IPSR
RISP

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Digital revolution and party innovations: An analysis of the Spanish case

Francesco Raniolo[1] and Valeria Tarditi[2]* ID

[1]Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Calabria, Cosenza, Italy and [2]Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Bologna, Bologna, Italy
*Corresponding author. Email: valeria.tarditi2@unibo.it

Abstract
The literature on party change has shown how the advent of the digital revolution and the diffusion of new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the democracies of the 21st century have influenced the way political parties communicate and perform their functions. Less investigated, however, is the organizational reaction of political parties to the challenges posed by the transformation of the communications environment. The aim of this paper is to scrutinize whether parties evince a transformative tendency towards virtual models in which new digital ICTs are used as 'functional equivalents' of the old organizational infrastructures. To this end, the paper focuses on the Spanish democracy – a paradigmatic case of the political transformations that European democracies have undergone since the 2008 economic crisis – comparing the organizational models of the main political parties: the Partido Socialista Obrero Español, the Partido Popular, Podemos and Ciudadanos. Particularly the analysis – through the use of parties' documents – focuses on whether and how digital tools are used by the Spanish parties in three dimensions: the participants in the organization, the organizational configuration and the decision-making process. The main conclusions are: new challenger parties make a more intense and radical use of new ICTs introducing 'disrupting innovations' in their organization, while old and mainstream parties gradually adapt their organization to the new digital environment introducing 'sustaining innovations'; parties on the left make greater use of ICTs in order to foster greater internal democracy when compared to their corresponding parties on the centre-right.

Key words: political parties; Spain; technology

Introduction

The history of political parties is also a history of political communication. Throughout the development of political parties, technological opportunity structures have shaped the ways in which parties communicate with citizens (Farrell and Webb, 2000; Norris, 2000; Gibson and Römmele, 2001; Römmele, 2003).

Empirical research on the relationship between Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and parties has focused mainly on either the functions performed by parties (opinion formation, interest mediation, electioneering) (Margolis *et al.*, 1997; Ward, 2008) or internal party organization, particularly in terms of the level of internal democracy and distribution of power (Smith and Webster, 1995; Gibson *et al.*, 2003). Other studies have identified ideal types of party ICT-enabled organization (Wring and Horroks, 2000; Heidar and Saglie, 2003; Löfgren and Smith, 2003; Margetts, 2006).

Systemic approaches to the empirical analysis of the potential transformation of parties' organizational models seem to be less common, in particular, those based on the combination of party-

focused studies with the most recent digital literature. According to Gibson and Ward (2009, 96), 'traditional party-focused research has tended to downplay the role of ICTs, whilst the newer Internet field has arguably focused too extensively on the technology'.

The aim of our paper is to fill this empirical gap by focusing on political parties' organizational reactions to the challenges posed by new digital technology. We are interested in scrutinizing whether parties evince a transformative tendency towards virtual models in which new digital ICTs are used not only to carry out the traditional functions of communication and expression but also as 'functional equivalents' of the old organizational infrastructures. In other words, we want to verify whether 'new web tools are actually breaking down traditional collective party structures and replacing or supplementing them with virtual networks' (Gibson and Ward, 2009, 96).

To this end, the paper proposes a comparative analysis of the main Spanish political parties. Since the beginning of the crisis in 2008, the Spanish party system has changed radically, becoming a typical example of transformations of well-established political systems during the Great Recession. New parties such as Podemos (We can) and Ciudadanos (Citizens – C's) have appeared both on the left and right to challenge the old Partido Popular (Popular Party – PP) and the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party – PSOE). These new parties compete not only in terms of political proposals but also in terms of party-form and use of web tools. Parties that show similarities with Podemos and Ciudadanos – i.e. new parties that have challenged existing political forces also in terms of organizational aspects – recently emerged also in other European countries: the Movimento 5 Stelle in Italy, La France Insoumise in France or Alternativet in Denmark. The Spanish case is particularly significant because, differently from other political systems, the two new parties as well as the traditional parties, have different ideological orientations: this fact allows us to widen the comparative aspects, identifying similarities and differences in terms of adaptation to the new digital environment according to both the two cleavages: new/old and left/right.

Party change and new communication technologies

The wide literature on party change identifies the historical evolution of several party types. In the early 1950s, during the heart of the golden era of mass parties, Duverger (1951) spoke of 'left-wing contagion'. Some decades later, on the other side of the ocean, Epstein (1967) spoke of 'contagion from the right' – this theme is closely associated with the preponderance of a catch-all tendency in party transformation (Kirchheimer, 1966). In both these cases (Duverger and Epstein-Kirchheimer), political change depended on external factors linked to the transformation of the social and economic structure as well as of democracy and of the State itself.

Based on these premises, the aim of the paper is to analyze the effects of the fourth industrial revolution[1] on the organizational models of parties today.

Early research on ICT use in organizations has focused mainly on two approaches: one framed in terms of *equalization* and the other framed in terms of *normalization* (Gibson and Ward, 2009). According to the first approach (see Doherty, 2002; Bennett, 2003), outsider or fringe organizations are likely to benefit disproportionately from the rise of new ICTs in comparison to mainstream parties. The second approach (see Resnick, 1998; Margolis and Resnick, 2000) conversely advances the so-called 'politics as usual' scenario: as the internet

---

[1]We can point out three modes or phases of communication technology, each typical of three broad historical phases: the oral word, the written text and the electrical revolution, of which internet is the maximum expression (De Kerckhove and Tursi 2006; Lévy 2002). From the point of view of the relationship between the forms of communication and politics, we prefer to separate the third phase into two: that of mass communication (radio and television) and that of satellite television, mobile phones and Internet. This latter started in the 1980s and is what we refer to as the fourth industrial revolution (see also De Fleur and Ball-Rokeach 1989).

becomes increasingly normalized, large traditional political forces will come to predominate as they do in other media.

More recent studies (Gibson and Ward, 2009; Vaccari, 2013) have rejected 'one size fits all' explanations, underlining that, 'the internet may not make much of a difference for some parties and voters in some contexts, but it may do so for some others in other situations. Even in the same political system, the web may affect some political actors and groups of citizens but not others' (Vaccari, 2013, 18).

Starting from these theoretical premises, our hypothesis is that the reactions of parties to new digital ICTs can vary along a continuum of different degrees of innovation. Taking inspiration from research on innovations in the business world[2], we hypothesize that the absorption or internalization of digital technologies can favour two polar types of reactions or innovations in the party organization. We might call the first type 'sustaining innovations': organizational changes that take place on the margins, in small steps. Parties use superficial communications technologies to disseminate information, attract new members, carry out electoral campaigns or simply survey public opinion. These are 'symbolic reforms' (Gauja, 2017) or peripheral innovations. In these cases, technology is used to reduce organizational and communication costs. If a member or supporter interaction is incidentally encouraged, it does not extend to the party's main activities (Bennett *et al.*, 2018). This type of innovations does not affect the parties' organizational structure or significantly alter the way in which they carry out their main functions (coordination, aggregation and integration, decision-making).

At the other end of the spectrum, we find 'disruptive innovations': intense and radical changes that create deep discontinuities within organizations and in their surrounding systems. ICTs are used both as instruments of structural and procedural coordination and as strategic elements. In this case, 'technology platforms and affordances are indistinguishable from, and replace, key components of brick and mortar organization and intra-party function' (Bennett *et al.*, 2018, 12). In other words, they can integrate, support or even substitute parties' structural architectures, contributing to solve the problem of coordination between the various parts of the organization, given way to lighter forms of organization (Gerbaudo, 2019). In addition, ICTs can be used to perform the function of aggregation and integration: allowing new kind of linkages with voters, civil society and the self-same institutions. Finally, they can be adopted for participatory aims, offering new channels of members' inclusion in decision-making processes.

