# "Citizen Politics: Are the New Media Reshaping Political Engagement?"

## International Workshop

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**UAB**
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

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# CONTENT

# INTRODUCTION

According to many scholars patterns of political engagement have been changing in the last decades: the erosion of traditional forms of involvement, such as voting and membership in political parties, is accompanied by an expansion of participation repertoires, the rise of protest politics and more individualized forms of action. This research seminar will examine whether and how the growing use of new media is related to changing attitudes and participation patterns.

Internet use by citizens, parties and organisations may facilitate large scale spread of political information, reduce communication and mobilization costs, modify citizens' political attitudes and involvement, and introduce new modes of *online* political participation. Although these benefits of new media are being advanced by many scholars, we still need further work to integrate the online dimension in the conceptualisation of political participation, its explanatory models, and its related normative concerns: What is the role of online resources for traditional political participation? What is the causal process by which Internet use may modify political attitudes? What is (and what is not) online participation? How do we explain it? How important are its implications for democratic politics?

## CONFERENCE PROGRAM

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Open session to all publics* | | |
| Thursday, 28th | *18-19[30]* | Opening:<br>Salvador Cardús, Dean of the Faculty of Political Science and Sociology, UAB<br><br>Presentation:<br>Eva Anduiza, Professor of Political Science, UAB<br><br>Conference<br>***New and old strategies of political communication: The Obama campaign***<br>J. Segarra, political consultant |
| *Panels restricted to registered participants* | | |
| Friday, 29th | *9[30]-11* | Panel 1: E-Electoral Politics<br>- Papers: R. Gibson, V. Sampedro and M. Poletti, R. Borge, A.S. Cardenal, A. Padró-Solanet and A. Batlle, L. Sudulich<br>- Discussant: C. Tolbert<br>  Chair: L. Jorba |
| | *11-11[30]* | Coffee break* |
| | *11[30]-13* | Panel 2: Parties and elections in the USA<br>- Papers: C. Tolbert, B. Boynton, C. Vaccari, B. Bimber<br>- Discussant: M. Jensen<br>  Chair: R. Borge |
| | *13-14[30]* | Lunch* |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Friday, 29th | $14^{30}$-$16^{30}$ | **Panel 3: New mobilization strategies**<br><br>- Papers: Y. Breindl, C. Cristancho, J. Salcedo, B. Krueger, S. Vissers, M. Hooghe, V. Mahéo and D. Stolle<br><br>- Discussants: A. Chadwick<br>Chair: C. Galais |
| | 20h | Conference Dinner** |
| Saturday 30th | $9^{30}$-11 | **Panel 4: Impacts on knowledge and participation**<br><br>- Papers: L. Jorba, A. Gallego, E. Anduiza, M. Cantijoch, M. Jensen<br><br>- Discussant: B. Bimber<br>Chair: J. San Martin |
| | 11-11$^{30}$ | Coffee break* |
| | $11^{30}$-13 | **Panel 5: Online Public Sphere**<br><br>- Papers: A. Chadwick, M. Fuster, A.K. Madsen<br><br>- Discussant: B. Krueger<br>Chair: R. Gibson |
| | 13-14$^{30}$ | Lunch* |
| | $14^{30}$-$16^{30}$ | - Round table: B. Bimber, A. Chadwick, R. Gibson, B. Krueger, V. Sampedro, C. Tolbert<br><br>- Chair: Eva Anduiza |

\* Provided by the Organization
\*\* Participants pay for their own expenses and participation is voluntary (22€)

## PANELS AND PAPERS

### PANEL 1: E-ELECTORAL POLITICS
- **Rachel Gibson** (University of Manchester): Citizen-Campaigning, New Media and the Revitalisation of Politics?
- **Mónica Poletti** and **Víctor Sampedro** (Universidad Rey Juan Carlos): Cyber-democracy: dividing or merging factor? A study of ICT use during the Spanish national elections of 2008
- **Rosa Borge, Ana S. Cardenal, Albert Padró-Solanet and Albert Batlle** (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya): Cyberactivism, campaigning and party change in the Catalan parties

### PANEL 2: PARTIES AND ELECTIONS IN THE USA
- **Caroline Tolbert** (University of Iowa): Youth, online engagement, and the 2008 U.S. presidential election
- **Bob Boynton** (University of Iowa): Schattschneider goes Web 2.0
- **Cristian Vaccari** (University Of Bologna): Technology is a Commodity: The Internet in the 2008 US Presidential Election
- **Bruce Bimber** (University of California, Santa Barbara)**:** New media and horizontal politics in the Obama Campaign

