ward. London: Routledge, 234-243.

NORRIS, P. 1999. *Critical Citizens Global Support for Democratic Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

NORRIS, P. 2000. *A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Postindustrial Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

NORRIS, P. 2001. *Digital Divide: Civic Engagement, Information Poverty, and the Internet Worldwide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

NORRIS, P. 2011. *Democratic Deficit – Critical Citizens Revisited*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

O'REILLY, T. 2005. "What is web 2.0: design patterns and business models for the next generation of software". Retrieved October 30, 2017, from http://www.oreilly.com/pub/a/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html.

PCP. 2008. *Political Resolution, PCP XVIII Congress*. Lisbon: Edições Avante!.

PCP. 2012. *Political Resolution, PCP XIX Congress*. Lisbon: Edições Avante!.

PCP. 2016. *Political Resolution, PCP XX Congress*. Lisbon: Edições Avante!.

PHARR, S. J., R. D. Putnam, and R. J. Dalton. 2000. "A quarter-century of declining confidence". *Journal of Democracy*, 11 (2): 5-25.

PICKARD, S., C. Nativel, and F. Portier. 2012. *Les politiques de jeunesse au Royaume-Uni et en France. Désaffection, répression et accompagnement à la citoyenneté*. Paris: Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle (PSN).

RHEINGOLD, H. 1993. *The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier*. Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley.

SOBACI, M.Z., I. Hatipoglu. 2017. "Measuring the engagement level of political parties with public on Facebook: the case of Turkey". Working paper presented at the E-Democracy and Open Government Conference (CEDEM). Krems: Donau University Krems.

STEINBERG, A. 2017. "Taking an in-depth look at political parties on Facebook: what they are saying, how they are saying it, and how party members respond". *The Journal of Social Media in Society*, 6 (2): 271-314.

SVÅSAND, L. 2013. "Party development in the old world: and in the new". In *Party Governance and Party Democracy*, eds. C. W. Müller, M. H. Narud. New York: Springer: 253-274.

TAYLOR, J.A., E. Burt. 1999. "Parliaments on the web: learning through innovation". *Parliamentary Affairs*, 52 (3): pp. 503-517.

TORCAL, M., J. Montero, eds. 2006. *Political Disaffection in Contemporary Democracies – Social Capital, Institutions and Politics*. London: Routledge.

VACCARI, C. 2008. "Surfing to the Élysée: the internet in the 2007 French elections". *French Politics*, 6 (1): 1-22.

VACCARI, C. 2013. *Digital Politics in Western Democracies: A Comparative Study*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

VALERIANI, A., C. Vaccari. 2015. "Accidental exposure to politics on social media as online participation equalizer in Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom". *New Media and Society*, 18 (9): 1857-1874.

VAN BIEZEN, I., P. Mair, and T. Poguntke. 2012. "Going , going , . . . gone ? The decline of party membership in contemporary Europe". *European Journal of Political Research*, 51 (1): 24--56.

VAN BIEZEN, I., T. Poguntke. 2014. "The decline of membership-based politics". *Party Politics*. 20 (2): 205-216.

VAN BIEZEN, I. 2003. *Political Parties in New Democracies. Party Organization in Southern and East-Central Europe*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.

VERGEER, M., L. Hermans, and S. Sams. 2011. "Online social networks and micro-blogging in political campaigning. The exploration of a new campaign tool and a new campaign style". *Party Politics*, 19 (3): 477-501.

WALLSTEN, K. 2010. "'Yes We Can': how online viewership, blog discussion, campaign statements, and mainstream media coverage produced a viral video phenomenon". *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 38 (2-3): 163-181.