Disrupting innovations do not necessarily involve at the same time all the functional and structural dimensions. Furthermore, in relation to participation, they do not necessarily imply a concrete strengthening of parties' internal democracy: new ICTs, although theoretically designed for participatory and horizontal aspirations, can be then practically used in favour of forms of top-down disintermediation (Lusoli and Ward, 2004; Biancalana, 2018; Gerbaudo, 2019).

We must, therefore, ask what factors (a) push parties toward either pole of the sustainable-disruptive innovation continuum and (b) affect the direction – top-down/bottom-up – of innovations through digital tools.

On the demand side, factors including the characteristics of the electorate and, in particular, widening dissatisfaction and 'protest potential' increase the attraction of 'extended mediatization' (Mazzoleni, 2012, 67–68) and disruptive innovations for fostering participation.

Our analysis focuses, however, on the supply side. On the basis of most recent research (Römmele, 2003; Padró-Solanet and Cardenal, 2008; Gibson and Ward, 2009; Vaccari, 2013; Borge-Bravo and Esteve-Del Valle, 2017), we hypothesize that given equal levels of systemic technological diffusion, parties use new ICTs in different ways depending on the characteristics of the parties themselves: (1) the age of the party in association with its place in the party system (2) the ideology and organizational goals of the party.

---

[2]Cfr. Bower and Christensen (1995).

Party age and position in the party system (challenger/mainstream; incumbent/opposition): those parties born in the last decades are more likely to adopt new ICTs, especially those 'political entrepreneurs' that have emerged during the Internet age. According to Gibson and Ward (2009), systemic and technological opportunity structures set the political and technological parameters within which political organizations operate, thereby influencing the extent and style of organizations' use of technology. As a consequence, digital tools can be an important feature of new parties' original model rather than a subsequent replacement for traditional bureaucratic technologies.

Moreover, for younger, new or genuinely new parties (Sikk, 2005; Morlino and Raniolo, 2017), the absence of pre-existing structures and consolidated dominant coalitions favours more radical innovations that affect both their organization and their relations with the environment and citizens. New digital technologies offer numerous opportunities to challenger or oppositional parties, especially since these benefits from the turbulence of electoral markets in 21st-century democracies. For these parties, 'incentives are greater, as an Internet presence can give them a forum in which to compete for nodality on a more equal footing with more established parties' (Margetts, 2006, 530).

Conversely, traditional parties have well-established bureaucratic structures and communication channels. In these cases, the costs of change are very high and institutional inertia tends to prevail, thus limiting the party's capacity to adopt innovations. Despite these barriers, it is possible to hypothesize that a contagion effect will lead traditional parties to eventually introduce innovations. However, these changes will be minimal and aimed at increasing their competitive advantage. We can also expect the propensity for innovation to weaken when parties increase their political weight in the party system or are in power. As underlined by studies on parties' communicative strategy (Gibson and Römmele, 2001; Vaccari, 2013), while electoral failure or marginality trigger ambition and urge to change, the maintaining of an incumbent position absorbs the party in the business of government, limiting the change. The first part of our hypothesis is therefore that:

Hypothesis 1 *New challenger parties will tend towards the 'disruptive innovations' pole, while old and mainstream parties and incumbent parties will tend towards the 'sustaining innovations' pole.*

Party ideology and organizational goals: parties differ from each other in terms of both ideology and organizational goals. Despite what has been said about the crisis or end of ideologies, they are still key to understanding parties, their strategies and their role. Some clarifications are nonetheless necessary. First of all, here ideology must be understood in the 'weak sense' (Stoppino, 1983), as a set of shared values and beliefs that give meaning to reality and function as a goad to action. Ideologies are composed of two parts: the *ethos* and the doctrine (Ware, 1996, 20–21). The first concerns the history of the party, its traditions and identity; the second consists of a coherent set of statements and judgments in relation to particular positions or issues.

Ideology is conditioned and interacts with other dimensions of the party (Panebianco, 1989) such as its dominant coalitions and leaders, organizational structures and even communication technologies. In any case, ideologies are one of the factors that explain a party's 'primary objectives' of votes, office and policy (or some combination thereof) (Harmel and Janda, 1994). In this sense, parties cannot easily be rid of the constraints posed by ideology. Therefore left-wing parties generally tend to be more sensitive to the issue of internal democracy (Ignazi, 2017), historically prioritizing it as a party aim, while right-wing parties give greater importance to hierarchical control. This difference, according to some studies, is also reflected in the use of digital tools. In particular, Vaccari (2013), through a comparative analysis of the websites of several parties in various political systems, has shown that left-wing parties are more open to facilitating online interaction in their webpages than right-wing parties. Similarly, Borge-Bravo and Esteve-Del Valle (2017), comparing the activity of Catalan parties on Facebook, showed a greater capacity for initiative and interaction of left-wing parties than their right-wing counterparts.

Thus, we further hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 2 *The parties that identify themselves as or tend towards the left-wing give greater importance to participatory goals and to internal democratization by combining virtual democracy and direct participation, on-line forums and assemblies; parties self-identified as or leaning towards the right-wing tend to be more conservative and less prone to disruptive participatory innovations, using new technologies mainly for instrumental and communicative purposes.*

The cases: a look at the Spanish parties

Most of the studies on the ICTs–party relationship focuses on the analysis of the US case or on the Northern European democracies, while Southern Europe countries remain less frequently investigated (Vaccari, 2013). In order to contribute to expanding the range of analysis, we will focus on the Spanish democracy. It is a particularly suitable case study for two main reasons. First of all, the level of digitalization in Spanish society has grown rapidly in recent years, reaching rather high levels. According to the International Telecommunication Union, Spain's ICT development index in 2010 was 6.73, increasing to 7.79 in 2017. While it remains lower than in Germany or France, is similar to other European countries, like Italy, Portugal or also Belgium. Secondly, the Spanish democracy is a paradigmatic case of the political transformations that most European (Southern European in particular) democracies have undergone since the beginning of the economic crisis (Morlino and Raniolo, 2017). It allows us to compare both relevant (Sartori, 1976) new and old parties situated across the entire ideological spectrum: the PSOE, Podemos, the PP and Ciudadanos. In other words, the Spanish party system provides sufficient variability between the analyzed characteristics of the parties. The study of the four Spanish parties, therefore, makes it possible to verify and further clarify the hypotheses formulated in the previous paragraph, extending their potential application to similar cases.

The PSOE is a social-democratic party with a long history. Since the beginning of the economic crisis, it has faced electoral decline (Table 1), the challenge of a new competitor on the left, Podemos and a series of problems related to internal cohesion.

On the centre-right is the PP, traditional competitor to the PSOE. In recent years the PP has remained the predominant party despite losing part of its consensus (Table 1) and led the government in 2011 and 2016. More recently, however, it was subjected to a vote of no confidence due to corruption scandals and thus was forced to cede leadership to the PSOE. The latter came first in the early elections of 2019, while the PP lost much of its consensus in favour of Ciudadanos and partly of the new far-right party Vox.

Podemos is a genuinely new party. It was born in 2014 from a politicization of anti-austerity and democratic regeneration discourses, which had already emerged as key topics in 2011 with the *Indignados* movement. Following its unexpected success in the 2014 European elections, the party obtained 12.7% in the 2015 political elections and was the third most-voted party overall (20.6%) thanks to its collaboration with local organizations in several Autonomous Communities (see Table 1). In the following elections, Podemos joined with the radical left party Izquierda Unida (IU) and various territorial formations (Unidos Podemos). Despite substantial difficulties (the loss of more than 1 million of votes), the coalition maintained the third position in the party system until 2016, further suffering a consistent reduction in votes in the last elections (Table 1).