### PANEL 3: NEW MOBILIZATION STRATEGIES
- **Yana Breindl** (Université Libre de Bruxelles): Web-based protest in Europe: the case of digital rights activism
- **Camilo Cristancho and Jorge Salcedo** (Universidad Autònoma de Barcelona): Assessing Internet Mobilization – A Methodological Approach For Integrating Source Analysis and Survey Data
- **Brian Krueger** (University of Rhode Island): Opt in or tune out: Online mobilization and political participation

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- **Sara Vissers** (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven), **Marc Hooghe** (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven), **Valérie-Anne Mahéo** (Mc Gill University), **and Dietlind Stolle** (Mc Gill University): The impact of online and offline mobilization on different modes of participation

## PANEL 4: IMPACTS ON KNOWLEDGE AND PARTICIPATION
- **Eva Anduiza, Aina Gallego and Laia Jorba** (Universidad Autònoma de Barcelona): New media and the paradox of the knowledge gap in Spain
- **Marta Cantijoch** (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona): Reinforcement and mobilization: the influence of the Internet on different types of political participation
- **Mike Jensen** (University of California, Irvine): Political participation, alienation, and the Internet in Spain and the United States

## PANEL 5: ONLINE PUBLIC SPHERE
- **Andrew Chadwick** (Royal Holloway, University of London): Granularity in citizen's online engagement
- **Mayo Fuster** (European University Institute): Participation as an eco-system? - Participation at online communities: The case of the Openesf.net
- **Anders Koed Madsen** (University of Illinois): Norms, technology and information: Pondering the infrastructural choices of ´e-participation´.

# ABSTRACTS

(List of papers' abstracts. Listed by surname of first author)

## Anduiza, Eva, Aina Gallego and Laia Jorba:
### *New media and the paradox of the knowledge gap in Spain*

The availability of media choices and possibilities of content selection has risen dramatically with the expansion of the new media. There are contradicting expectations regarding the impact of this process of choice expansion on the population's political knowledge. Some authors argue that increasing media choice is resulting in a widening knowledge gap, whereby the political interested have many means to learn about politics while the uninterested skip political information and turn more and more ignorant about political affairs. A more optimistic point of view is that increasing media and content choices provide opportunities for political learning to the uninterested in politics and some of them may make use of these opportunities, thus closing the knowledge gaps. In this paper we analyze the knowledge gap in Spain, with a focus on how this gap is affected by media use. We find that frequent Internet users are more knowledgeable about politics than non users. Well-educated Internet users learn more when they use the Internet than the less-educated users. In that regard, the political knowledge gap related to education might be growing with the introduction of new technologies. However, the knowledge gap between the interested and uninterested is smaller for frequent Internet users than for non-users. These findings provide a complex picture and contradict the pessimistic theory about the impact of increasing media choice on political knowledge.

## Bimber, Bruce
## New media and horizontal politics in the Obama Campaign

Barack Obama used the Internet and social media more intensively and successfully than any previous presidential candidate in the US, and perhaps more so than any previous candidate for any high US office. What were his strategies with these tools? Why was he more successful at using these tools than both his general election opponent, John McCain, and his main primary election opponent, Hillary Clinton? Part of the answer lies en superior skill with new media on the part of his campaign itself, but a significant part of the answer lies in the skills with new media and the sensibilities of Obama's supporters themselves. In some ways, Obama and his supporters were successful with new styles of horizontal communication, while in other ways they were successful at using new media to accomplish the basics of traditional campaign communication and organizing.

## Borge, Rosa, Ana S. Cardenal, Albert Padró and Albert Batlle: Cyberactivism, campaigning and party change in the Catalan parties

It is commonplace to say that in recent years partisan activism has come to life again due to the growing use of ICTs. There are lots of examples around the world of how candidates and parties are successfully using their websites, their blogs and the (so-called) web 2.0. in order to expand activism and reinforce electoral campaigning. Parties are trying to mobilise supporters by means of the channels opened on their websites and blogs. But also party members and supporters who are frequent ICTs users are somehow pushing and questioning the established partisan organization. In this sense, some authors have pointed out (Margetts, 2001) that parties' boundaries are blurring and supporters that are not official members are becoming more important as campaign activists and public opinion mobilisers. This paper will focus on cyberactivism within and on the boundaries of political

parties, and how this new phenomenon is changing the established parties' structures.