Ciudadanos was born in 2006 as a centre-right regional party active only in Catalonia. It subsequently became a state-wide party. It has built a moderate image, opposing nationalist forces and showing itself in favour of the current regional state organization, albeit improved by some reforms. After entering the EP in 2014, it became the fourth political force in the 2015 and 2016 general elections, almost surpassing the PP in the 2019 elections (Table 1).

In order to see how these four parties have adapted to new digital ICTs, we adopt an analytical perspective focused on the identification of three main dimensions of parties' organizational

Table 1. Electoral results of the main Spanish parties: PP, PSOE, Podemos and Ciudadanos (2008–19)

Parties	G-2008 (%)	E-2009 (%)	G-2011 (%)	E-2014 (%)	G-2015 (%)	G-2016 (%)	G-2019 (%)
PP	39.9	42.1	44.6	26.1	28.7	33	16.7
PSOE	43.9	38.8	28.8	23	22	22.6	28.7
Podemos	–	–	–	8	12.7[a]	13.4[b]	11.1[c]
Ciudadanos	–	–	–	3.2	13.9	13.1	15.9

[a]The electoral result gained by Podemos and its partners in three Autonomous Communities was 20.6%.
[b]Unidos Podemos (Podemos, IU, Equo); the entire coalition made up also of territorial partners gained 21.1%.
[c]Unidas Podemos (Podemos, IU, Equo); the entire coalition gained 14.3%.
Source: Ministerio del Interior

models: the participants in the organization, the organizational configuration and the decision-making process. We will examine whether and how digital tools are used by parties in each of these dimensions, beginning with a comparison of how the four parties thematise the issue of new digital ICTs in their political documents.

The web and the partisan identity

Since 2008, the PSOE has demonstrated willingness to modify its organizational culture in response to transformations of the 'knowledge society' and the 'immediacy and bi-directionality typical of Internet' (PSOE, 2008). The 2008 statute dedicates an entire section to the theme of the web and ICTs: *Un partido en la red por una sociedad en red* (an online party for an online society). The party shows an awareness of the need to dismiss 'slow or excessively bureaucratic and hierarchical methods' (PSOE, 2008, 156), strengthen new ICTs to expand external communication, facilitate internal communication and allow participation through new social networks. In 2012 the PSOE confirms the need to offer 'a new model of party that is much more attractive for new generations' and to be able to act as a forerunner of changes induced by technological progress (PSOE, 2012, 144). Finally, the 2017 statute both marks a strengthening of the party's left-wing identity and declares the intention to 'offer new solutions and horizons to digital citizenship' (PSOE, 2017, 43) by enhancing the digitalization of all its operational systems (PSOE, 2017, 146–147).

In comparison, the issue of digitalization is much less developed and is broached years later in the PP's documents, though it is not completely absent. In the 2008 Statute, the PP refers to new ICTs (in particular the website) in terms of tools to improve the functioning of the party (PP, 2008). Beginning in 2012, the PP centred the problem of adapting its organization to social changes in response to citizens' growing distrust of parties. New technologies thus became framed as tools with which to engage in 'continuous contact with citizens' (PP, 2012, 3), spread information (PP, 2012, 3) and expand internal and external communication (PP, 2017, 66), as well as a means to practice 'virtual democracy'.

Unlike the two traditional parties, neither Podemos and Ciudadanos need to adapt their organizations to the digital environment. Although the former belongs to the radical left and the latter to the centre-right, both present themselves as innovators with respect to policy proposals and the party form. According to Podemos, the new ICTs are essential tools 'to promote the acquisition of power by citizens inside and outside the organization and the direct participation of people in adopting public and political decisions' (Podemos, 2014, 9). Similarly, the web 2.0 changed politics considerably for Ciudadanos by forcing the party to establish direct relationships with citizens beyond electoral campaigns, in their everyday lives (C's Secretary of Communication cit. in Prnoticias, 2015; Rivera, 2015, 19–20).

For Podemos, ICTs are among its constitutive factors and reflect a project of greater openness and internal democracy. Ciudadanos, on the other hand, has 'regional-national' origins, meaning its formation and development are linked to Catalan politics. ICTs initially were integrative factors

and successively fundamental tools in the party's transition from the regional to the national context. They undertake a vote-seeking function rather more than a democracy-seeking function.

In summary, from the point of view of self-representation, all the Spanish parties give (different types of) importance to new technologies and link them to improving communication and widening participation. The main differences arise between the traditional parties, which face the problem of changing their cultures and organizational models (to stop the electoral crisis), and the new parties, that both propose themselves as challengers and innovators despite their different approaches.

In none of the cases are the new digital technologies and the 'virtual structures' considered completely viable alternatives to 'real structures': they are integrative and not exclusively tools. Left-wing parties seem more oriented towards innovations that allow for greater internal participation, but at the same time, they place great importance on conventional forms of participation in the physical territory. More specifically, in the case of the PSOE[3], the blend of real and virtual structures seems to be a prerequisite for organizational adaptation-innovation. For Podemos, as we will see later, the combination of virtual and real instruments reflects an awareness of the gap produced by digital participation (digital divide, disintermediation) gained gradually during its process of institutionalization.

Multi-speed membership and digital tools

All the Spanish parties recognize different affiliation models according to a multi-speed membership logic (Scarrow, 2015). Of all the parties here considered, the PP is the party that uses new ICTs least to encourage adhesion to its organization. The PSOE, conversely, can, in this case, be considered an early adopter.

Since the beginning of the 2000s, the PSOE, being in opposition and faced with the need to regain the trust of its supporters, had started a process of renewal of its organization, trying to blur the boundaries between members and sympathizers, making the organization more open and participatory, according to a leftist tradition (Méndez-Lago, 2006). In the following years, in the face of the growing informatization of society, digital tools were adopted precisely because of the same organizational goal.

In 2008, the PSOE introduced the category of cyber-militant: an affiliate with the right to participate in online consultations, have an official email, connect his/her personal blog to that of the party, receive the party's digital publications and participate in cyberactivism campaigns (PSOE, 2008, 161). In more recent years, the party has distinguished between sympathizer (a member who does not pay any fees, receives political information and has the opportunity to participate in open internal electoral processes) and militant (a member with full rights and duties that pays a membership fee). Both the sympathizers and the militants can join the party electronically, but the latter must be confirmed by their local executive committee. Since 2013, the main novelty is the 'direct affiliate' (*afiliato dírecto*): a category created to respond to the low increase in supporters' subscriptions (PSOE, 2013). The direct affiliates, unlike militants, do not belong to a local party unit (*agrupación local*) and do not have to participate in the political life of the basic units but rather participate directly at the regional or federal levels. Direct affiliates enter the organization by filling out an online form and participate only occasionally or through online tools. They pay a membership fee and, with the exception of participation in internal party elections at the territorial level, enjoy the same rights as militants (PSOE, 2017). In its 2013 political resolution, the party states that cybermilitance is a complementary formula for participation available to members seeking to further engage via Internet (PSOE, 2013, 56). However, this

---

[3]In its 2013 Political Conference document, the PSOE proposes a new law on party regulation in which parties should use 'digital culture' and the new social networks to facilitate democratic participation in accordance with the criteria of multilateralism, interaction and immediacy. At the same time, the PSOE specifies that the use of social networks would never substitute for a relationship with society, physical presence and personal activity in local party units (Psoe 2013, 137).

Table 2. Membership data for the main Spanish Parties (2017–18)

Parties	Militants	Other forms of affiliation	Total
PSOE (2017)	187,000	1500 (direct adherents)	188,500
PP (2017)		–	861,430
Ciudadanos (2018)	30,000	130,000	160,000
Podemos[a] (2017)	13,458 (militants)	443,267	456,725

[a]The total number of current Podemos membership is 507,827.

Sources: Data provided by the parties' website or collected from the press (C's: https://www.ciudadanos-cs.org/transparencia; Gálvez (2018); Podemos: https://participa.podemos.info/es; InfoLibre, 2017; PP: http://www.pp.es/participa/afiliate; Riaño (2018); PSOE: http://web.psoe.es/ambito/afiliadasyafiliados/docs/index.do?action=|View&id=98014; Público (2017)).

greater flexibility in the forms of participation has not yet yielded the expected results, increasing membership extension only slightly (Table 2) after years of substantial decline (in 2008 there were 351.239 militants, while in 2014 they had fallen to 201,000, http://www.projectmapp.eu/database-country/).

Unlike the PSOE, the PP has declared a steady increase in the number of members since the 1980s (Astudillo and García-Guereta, 2006), claiming to be the largest party in Spain (PP, 2017, 13). It divides its membership into militants and sympathizers. The two categories comprise different rights and duties and differ regarding the payment of the registration fee. The same distinction is also found in Ciudadanos (Table 2) (https://www.ciudadanos-cs.org/afiliate). However, the whole process of affiliation to Ciudadanos takes place online, while to join the PP one can download the online form but then must physically deliver it to the local party unit (PP, 2017, 28–38).

For both Ciudadanos and Podemos, the web facilitates the construction of a community of adherents, bridging the organizational gap with traditional parties.

Ciudadanos introduced online affiliation without the requirement to join a territorial branch in 2007. According to Rodríguez-Teruel and Barrio (2016), this new way of recruiting members made facilitated Ciudadanos' transformation from a regional party to a state-wide party. Within a few years of this change, membership had indeed increased from 4000 people in 2007 to 12,000 in 2015 (Ibidem), and currently reaches 160,000 members (Table 2). Thanks to these new members, the party was able to participate in the 2015 local elections without the benefits of a physical organization in many areas of the country (Rodríguez-Teruel and Barrio, 2016).

Podemos is certainly the party that has introduced the most innovations regarding membership. In the early years, there was only a single category of affiliation, enabling anybody to enjoy full rights to participation. To become a member, one simply needed to sign up on the party's website and agree with its political platform and organizational rules. Unlike all the other parties, there was no membership fee and no probation period or endorsement required to join. Spanish citizenship was not a prerequisite, nor was belonging to another party forbidden (Gomez and Ramiro, 2017).

These flexible affiliation procedures and low 'membership costs' (Scarrow, 2015) allowed the party to reach 200,000 members in 2014 (Franzé, 2018, 53) and grow rapidly in the following years (Table 2). At the same time, a wide membership has not guaranteed the 'intensity' of members' commitment to participation in the party's internal processes. For this reason and in order to measure turnout in the internal online decision-making processes, the party has begun differentiating between passive and active adherents. The latter are those members that have participated in online decision-making processes within the last 12 months (Gomez and Ramiro, 2017); at the time of the II Congress – Vistalegre II – there were 283,175 active members out of 456,725 total members[4]. After the second Congress in 2017, Podemos created the militant registry. Like basic affiliation, militant membership is accessible online and no fee is required, though donations are

---

[4]See: https://vistalegre2.podemos.info/resultados/

Table 3. Spanish parties on the main social-networks

Parties	Facebook	Twitter
PSOE	159,177	626,694
PP	189,833	664,602
Ciudadanos	329,568	475,945
Podemos	1,207,118	1,300,000

Official data, Last access 19 August 2018.

accepted. However, the personal information requested of militants is much more detailed than that required for a basic affiliation, and an identity document is now required, just as in the other parties under consideration (see Secretaría de organización y programa Podemos, 2017).

Despite these recent changes, Podemos remains more inclusive and cost-free than other new parties that have chosen to implement fluid notions of membership (e.g. the Pirates parties) (Gomez and Ramiro, 2017, 4).

While all the Spanish parties are on the main social networks, Podemos has the greatest following through these channels (Table 3). All of the parties except the PP have digital platforms for discussion and participation: the PSOE introduced the *MìPSOE* platform in 2013, Ciudadanos uses *Red Naranja*, and Podemos uses *Participa/Plaza Podemos* (see Section 7). Lagging behind the other parties, the PP stated in the 2017 statute that it will introduce virtual platforms into the party's territorial organizations (PP, 2017, 115). The delay of the PP derives from the absence of a participatory tradition, linked to a centralistic and elite-driven conception of the party that also in the past had prevented other forms of empowerment of the membership (Ramiro-Fernández, 2005).

Traditional architecture vs. the network

From the perspective of organizational configuration, all the Spanish parties present a rather classical architecture. New ICTs can only be considered functionally equivalent to traditional architectures in the case of Podemos' initial phase.

The PSOE's main political organ between Congresses (where delegates are selected by provincial congresses) is the Federal Committee, which is made up of almost 300 members, including the members of the Federal Executive Commission, the 17 regional general secretaries, the sector coordinators, the institutional spokesmen, the secretary of the youth organization, the socialist representative of the FEMP (*Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias*), and various members elected by the Federal and Regional Congresses and, since 2017, also by militants and direct affiliates (PSOE, 2017). The main executive body is the Federal Executive Committee, which over time has become the main decision-making body (Magone, 2009). It is composed of 49 people elected during the Congresses and is chaired by the Secretary-General. Other party organs include the guarantor, ethics and auditing commissions, all entrusted with the task of ensuring compliance with the Party Statute. The organization is articulated at the territorial level into municipal and local units (*agrupaciones*), grouped into Provincial, Comarcal and Island Federations. These last then form part of the Regional Federations. In recent years a parallel sectoral structure has been developed alongside the existing territorial structure in order to encourage member participation in various areas of interest (PSOE, 2017).

The PP's main organ is the *Junta Directiva*, which is composed of members of the National Executive Committee, 30 representatives elected by the Congress, institutional representatives at every level, ministers, regional presidents and secretaries, representatives of large cities and of the FEMP. Between Congresses, the Executive Committee functions as the governing and administrative body for the party. It is composed of 35 representatives elected by the Congress, the spokesmen for the parliamentary groups, the regional and local presidents (both in institutional and internal roles), the party's President and the Secretary-General. The

Management Committee, led by the President, undertakes the management and coordination of the party. Finally, the Electoral Committee deals with election issues, the Guarantee Committee guarantees compliance with the Statute and the Autonomous Committee handles territorial issues. This structure is reproduced at both the regional and provincial level (PP, 2017).

As previously shown, the Internet has been a fundamental resource in Ciudadanos' expansion beyond the borders of Catalonia, particularly as a tool for organizational coordination around membership. Despite this, from a structural point of view, Ciudadanos appears to be 'a new party dressed in traditional garb' (Rodríguez-Teruel and Barrio, 2016, 596). The party organs include: the General Assembly, made up of members or delegates and convened every 4 years; the General Council, which acts as the decision-making body between congresses and is made up of 125 members elected by the General Assembly, a part of the members of the Executive Council (max 20), the spokesmen for the Regional and International Committees; the Executive Committee, which is responsible for the administrative and economic management of the party and is made up of 20–40 members including the President and the Secretary-General; the Standing Committee, a coordinating body; the Guarantee Commission and the Disciplinary Commission, which are responsible for compliance with internal regulations. The party is articulated at the territorial level into regional councils and local units (*agrupaciones*). Finally, the President is the political representative of the party, while the General Secretary has a coordinating role (Ciudadanos, 2017).

Podemos was founded in 2014 by a mixed group of intellectuals and university professors, social activists and members of the radical left party Izquierda Anticapitalista. In this primordial phase, social networks and the web were fundamental tools, used to spread the political message and to organize and coordinate the first assemblies. The list for the 2014 European elections was decided on the basis of online support from 50,000 people, and candidates were selected via open online primaries.