First, we want to know which are the channels and technologies more frequently used by the cyberactivists. For example, what is the extension of blogging or the social networks (web 2.0). Second, we want to examine whether ICTs are widening participation in the sense that supporters and members with a new profile (sociodemographics, attitudes, values) are beginning to get involved in parties' activities. Are these cyberactivists younger, more politically informed, more prone to the expansion of democratic structures within the party? We also want to know who, among the cyberactivists, are members of the party, who have registered as supporters or who are only giving some help during the electoral campaign but without involvement in the party. That is, we will examine the different levels and time for cyberactivism. Third, we will check if ICTs are deepening internal democracy and if they are awakening division and conflicts inside the party. Parties are opening new channels for communication and participation on their websites but we want to check if the decision mechanisms are changing because of that. Maybe these activists online disseminate their opinion in blogs or get new supporters via web 2.0. networks but have they any impact on party's decisions? Their visibility and capacity for mobilisation can conflict with party hierarchy and formal party structures. Therefore, we also want to examine the acknowledgement and legitimacy that online activists get within the party.

There are few empirical studies on party cyberactivism (Ward, Lusoli & Gibson, 2002; Löfgren, 2003; Lusoli & Ward, 2004; Gibson, Lusoli & Ward, 2005; Pedersen & Saglie, 2005). We want to contribute to this literature with a new case study: the Catalan political parties. We will carry out a survey of online Catalan party activists focused on uses of ICTs during the 2008 Spanish general elections. In short, with this survey we aim to characterise who cyberactivists are, which ICTs channels they use and which is their position regarding the challenges that ICTs raise to internal democracy and participation.

## Boynton, Bob:
## Schattschneider goes Web 2.0

The evidence is overwhelming that the supporters of Obama were much more enthusiastic about their candidate than were the supporters of McCain. However, when you look at the action connected with the campaigns on YouTube you find: The videos of the Obama campaign were viewed fewer times on average than were the videos of the McCain campaign. The types of videos viewed most and least frequently were substantially different for the two campaigns. There were fewer comments about the Obama campaign videos than the McCain campaign videos. There were fewer ratings for the Obama videos compared to the McCain videos. The views arrived by somewhat different routes. The McCain YouTube site was 'where the action was' during the campaign.

The campaign on YouTube in 2008 is the first time we have been able to observe political activity on such a broad scale. The videos of the two candidates were viewed more than 60 million times. While comments and ratings are a fraction of total views, even a small fraction is very substantial activity. YouTube became a domain for global political action that had never existed before.

In this report I will analyze how viewers used YouTube as a site for political action. The campaigns on YouTube have received a great deal of attention, but most of it has discussed the videos the campaigns posted to YouTube. The Pew foundation and news organizations conducted surveys to find out how many people were using YouTube as an important source of news about the campaign. But that is as far as sample surveys will take you. I will go beyond what can be learned from the surveys to examine the political action in this new domain. We need a better accounting for all of this activity than the surveys can give us. And I am confident that E.E. Schattschneider's ideas in The Semi-Sovereign People are a good starting point for interpreting this political action in 2008.

## Breindl, Yana: Web-based protest in Europe: the case of digital activism

This paper discusses the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) by nongovernmental actors with a view to influence the policy-making at the European level by focusing on "digital rights" activists that can be considered as members of an emergent social movement. "Digital rights" activists are generally rooted in the open and free software community and/or the peace or civil rights movements. Located in various european countries, these activists are developing distinctive discursive practices and protest strategies on issues such as intellectual property rights or the respect of civil rights in digital environments on which the European Institutions are increasingly legislating.

The literature on collective action and ICTs has long acknowledged that Web-based tools constitute crucial resources for contemporary social movements such as the global justice movement (e.g.: Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2004; Kavada, 2005, 2007), environmental activists (Pickerill, 2004) let alone hacktivists (Jordan, 2004). Yet by approaching web-based protest from a social movement's perspective, scholars often fail to examine the importance of communicative processes that shape current protest activities. Therefore, this paper analyses the advocacy tactics (Keck & Sikkink, 1998) developed by "digital rights" activists aiming at mobilizing their "community" but above all at pressuring political decision-makers.

One case study constitutes the 2003-2005 campaign against "software patents" that mobilized several activists across Europe. The Internet and other electronic devices played a major role in this battle as one campaigner declared: "for a pressure group that consists of activists throughout and even beyond the EU, there is no alternative to the extreme use of electronic communication. There is no way to meet physically, at least not frequently" (Mueller, 2006: 47). Indeed, the technological infrastructure of ICTs enabled the encounter, organization and collaboration of a vast array of individuals, groups and organizations from across the continent.