It can, therefore, be argued that new ICTs were constitutive of the organization. They should not, however, be considered exclusive instruments but rather fundamental channels within a transmedia logic (Raniolo and Tarditi, 2017). The promoter of the initiative and current General Secretary, Pablo Iglesias, had already used modern communication tools before the formation of the party, presenting and participating in programs on local and national TV. The party's virtual network is supported by the most popular social networks (Facebook and Twitter) and various platforms for discussion and deliberation (Plaza Podemos), coordination (Loomio) and voting (Appgree and Agorà voting). Simultaneously, the party has promoted the parallel formation of a territorial network through the so-called *círculos*, the basic units inspired by the Indignados movement's assemblies. From its beginnings, the party has always linked the virtual dimension to the real dimension, that made up of physical organizations, assemblies and congresses (Tarditi, 2017).

Podemos does have a physical headquarters and a series of organs which perform functions similar to those of any party: the Citizens' Assembly, composed of all party members, defines the political line and selects party and institutional representatives; the Secretary-General is the political and institutional representative of the party; the Citizens Council acts as the political direction board and consists of 62 members elected by the Assembly, the Regional Secretaries, a Representative of members abroad and, since 2017, four representatives of the circles; the Coordination Council is organized into secretariats and plays an executive and internal coordination role; and the Guarantee Committee, consisting of 10 people elected by the Assembly, has the task of ensuring compliance with internal principles and rules. Finally, the Circles are those sectoral and territorial units in which any interested persons may participate, whether enrolled in the party or not (Podemos, 2017*a*, 2017*b*).

Deciding online

In this paragraph, we will distinguish between two types of decision-making processes that express the 'struggle for power' in democratic and associative contexts (Raniolo, 2013): the choice

of people (decisions on nominations) and the choice of things (decisions on policies). The first category includes the choice of the party leader (secretary or president), the government leader (or the ruling coalition), election candidates (candidate selection processes) or other roles (eg. local administrators or party internal offices). The second category concerns the approval of political strategies or alliances, political-electoral programs and specific issues or policies.

This last dimension highlights the differences in the Spanish parties' relationships with the new ICTs. Once again, Podemos is the most innovative party, followed by Ciudadanos and the PSOE with the PP lagging behind.

The choice of people – decisions on nominations

The PSOE was the first party in Spain to introduce a candidate selection process for the Presidency of the Council of Ministers in 1998. Subsequently, in light of the problems that arose from that process[5], the party used traditional mechanisms for selecting its candidates for many years.

More recently, in 2014 and 2017, militants voted to choose the Secretary-General: Pedro Sánchez won with 49% of 132,702 votes (PSOE, 2014) and more than 50% out of 149,951 votes (http://consultasg.psoe.es/), respectively. Candidate selection processes were also held for regional presidents and mayors of big cities (Méndez-Lago, 2000). However, digital tools were not used in any of these cases. Instead, members voted in person through their local party units.

Alone of the four parties, the PP never chose any of its institutional or internal candidates through member voting until 2018. The leadership, in fact, has historically thought that the primaries could give an 'external projection' (Raniolo, 2013) of a fragmented party, leading to electoral defeat (Ramiro-Fernández, 2005). Following corruption scandals and facing the need to re-legitimize itself, the PP allowed its militants to choose the party president at its most recent Congress in 2018, albeit without using digital channels. Only the 66,706 militants who had previously enrolled to vote and regularly paid their membership fees were allowed to participate in the vote[6]. The low number of participants has led many commentators to doubt the party's published membership data (Collado, 2018).

Of the two new parties, only Podemos has regularly and systemically involved all its members in online open selection procedures for all its internal and institutional representatives at every territorial level (Figure 1).

In the past, Ciudadanos held closed primaries for the top candidates in some local (Barcelona 2011 and 2015), regional (2010, 2012 and 2015), European (2009 and 2014) and national elections (2008; 2015) (Rodríguez-Teruel and Barrio, 2016).

The European elections in 2014 provided C's militants with the first opportunity to select candidates via the web[7]. On that occasion, 3292 members expressed their preferences (Libertad Digital, 2014). Since then all primaries are carried out via the party's website, but only militants are allowed to participate. During the 2007 and 2011 Congresses the disposition of the party's internal offices was decided by the Congress delegates. In 2017, Albert Rivera was instead confirmed as party leader through an online vote held in response to a grassroots push for greater involvement in leader and candidate selection (Rodríguez-Teruel and Barrio, 2016). Passing from the regional to the national dimension and abandoning a peripheral position, the party had used the web to facilitate the adhesion to its organization, reducing however online spaces

---

[5]In 1998 the PSOE primary for the candidate to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers was won by Josep Borrell. Borrell was not supported by the party apparatus and he resigned after few months because two ex-collaborators were investigated for fiscal fraud (See: https://www.eldiario.es/politica/Josep-Borrell-ultimo-tumbado-PSOE_0_564493851.html).

[6]http://www.pp.es/actualidad-noticia/coc-acuerda-mantener-plazos-requisitos-inscripcion-votar-dia-5 (Last access 2 October 2018).

[7]https://www.ciudadanos-cs.org/prensa/27_candidatos_concurren_a_las_primarias_de_Cs_para_las_elecciones_europeas/6625/ (Last access 2 October 2018).
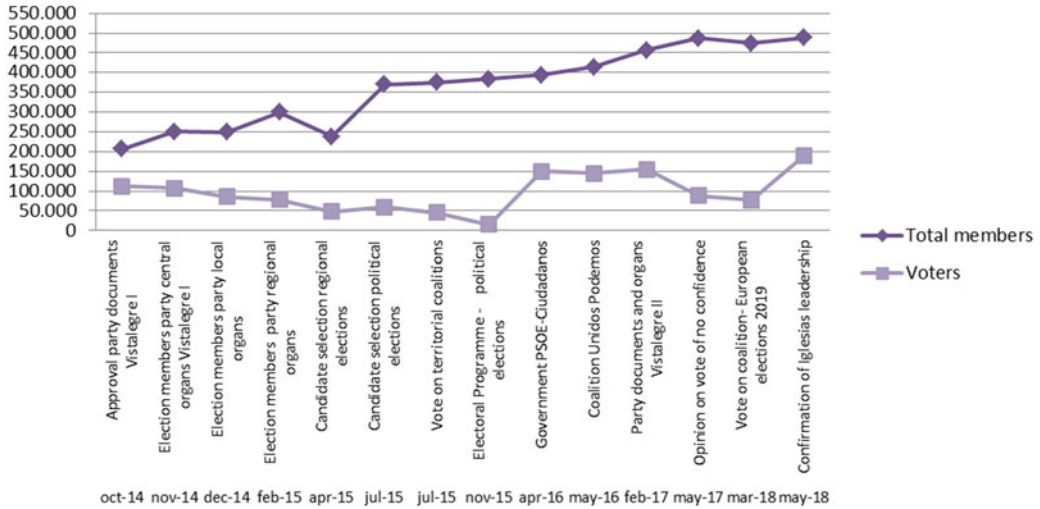
Figure 1. Participation in Podemos.
Source: Data provided on the party's website or collected from the press (https://podemos.info/los-inscritos-en-podemos-respaldan-con-un-98-de-los-votos-las-alianzas-electorales-para-las-generales/; https://podemos.info/resultados-de-la-votacion-sobre-el-gobierno-de-espana; https://vistalegre2.podemos.info/resultados/; https://vistalegre2.podemos.info/resultados/documentos/; https://podemos.info/consultasciudadanas/); Alameda and Manetto, 2015 (Last access 2 October 2018).

for discussion and participation. While Rivera won 87.3% of the votes cast, only 6874 out of 20,065 militants participated (Estebán, 2017).

Both Podemos and Ciudadanos' candidate selection processes have been criticized in multiple instances.

Most of Podemos' selection procedures took place using the so-called *lista plancha*, which allowed voters to select groups of candidates all together with a single click. This generally benefited the groups which included the party leader and the most visible media figures (though not always). This effect has been amplified by the tight time limits for submitting a candidature. It would seem that online primaries, though they constitute an innovative element in the Spanish party context, have been mostly used as a means of consolidating direct links (between leader and electorate) and therefore as a 'plebiscitary instrument' (Roberts, 2013) rather than a participatory instrument. They consolidate the process of the party's personalization. At the same time, however, primaries, especially at the regional level, have also facilitated the election of members of the 'critical sector' (e.g. Teresa Rodríguez in Andalusia or Pablo Echenique in Asturias). This fact has ensured that a certain level of internal pluralism is maintained (Tarditi, 2017).

C's primary elections have been criticized for the strict requirements they impose upon militants seeking to participate as candidates. Militants must have the support of a rather large number of members to be eligible. As a consequence, in many territorial contexts, the only members to successfully participate in internal elections have been those backed by the leadership (Rodríguez-Teruel and Barrio, 2016). According to some of the party's activists, 'the party apparatus' essentially imposed some candidates, thereby reducing the competition (Piña, 2015). Albert Rivera, for example, 'won' the nomination for the Presidency of the Government in the 2015 general elections completely unchallenged.

The choice of things

Since the 2012 Congress and after coming back in opposition, the PSOE has declared itself favourable to introducing ways to consult with its militants on decisions of particular importance

(PSOE, 2017). Until now, however, the party has involved its militants only in a single non-binding consultation on the virtual *MiPSOE* platform. Faced with the absence of a clear majority following the 2015 elections, the PSOE solicited its militants' position regarding the possibility of a governmental coalition with what it termed 'progressive forces'. This internal referendum was couched in very general terms and did not indicate potential coalition partners. At that time an agreement was reached with Ciudadanos, but not with Podemos. Of the PSOE's 185,887 militants, 96,062 participated in this consultation and 78.94% of them voted in favour of the agreement[8].

In the case of the PP, there is no decision-making process which is open to the direct participation of its members.

Of the new parties, on the other hand, only Podemos has frequently carried out internal consultations for competitive choices or single issues (Figure 1).

Although Ciudadanos claims to have more than 14,000 digital activists (http://www.ciudadanos-cs.org), it seems to use the *Red Naranja* virtual platform more as a forum for discussion and for the dissemination of information than as a decision-making arena. The party describes the platform with these words: 'we are the orange force in the social networks; we spread the C's message across all over Spain; we talk with people and we offer solutions' (https://www.ciudadanos-cs.org/red-naranja).

C's sympathizers can also sign up for three types of participatory events via the web: *Cafè con Albert* (Coffee with Albert), *Encuentro twittero* (Meeting on twitter) and *Parlamento Abierto* (Open Parliament). These are meetings in which the party leader and MPs meet sympathizers and answer their questions. These events are clearly driven by vote-seeking logic and a consumerist strategy (Löfgren and Smith, 2003) aimed at creating linkages with sympathizers. There is no real deliberation involved in these encounters. Like Ciudadanos, Podemos also promoted meetings with citizens, known as *El Congreso en tu plaza* (The Congress in your plaza). These meetings were held before the 2016 general elections to 'give an account' of the work being done inside Parliament.

More generally, however, Podemos' use of digital tools seems to be driven by a participatory and deliberative logic, according to a 'grass-root strategy' (Löfgren and Smith, 2003). The party is also undoubtedly the political force that stands out most in the Spanish context for introducing parallel digital channels since its origin.

Even before Vistalegre I in 2014, the first Podemos Congress, there was a 2-month series of virtual and physical meetings in which members contributed to composing the party's basic documents and approved them through online voting. Online participation was also promoted while preparing the program for the 2015 general elections. In the first phase of this preparation, members could make proposals through the *plaza podemos* virtual platform. In the second phase, members could vote on the proposals (Meyenberg, 2017). Finally, Podemos' members used digital channels to approve the territorial electoral coalitions in 2015, the electoral coalition with Izquierda Unida in 2016, the new party's political and organizational documents at the second Congress in 2017 and took various votes on single issues.

Criticisms have also emerged regarding internal referendums and the elaboration of party documents, in particular regarding the ways in which the leadership influenced the outcome of the decision-making processes through public declarations and greater media access (Donofrio, 2017). Similarly, the *Plaza Podemos* digital platform did not appear to be completely satisfactory. Unlike the other parties' virtual platforms, *Plaza Podemos* is designed as an arena for discussion and deliberation, where affiliates can propose political initiatives and proposals. Thus far, the deliberative aspect has not actually worked. According to Borge-Bravo and Santamarina-Sáez (2016), *Plaza Podemos* offers the widest potential for inclusion and for parity

---

[8]https://www.psoe.es/consulta-acuerdo-de-gobierno/resultados-de-la-consulta-a-la-militancia/ (Last access 2 October 2018).

between participants without moderator intervention. It is, however, weak in terms of its external impact. The imbalance between members of the platform in total and the number of actual participants has usually hampered the deliberative process, preventing members' proposals from gaining the necessary support to be included in the party's program.[9]

Despite the limits of virtual democracy, we must underline that Podemos has been able to use the new ICTs to multiply its participatory channels of communication (Donofrio, 2017). This confirms Podemos to be the main innovator in the Spanish context with regard to using ICTs.

Moreover, when faced with the limits of digital democracy as clearly demonstrated by the fluctuating level of participation (Figure 1), Podemos reacted by trying to strengthen its territorial network of circles. As the party's leadership admits (Podemos para Todas, 2017; Recuperar la Ilusión, 2017), the circles, initially designed as deliberative and participatory spaces, have often been used as tools for electoral campaigning and have fallen prey to a progressive detachment between the territorial base and the rest of the party. This transformation can be attributed both to the difficulty of structuring a complex organization in a short period of time and to the leadership's attempt to 'gather social strength starting from media and electoral campaigns' (Lago and Bustinduy, 2016). Podemos' recent attempt to reimagine the circles as essential tools to anchor territories, reach citizens in both rural and urban areas and ultimately overcome the digital divide can be considered typical of the leftist tradition.

Conclusions

Democracy in the 21st century is marked by the *digital revolution* and the shift toward the so-called *democracy of the public* (Manin, 1997) and the *democracy of leader* (Calise, 2015) in representative government. In the current scenario, dominated by new media and the advent of web 2.0, the relationships between parties and electors take on unusual, interactive, disintermediate forms.

Some authors have used the concepts of *automedia* (Lévy, 2002) and *mass self-communication* (Castells, 2009), in the sense that communication continues to be mass communication 'because it reaches a potentially global audience through p2p networks and Internet connection […]. It is also self-generated in the content, self-directed in emission, and self-selected in reception by many who communicate with many. This is a new communication realm, and ultimately a new medium, whose backbone is made of computer networks, whose language is digital, and whose senders are globally distributed and globally interactive' (Castells, 2009, 70).

The extended mediatization through ICTs offers new opportunities to cover the *void* (Mair, 2013) which opens up between voters and leaders in individualized societies. Current digital communication promotes immediate networking flows and exchanges whose crucial aspects include ubiquity and widespread access to not only ICTs and TV on demand, but also to the traditional models of participation, which then become increasingly active, creative and unpredictable thanks to the internet (Mazzoleni, 2012, 46–47; Vaccari, 2013). In this sense, there can be a convergence between voters' growing dissatisfaction, electoral volatility and the new technologies that challenges the traditionally vertical relationships that characterize representation. However, much it depends on how and in what direction these tools are used.