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Yet, a detailed analysis of this campaign makes clear that online techniques alone are not sufficient for groups wishing to influence the political process. In order to compete with classical interest groups by mobilizing a broader public on a highly technical issue, the campaigners were forced to rely on a more or less effective combination of online and offline protest techniques. The analysis of this campaign will be compared to first results of an ongoing campaign, i.e.: the revision of the "Telecom Package", in order to shed light on web-based protest activities in the EU. This case study approach is indeed necessary in order to understand new patterns of citizen activism and involvement that are increasingly relying on ICTs as tools of political participation.

## Cantijoch, Marta:
## Reinforcement and mobilization: the influence of the Internet on different types of political participation

The literature on the impact of Internet use on political participation has debated whether the Internet has a positive or a negative effect on political participation. On the one hand, those authors defending the reinforcement hypothesis argue that the use of the Internet offers new channels for those who were already participating before securing their access to the Internet. On the other hand, the mobilization hypothesis supports that the Internet will contribute towards a more participative society by attracting previously inactive members of the public.

In this paper we analyse political participation distinguishing between representational and extra-representational activities. We argue that Internet use may have an impact on specific forms of political participation. We defend that the increase of the amount of information available on the Internet allows for escaping the mainstream discourses and the agenda-setting established by traditional elites. A higher diversity of information is available and involved citizens will access it voluntarily or through unplanned exposures. Then, this exposure to more diverse discourses would contribute to the impulse towards extra-representational modes of participation.

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We analyse the impact of frequency of Internet use and specific uses of the Internet on different types of participation and we obtain that the mobilisation approach can be applied to the Spanish case regarding extra-representational modes of participation. We also check for distinct mobilising impacts in three profiles of individuals according to their attitudinal traits: disaffected, critical and institutionalised. Our results suggest that the use of the Internet reinforces critical citizens in their participatory habits and mobilises institutionalised individuals towards extra-representational activities. Our conclusion is that the reinforcement and mobilisation hypotheses are both verified. They are not exclusive, but complementary.

## Chadwick, Andrew:
### Granularity in citizen's online engagement

This paper seeks to broaden the debate about e-democracy. Since the emergence of the e-democracy movement, most projects and analyses have used rich and sustained deliberation on an often- romanticized "Athenian" or "public sphere" model as a yardstick to both judge and empirically measure outcomes. This approach, heavily influenced by an ideal of rational critical discourse, has proved notoriously difficult to embed in political organizations. As a consequence, the use of digital network technologies to shape public policy is generally met with incredulity by most politicians, public servants, and citizens. Following a brief critique of the assumptions underlying the literature to date, this paper sketches out an alternative approach—one based on the incentive structures that seem to shape how public servants and citizens now behave online. The approach is derived from preliminary observations of the low threshold co-production behavior characteristic of what has come to be known as "web 2.0." While it may not live up to the high ideals of the deliberative public sphere, some of this behavior has real value in online consultation and public policymaking. We should acknowledge that successful e-democracy programs may require a plurality of different socio-technical values and mechanisms.

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## Cristancho, Camilo and Jorge Salcedo:
## Assessing Internet Mobilization

The aim of this paper is to review some of the core theories of political mobilization in an internet context in order to appraise the benefits and limitations that can be expected from the petitions for political action made by individuals and organizations through email and website publishing. The potential for mass mobilization and the implications of e-mobilization on fragmentation are assessed through a case study of a call for protest in Barcelona against the government´s decision to follow the G20 policies to face the financial crisis. The methodological approach that we use combines web analysis with protest surveys in order to link the individual traits of participants to mobilization sources. As in previous studies, we share similar conclusions on the limited advantages for internet to expand mobilization in spite of its potential for providing entry points for information on political action or for providing individuals with low-cost diffusion channels to forward petitions. Finally, we identify a decisive role for social networks in overcoming the risk of fragmentation in cyberspace as part of their mobilization endeavors.

## Fuster, Mayo:
## Participation as an eco-system? - Participation at
## online communities: The case of the Openesf.net

An Online Community can be defined as a collective action performed by a loosely integrated "network" of individuals that share informational resources, communicate, cooperate and interact, mainly via an online platform, around a common goal or interest.
The emerging body of empirical research on the participation at online communities suggests some common features. The percentage of participants which generate contents appears to be very low; instead a larger presence of "lurkers" or individuals that do not participate in any way or/and act as an "audience" appears to be larger. A long tale of "weak" participation or individuals that do very small or indirect contributions is also suggested.