The integration of new digital tools in the parties' organizations influence *how the parties are* and it interacts with and conditions *what parties are (or say to be)* and finally *what they do*. In this paper, we have studied *how the main old and new Spanish parties are* in relation to the three internal dimensions: participation, organizational structure and decision-making.

---

[9]At the beginning of 2016 Podemos substituted *Plaza Podemos* with *Plaza Podemos 2.0*, a section of the main platform, *Participa*. The first platform was based on the reddit software and was open to all symphathizers, independently from their affiliation to the party. In the new *Plaza Podemos* only the party's members can register. This change should contribute to find growing equilibria between members and active participants.

All the parties analyzed here use new digital ICTs, but each does so with different intensity and extension.

The first difference is between the old mainstream parties – the PSOE and the PP – and the new challenger parties – Podemos and Ciudadanos. In contrast to the 'normalization' approach, the analysis shows that the latter makes a more intense and radical use of new ICTs in all the three dimensions taken into consideration (Hypothesis 1).

The mainstream parties have been forced to deal with the problem of gradually adapting their organizations to the new digital and communications environment; the challengers have used new ICTs in order to create their organizations and solve the problem of coordination. More specifically, for Podemos the web is a constitutive resource that characterized its original model and was essential for aggregating and coordinating the supporters of its political message. For Ciudadanos, the web is a tool for extending the party's organizational presence over regional borders, allowing for a process of territorial penetration throughout the country.

In line with previous studies on communication, the other crucial difference is the *left-right cleavage* between the four parties. On the left, Podemos and the PSOE make greater use of ICTs in order to foster greater internal democracy and open the party to sympathizers when compared to their corresponding parties on the centre-right (C's and the PP) (Hypothesis 2).

Indeed, the virtual network's role in the dimension of participation draws a clear difference between Podemos and Ciudadanos. Podemos party members are regularly and systematically involved in both the 'choice of things' and the 'choice of people' through digital channels. For Ciudadanos this involvement is more sporadic, open only to the party's militants and limited to choosing people to fill party roles. The two parties' virtual platforms – *Participa/Plaza Podemos* and *Red Naranja* – are communicative spaces for discussion; however, only *Plaza Podemos* is designed to potentially function as a deliberative arena. Both parties have progressively reduced the participatory and decentralized use of ICTs, but only Podemos seems to thematize the issue. The party seems to be oriented to counterbalance the distortions of the concrete use of digital tools through the consolidation of off-line participatory channels.

With regard to the mainstream parties, only the PSOE shows an inclination to introduce digital tools which might facilitate lighter forms of adhesion and participation. The need to seize the opportunities of the digital revolution, attract younger members and experiment with new possibilities of participation has been a recurring theme for the PSOE since before the emergence of the new challenger parties. From this point of view, the PSOE shows similarities with other European social democratic parties, such as the Labour Party in the UK and the SDP in Germany, which, as noted by Gerbaudo (2019, 108), have also begun 'internal discussions and limited experimentations with digital democracy tools'. The innovation boost in the PSOE has been strengthened in recent years, in the face of the need to rebuild consensus (H1).

Conversely, the PP is the less innovative party in terms of both the digitalization of its organization and its capacity to involve its members in party life. The use of new ICTs in this party is almost completely limited to communicative functions. This partly reflects the centralistic and top-down conception of the party that has historically shown to be reluctant to introduce 'participatory incentives' (Ignazi, 2004) and, on the other hand, confirms how internal changes are unlikely when a party succeeds (Astudillo and García-Guerreta, 2006).

In conclusion, based on the transformations in the three dimensions – membership, organizational configuration and decision-making – none of the parties studied here can be considered as a proper virtual party. In relation to the organizational configuration, no party has completely replaced the real structures with the virtual network. Looking at the other two dimensions, Podemos is clearly nearest the disruptive pole on the continuum of innovation, followed by Ciudadanos and the PSOE, while the PP finds itself nearest the opposite extreme. It can be assumed that also the PP, following the recent defeat (Table 1), will introduce some other organizational changes, deepening a process of renewal partially started in June 2018 after losing the

leadership of the government. Only by observing its evolution, it will be possible to verify if the changes consist of incorporation of new digital instruments.

In general, the analysis of the Spanish case shows how all parties (new/old, right/left) have to deal with the opportunities and challenges of the new communicative environment. The ability to integrate the new tools, approaching to sustainable or disruptive innovations, but also the direction and objectives for which the new tools are used seem to be influenced by specific party factors: the party age and position in the party system and the ideological approach.

In this regard, compared to the analysis proposed here, further research is needed to explore also the role and weight of the communication offices in the parties' organizations and in defining their innovation strategies.

References

Alameda D and Manetto F (2015) La evolución de Podemos en el último año. *El País*, 5 November. Available at https://elpais.com/elpais/2015/11/06/media/1446812318_414947.html (Accessed 2 October 2018).

Astudillo J and García-Guereta E (2006) If it isn't broken, don't fix it: the Spanish popular party in power. *South European Society and Politics* **11**, 399–417.

Bennett LW (2003) Communicating global activism: strengths and vulnerabilities of networked politics. *Information, Communication and Society* **6**, 143–168.

Bennett LW, Segerberg A and Knüpfer CB (2018) The democratic interface: technology, political interface and diverging patterns of electoral representation. *Information, Communication and Society* **21**, 1655–1680.

Biancalana C (2018) *Disintermediazione e Nuove Forme di Mediazione: Verso una Democrazia Post-Rappresentativa?*. Milan: Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli.

Borge-Bravo R and Esteve-Del Valle M (2017) Organization still matters: parties' characteristics, posting and followers reactions on facebook. *International Journal of e-Politics* **1**, 30–49.

Borge-Bravo R and Santamarina-Sáez E (2016) From protest to political parties: online deliberation in new parties in Spain. *Medijske Studije* **7**, 104–122.

Bower JL and Christensen MC (1995) Disruptive technologies: catching the wave. *Harvard Business Review* **73**, 43–53.

Calise M (2015) *La Democrazia del Leader*. Roma-Bari: Laterza

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

Collado A (2018) Solo 66.384 militantes del PP (el 7,6%) se inscriben para votar al sucesor de Rajoy. *El Confidencial*, 26 June. Available at https://www.elconfidencial.com/espana/2018-06-26/solo-64-523-militantes-del-pp-se-inscriben-para-elegir-al-sucesor-de-rajoy_1584409/ (Accessed 20 July 2018).

De Fleur ML and Ball-Rokeach SJ (1989) *Theories of Mass Communication*. New York: Longman.

De Kerckhove D and Tursi A (2006) *Dopo la Democrazia? Il Potere E la Sfera Pubblica Nell'epoca Delle Reti*. Milano: Apogeo Editore.

Doherty B (2002) *Ideas and Actions in the Green Movement*. London: Routledge.

Donofrio A (2017) Podemos: de las calles al 'asalto al cielo'. *ResPublica* **17**, 19–51.

Duverger M (1951) *Les Partis Politiques*. Paris: Armand Colin.

Epstein LD (1967) *Political Parties in Western Democracies*. New York: Praeger.

Estebán P (2017) Rivera arrasa en las primarias y se ratifica como presidente de ciudadanos. *El Confidencial*, 27 January. Available at https://www.elconfidencial.com/espana/2017-01-27/rivera-arrasa-primarias-presidente-ciudadanos-de-los-santos-bermejo_1322937/ (Accessed 3 October 2018).

Farrell DM and Webb P (2000) Political parties as campaign organizations. In Russell J. D and Wattenberg M (eds) *Parties Without Partisans: Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 103–125.