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These several forms of participation seem to be integrated in the resulting community. These suggested patters will be considered for the case of the online community around the openesf.net. The openesf.net is a platform provided by the European Social Forum to facilitate the networking and the building of the Forum's Program. It will be presented the results of an empirical analysis of the actual participation and interaction at the openesf.net. The empirical data will be based on online ethnography and statistical analysis of digital threads available at the openesf.net.

## Gibson, Rachel: Citizen-Campaigning, New Media and the Revitalisation of Politics?

In this paper I seek to examine what the new media can do for contemporary democracy practice from the perspective of the new media, focusing in particular on how far it could help to reinvigorate one of the more established of arenas of conventional politics – the election campaign. Thus, while I do not share some observers firm convictions about the parlous condition of modern politics (indeed there are clear grounds for seeing the democratic glass as half-full, particularly in relation to young people (Dalton, 2006; 2008) I do proceed here from a recognition that there has been a significant decline in the levels of support and popular trust enjoyed by our representative institutions and elected officials in recent decades (Norris, 1999; Pharr, Putnam, 2000), particularly in respect to parties' civic strength and levels of voter attachment (Dalton and Wattengberg, 2002). My purpose here then is to ask whether the new information and communication technologies (ICTs) (particularly the newer user-driven applications synonymous with web 2.0 era) offer the possibility for rejuvenation of formal politics, sui generis of the debate over the scale and particular sources of the problem. In a nutshell, do the new technologies of blogs, social networking and video sharing sites present politicians with new and meaningful ways to stimulate popular interest and participation in established politics and the representative process? To address this question we take evidence from one of the most acclaimed e-campaigns to date, that of the

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Democratic nominee Barack Obama's in his bid for the U.S. Presidency in 2008. Without wishing to steal too much thunder from our conclusions it can be revealed at this point that the answer arrived at is a tentative yes, democratic benefits do appear to be associated with the use of web 2.0 tools, although one must remember that even in e-politics, context is king. A simple importation of the tools used by the Obama team into the UK General election environment is unlikely to unleash the levels of passion and excitement and financial generosity that the newly elected President enjoyed in the run up to his victory. However, it is clear that his digital advisors, many of whom had worked with Howard Dean, paid considerable attention to ensuring their online tactics were translated into offline mobilization and that these efforts helped to sustain him in the race, if to not win the election itself. The adoption and adaptation of these strategies, therefore, would understandably be of interest to politicians and parties around the world. Here we seek to identify what lay at the heart of Obama's successful use of the new media in 2008 and how they might be of utility for British parties in 2010.

## Jensen, Mike: Political participation, alienation, and the Internet in Spain and the United States

Traditional theories of liberal democracy depend on the ability of political institutions to aggregate interests and convert those interests into electoral outcomes. Hence the ability for campaigns to represent those interests depends on the strength of the connections between political parties and candidates with members of the public. However studies show that in Western democracies, there has been a decline across the board in voting and campaign participation. As a result, nonparticipation and inequalities in participation pose a significant problem for electoral representation.

However the Internet may have the potential to reverse some of these trends by enabling citizens to connect directly with candidates. This research investigates the relationship between use of the Internet and connections with electoral campaigns and levels of political alienation.

Additionally, it explores the relationship between online interactions and offline participation in campaigns and electoral politics, differentiating between different types of online activities as well as differences between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0. Specific questions the research addresses are: To what extent do individuals use the Internet to connect with candidates and parties? In what ways are they using the Internet to connect with parties and candidates? What is the relationship between online and offline participation in campaigns and electoral activity? Is there a difference between their use of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 and offline participation? How do persons who are politically alienated use the Internet, and might this be a way for parties to reach the politically disaffected?

The data analysis is based on a survey carried out in both Spain and the United States of America. The Spanish survey included 2800 face-to-face interviews randomly selected respondents conducted during the winter in 2007-2008. The US survey contains 1200 telephone interviews of randomly selected respondents from a national probability sample conducted just after the 2008 elections. The surveys contain a wide variety of questions regarding political participation offline and online, a variety of nonpolitical uses of the Internet, questions about political attitudes and values, and questions about political knowledge. The survey was originally constructed in Spanish and underwent two separate translations into English in order to select the best translation. Funding for the American study came from the (US) National Science Foundation (grant no. SES-0121232) and from for the Spanish survey from the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation (grant no. SEJ2007-60082).

The Spain-US comparison gives several points of analytical leverage in addressing the questions raised above. First, it provides variance in the level of Internet use which may impact candidate and party strategies for communicating with potential voters as well as individuals' use. Second, there are historical differences with respect to the political development with the United States being a long established democracy and settled boundaries while

Spain became democratic in the 1970s and has regions with separatist movements. Finally, there are enduring cultural differences between the countries which impact political values and orientations. This research therefore enables us to analyze the impact of the availability of Internet access on usage practices and the impact that political culture and development have in shaping the political use of the Internet.

**Koed Madsen, Anders:**
**Norms, technology and information: Pondering the infrastructural choices of ´e-participation´.**

This study provides a qualitative analysis of the infrastructural choices of eight web-portals launched between 2006 and 2008 as part of the ´eParticipation preparatory action´ in EU. These portals aim at revitalizing democratic citizen participation and the paper analyses how they shape this abstract aim theoretically and concretize it technically. It is argued that the prevalent focus of the portals is on making transmission of information more effective and providing citizens the possibility to react to official legal proposals. More deliberative tendencies are, however, localized and discussed as well. The study extracts four infrastructural dimensions from the data that can serve as a basis for a future typology of ´e-participation´ infrastructures. These dimensions revolve around the logic of political discussion, the contents for such discussions, the levels of moderation and the choice of making a portal centered around messages in comparison to agents.

### Krueger, Brian: Opt in or tune out: Online mobilization and political participation

An enduring concern for students of political mobilization has been whether political mobilization efforts reinforce or expand current patterns of political participation. Despite some promise, an emerging body of research suggests that Internet mobilization techniques generally will reinforce existing participatory patterns. Online mobilization campaigns rely heavily on individuals to first submit their email addresses for future contact. Because signing up for future political email is itself an act of political participation, mobilization resulting from these solicited contacts serves to reinforce the engagement of those already willing and able to participate. Yet, many individuals do receive unsolicited political email. These unsolicited political email hold the most potential to activate the inactive. Unfortunately, despite speculation about the mobilizing potential of these unsolicited email contacts, political scientists know little about whether unsolicited political messages induce engagement. This project seeks to answer the question: Does unsolicited political email independently induce individuals to participate in politics? Using data from a unique probability sample survey of U.S. Internet users, several multivariate regressions suggest that unsolicited email contact from mobilizing institutions does not induce individuals to engage in political activity. The paper concludes with a discussion of these findings.

### Poletti, Mónica and Victor Sampedro: Cyber-democracy: dividing or merging factor? A study of ICT use during the Spanish national elections of 2008

As part of a bigger project in which several methodologies and actors' perspectives have been used, we analyze the increasing importance of the Internet and ICT in the Spanish political context, focusing on the innovations brought forth during the last national elections of 2008. Following a global trend, changes on the realm of cyber-democracy are taking place in several ways. On the institutional side, politicians and political parties have used new technologies in a more organized and innovative way compared to previous elections, using traditional tools as well as Web 2.0 applications. Citizens, on their side, have increased the use of the Internet to follow the political campaign, changing their patterns of media consumption and possibly influencing their political involvement and participation.

The perspective shown in this paper is bottom-up: we compare the perceptions that different groups of citizens hold about these innovative trends. We selected people on the dimensions of age, Internet users' political profiles and political ideology. For each of these dimensions we organized two discussion groups, for a total of six.

In our analysis we explore whether a generational digital divide exist, or whether an open and plural mobilization is now possible through the ICT. Then, we investigate in what ways new social movements and political parties' cyber-activists differ in their use and meaning attribution of the Internet. Finally we look whether differences in use exist between right-wing voters (the opposition party), and left-wing voters (the government party). Our aim is to document present changes and future trends of cyber-political culture in Spain and more generally in Southern European countries.

## Sudulich, Maria Laura and Matthew Wall: 'Every little helps'. Cyber-campaigning in the 2007 Irish General Election

This paper explores the impact of cyber-campaigning on candidates' electoral performance in the 2007 Irish general election. As such, we investigate the extent to which previous findings in this area are generalizable; testing them in a new political context. Our methodological approach seeks to deal with two of the critiques that have been leveled against the validity of aggregate findings on the electoral effects of cyber-campaigns. We do so by controlling for levels of candidate campaign expenditure, as well the extent to which candidates were viewed as 'favorites' or 'outsiders' to win seats during the campaign. Finally, we present the first analysis in this field of whether the effects of cyber-campaigning are constant across constituencies with varying technological profiles.

## Tolbert, Caroline: Youth, online engagement, and the 2008 U.S. presidential election

In the run up to the 2008 election, the media buzz about younger voters was palpable. Expectations were set high. Young voters – generally meant to be those under 30 – would turn out in record numbers, closing the participation gap with older voters that has existed for decades. In many ways young voters of 2008 were the soccer moms to 2000 and the Nascar dads of 2004. The group everyone thought would make the difference between winning and losing. Of course, in the aftermath of the election, the picture looked different. By most measures youth turnout, while increasing over 2004, was not the force that many had expected. Estimates put young voter turnout at about 20 million in 2004, and at 22 million in 2008. While an increase, these results still left a significant participation gap between younger and older voters. No other group is as disengaged from elections as youth. However, a closer look suggests just how significant this group was in 2008. Where John Kerry won young voters by about 9 points, Barack Obama won the group by an estimated 34 points, 66%-32%. When

all is said and done, this translates to a margin of victory for Obama of over 7 million votes from those under 30, nearly 80% of his overall margin of about 8.5 million.

Given the role these voters played in 2008, a closer look seems in order. In this paper we examine participation and engagement of younger voters during the 2008 election cycle, building on the work of previous scholars (Putnam 2000; Jennings and Stoker 2001; Green et al 2001; Highton and Wolfinger 2001; Carpini 2000; Bennett 1997; Campbell et al 1960; Lewis-Beck et al 2008), and work on online mobilization (Lupia and Baird 2003; Mossberger et all 2007; Bimber 2003; Tolbert and McNeal 2003; Krueger 2002). Using a unique dataset that includes national survey data from the presidential primaries (February 2008), an October 2008 rolling pre-general election national survey, and a post election November panel, we build a picture of young voters, their issue preferences, their participatory behavior in both traditional and online modes, and their voting decisions. We consider whether and in what ways younger voters differ from older voters in these areas, focusing on online engagement in politics, including reading online news, contributing money to candidates online, political email use, reading political blogs and watching campaign videos on Youtube. These activities are compared to traditional forms of participation, and used to predict vote choice in the primary and general elections. Our intent is to build a comprehensive picture of voters under 30 who in the end meant the difference between a closely won election and an emphatic victory for Barack Obama in 2008.

## Vaccari, Cristian: Technology is a Commodity: The Internet in the 2008 US Presidential Election

The role of the internet as a tool for participation and organization has been considered the most important innovation in the 2008 US Presidential campaign and one of the key strategic factors in Barack Obama's conquest of the Democratic nomination and the White House. This paper draws from more than thirty qualitative interviews with top-level professionals who worked in the internet teams of Barack Obama and John McCain in the 2008 elections. These insiders offer unique insights into the dynamics and implications of technological adaptation in campaigns. Rather than adopting a techno-centric perspective, internet campaigning professionals acknowledge that several contextual factors enhance or hinder the effectiveness of online tools, such as the candidate's personality, the message of the campaign, and the mood of the electorate. Technology is seen more as an efficient channel of preexisting motivations and loyalties rather than as a driver of these attitudes. Moreover, while the internet has often been characterized as presenting campaigns with a dilemma between top-down hierarchical control and bottom-up anarchic spontaneity, internet professionals argue that contemporary e-campaigning tools can help achieve both of these goals. These findings have important implications regarding the dynamics of contemporary campaigns and the role of citizen participation within them.

### Vissers, Sara, Marc Hooghe, Valérie-Anne Mahéo and Dietlind Stolle: The impact of online and offline mobilization on different modes of participation

In recent years, various voluntary associations and political organizations have increasingly relied on internet-based mobilization campaigns, replacing traditional forms of face-to-face recruitment and mobilization. With this shift, many researchers have claimed that the use of the internet might lead to more effective political mobilization of citizens. However, the question arises whether Internet mobilization encourages participation in both the online and off-line worlds, or whether it simply intensifies toolspecific participation online. In this paper we test whether Internet-based mobilization tools are potentially more effective than face-to-face tools for different modes of political participation. More specifically, the question is whether Internet mobilization mainly stimulates online participation, while face to face mobilization mostly encourages offline participation; or whether different mobilization strategies have a broader spill-over effect.

To examine the impact of different mobilization strategies on online and offline political behaviors, we employ an experimental design. The experiment used a mobilization campaign to stimulate environmental participation and consciousness among young students and participants of lower socio-economic backgrounds in Belgium. Our results suggest that face-to-face mobilization fosters offline participation, while online mobilization significantly stimulates internet participation. Cross-over effects (from online mobilization to offline participation or vice versa were not significant). In other words, mobilization is tool-specific. However, the overall mobilization effects proved only to be significant for the participants with a low socio-economic status. This could imply that once this group is reached by mobilization efforts, the effects will be stronger than those among a sample that is already saturated with political information.

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

| Surname | Name | Afiliation and contact |
|---|---|---|
| Anduiza | Eva | Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona<br>eva.anduiza@uab.cat |
| Batlle | Albert | Universitat Oberta de Catalunya<br>abatlle@uoc.edu |
| Bimber | Bruce | University of California, Santa Barbara<br>bimber@cits.ucsb.edu |
| Borge | Rosa | Universitat Oberta de Catalunya<br>rborge@uoc.edu |
| Boynton | Bob | Iowa University<br>bob-boynton@uiowa.edu |
| Breindl | Yana | Univeris. Libre de Bruxelles<br>ybreindl@ulb.ac.be |
| Cantijoch | Marta | Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona<br>marta.cantijoch@uab.cat |
| Cardenal | Ana S. | Universitat Oberta de Catalunya<br>acardenal@uoc.edu |
| Chadwick | Andrew | University of London<br>Andrew.Chadwick@rhul.ac.uk |
| Colombo | Clelia | DGPC, Generalitat de Catalunya<br>ccolombo@gencat.cat |
| Company | Biel | Universitat Oberta de Catalunya<br>bcompanyp@uoc.edu |
| Cristancho | Camilo | Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona<br>camilo.cristancho@gmail.com |
| Fuster | Mayo | European University Institute<br>Mayo.Fuster@EUI.eu |
| Galais | Carol | Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona<br>Carolina.Galais@uab.cat |

| Surname | Name | Afiliation and contact |
|---------|------|------------------------|
| Gallego | Aina | Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona<br>aina.gallego@uab.cat |
| Gibson | Rachel | University of Manchester<br>Rachel.Gibson@manchester.ac.uk |
| Jensen | Mike | University of California, Irvine<br>mjensen@uci.edu |
| Jorba | Laia | Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona<br>laia.jorba@uab.cat |
| K. Madsen | Anders | University of Illinois<br>anderskoedmadsen@gmail.com |
| Krueger | Brian | University of Rhode Island<br>bkrueger@uri.edu |
| López | Marc | Nuestra Causa, www.nuestracausa.es<br>mlopezplana@yahoo.es |
| Mosca | Maria Paola | Associazione TrecentoSessanta<br>mp.mosca@gmail.com |
| Padró | Albert | Universitat Oberta de Catalunya<br>apadro_solanet@uoc.edu |
| Parodi | Francesca | Fundació Campalans<br>francesca.parodi@fcampalans.cat |
| Peña | Ismael | Universitat Oberta de Catalunya<br>ipena@uoc.edu |
| Polanco | Joslay | Universidad de Navarra<br>jpolanco@alumni.unav.es |
| Poletti, | Monica | Universidad Rey Juan Carlos<br>monica.poletti@gmail.com |
| Sagarra | Jordi | Political Consultant<br>jsegarra@segarrateres.com |
| Salcedo | Jorge | Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona<br>jorgelsalcedo@gmail.com |

| Surname | Name | Afiliation and contact |
|---|---|---|
| Sampedro | Víctor | Universidad Rey Juan Carlos<br>sampedro@nodo50.org |
| Sanmartin | Josep | Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona<br>josep.sanmartin@uab.cat |
| Serrano | Ivan | Universitat Oberta de Catalunya<br>iserranoba@uoc.edu |
| Sort | Josep | Universitat Ramon Llull, www.virtualep.eu<br>jsort64@gmail.com |
| Sudulich | Laura | Trinity College Dublin<br>sudulicm@tcd.ie |
| Szmulewicz | Esteban | Universidad Atónoma de Barcelona<br>eszmulewicz@gmail.com |
| Terés | Àlex | Political Consultant<br>ateres@segarrateres.com |
| Tolbert | Caroline | University of Iowa<br>caroline-tolbert@uiowa.edu |
| Vaccari | Cristian | University of Bologna<br>cristian.vaccari@gmail.com |
| Vissers | Sara | Katholieke Universiteit Leuven<br>Sara.Vissers@soc.kuleuven.be |

## CONFERENCE LOCATION

Convent de Sant Agustí, Carrer Comerç 36,
www.bcn.cat/centrecivicsantagusti



## CONFERENCE DINNER

Tèxtil Cafè, Carrer Montcada 12,
www.textilcafe.com

## CONTACT INFORMATION


Laia Jorba
Professor of Political Science, UAB
p.polnet@uab.cat


Departament Ciència Política I Dret Públic
Edifici B, Campus UAB
08193 Bellaterra (Barcelona)
+ 34 93 581 24 74

IGOP, Mòdul de Recerca A
1ª planta, Parc de Recerca UAB
08193 Bellaterra (Barcelona)
+34 93 586 88 14

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www.polnetuab.net
p.polnet@uab.cat