Franzé J (2018) The podemos discourse: A journey from antagonism to agonism. In García-Agustín Ó and Briziarelli M (eds). *Podemos and the New Political Cycle. Left-Wing Populism and Anti-Establishment Politics*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 49–74. doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-63432-6.

Gálvez JJ (2018) Ciudadanos recauda con las cuotas de sus militantes casi lo mismo que el PP. *El País*, 5 June. Available at https://elpais.com/politica/2018/05/08/actualidad/1525798023_673894.html (Accessed 28 September 2018).

Gauja A (2017) *Party Reform: The Causes, Challenges, and Consequences of Organizational Change*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gerbaudo P (2019) *The Digital Party. Political Organisation and Online Democracy*. London: Pluto Press.

Gibson R and Römmele A (2001) Changing campaign communications: a party-centered theory of professionalized campaigning. *The International Journal of Press/Politics* **6**, 31–43.

Gibson R and Ward S (2009) Parties in the digital age- a review article. *Representation* **45**, 87–100.

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

Gomez R and Ramiro L (2017) The limits of organizational innovation and multi-speed membership. Podemos and its new forms of party membership. Party Politics, published early online, 23 November. Available at https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068817742844.

Harmel R and Janda K (1994) An integrated theory of party goals and party change. *Journal of Theoretical Politics* **6**, 259–287.

Heidar K and Saglie J (2003) Predestined parties? Organisational change in Norwegian political parties. *Party Politics* **9**, 219–39.

Ignazi P (2004) Il puzzle dei partiti: più forti e più aperti ma meno attraenti e meno legittimi. *Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica* **3**, 325–346.

Ignazi P (2017) *Party and Democracy. The Uneven Road to party Legitimacy.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

InfoLibre (2017) Podemos reforma su censo: pide a sus inscritos que verifiquen su identidad para mejorar la seguridad y reparte 'carnés', 13 July. Available at https://www.infolibre.es/noticias/politica/2017/07/13/podemos_reforma_censo_pide_sus_inscritos_que_verifiquen_identidad_para_mejorar_seguridad_reparte_carnes_67551_1012.html (Aaccessed 28 September 2018).

Kirchheimer O (1966) The transformation of Western European Party Systems. In La Palombara J and Weiner M (eds), *Political Parties and Political Development.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 177–200.

Lago J and Bustinduy P (2016). Podemos y el nuevo ciclo político: de la hipótesis Podemos a la maquina de guerra electoral. Universidad de Verano, Madrid. Available at https://instituto25m.info/mesas/podemos-y-el-nuevo-ciclo-politico-de-la-hipotesis-podemos-a-la-maquina-de-guerra-electoral/ (Accessed 28 September 2018).

Lévy P (2002) *Cyberdémocratie. Essai de philosophie politique.* Paris: Jacob.

Libertad Digital (2014) Nart y Girauta, cabezas de lista de Ciudadanos para las elecciones europeas. Available at https://www.libertaddigital.com/espana/politica/2014-02-22/nart-y-girauta-cabezas-de-lista-de-ciudadanos-para-las-elecciones-europeas-1276511416/ (Accessed 2 October 2018).

Löfgren K and Smith C (2003) Political parties and democracy in the information Age. In Gibson R, Nixon P and Ward S (eds.), *Political Parties and the Internet: Net Gain?* London: Routledge, pp. 39–52.

Lusoli W and Ward S (2004) Digital rank-and-file: party activists' perceptions and use of the internet, *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* **6**, 453–470.

Magone JM (2009) *Contemporary Spanish Politics.* London and New York : Routledge.

Mair P (2013) *Ruling the Void: The Hollowing of Western Democracy.* London: Verso Books.

Manin B (1997) *The Principles of Representative Government.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Margetts H (2006) The cyber party. In Katz R and Crotty W (eds), *Handbook of Party Politics.* London: Sage, pp. 528–535.

Margolis M and Resnick D (2000) *Politics as Usual: The Cyberspace Revolution.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Margolis M, Resnick D and Tu C (1997) Campaigning on the internet: parties and candidates on the world wide web in the 1996 primary season. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* **2**, 59–78.

Mazzoleni G (2012) *Comunicazione Politica.* Bologna: Il Mulino.

Méndez Lago M (2000) *La Estrategia Organizativa del Partido Socialista Obrero Español (1975–1996).* Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas.

Méndez Lago M (2006) Turning the page: crisis and transformation of the Spanish Socialist Party. *South European Society and Politics* **11**, 419–437.

Meyenberg Y (2017) Disputar la democracia. El caso de Podemos en España. *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales* **230**, 221–242.

Morlino L and Raniolo F (2017) *The Impact of the Economic Crisis on South European Democracies.* Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-52371-2.

Norris P (2000) *A Virtuous Circle: Political Communication in Postindustrial Societies.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Padró-Solanet A and Cardenal AS (2008) Partidos y política en Internet: Un análisis de los websites de los partidos políticos catalanes. Revista de los Estudios de Derecho y Ciencia Política de la UOC 6, pp. 46–64.

Panebianco A (1989) *Modelli di Partito.* Bologna: Il Mulino.

Piña R (2015) Las primarias de Ciudadanos sellan el pasaporte para el Congreso de los candidatos 'oficiales'. *El Mundo*, 19 July, Available at http://www.elmundo.es/espana/2015/07/19/55ab912b22601d91518b4575.html (Accessed 20 July 2018).

Prnoticias (2015) Ciudadanos desgrana las claves de su Comunicación: entrevista a Fernando de Páramo. Available at https://prnoticias.com/hemeroteca/20138260-ciudadanos-claves-comunicacion#inline-auto1611 (Accessed 20 July 2018).

Público (2017) Radiografía del militante del PSOE: sexagenario y poco participativo, 2 July. Available at https://www.publico.es/politica/radiografia-militante-psoe-sexagenario-participativo.html (Accessed 28 September 2018).

Ramiro-Fernández L (2005) Programmatic adaptation and organizational centralization in the AP-PP. *South European Society and Politics* **10**, 207–223.

Raniolo F (2013) *I Partiti Politici.* Il Mulino: Bologna.

Raniolo F and Tarditi V (2017) 'Virtual' parties in the democracies of dissatisfied citizens, Paper presented at the Ipsa/Aisp Conference, Political Science in the Digital Age, Hannover, 4–6 December.

Resnick D (1998) The normalization of the cyberspace. In Toulouse C and Luke T (eds), *The Politics of the Cyberspace: A new Political Science Reading*. New York: Routledge, pp. 48–68.

Riaño M (2018) Las cuentas del PP desmontan sus inverosímiles datos sobre afiliación, *El Independiente*, 23 June. Available at https://www.elindependiente.com/politica/2018/06/22/cuentas-pp-desmontan-inverosimiles-datos-afiliacion/ (Accessed 28 September 2018).

Roberts KM (2013) Parties and populism in Latin America'. In De la Torre C and Cynthia JA (eds), *Latin America Populism in the Twenty-First Century*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 37–60.

Rodríguez-Teruel J and Barrio A (2016) Going national: ciudadanos from Catalonia to Spain. *South European Society and Politics* **21**, 587–607.

Römmele A (2003) Political parties, party communication and new information and communication technologies. *Party Politics* **9**, 7–20.

Sartori G (1976) *Parties and Party Systems: a Framework for Analysis*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Scarrow S (2015) *Beyond the Party Members. Changing Approaches to Partisan Mobilization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sikk A (2005)How unstable? Volatility and the genuinely new parties in Eastern Europe. *European Journal of Political Research* **44**, 391–412.

Smith C and Webster W (1995) Information Technology in Political Parties'. Paper presented to the Political Studies Association Annual Conference, University of York, 15–18 July.

Stoppino M (1983) 'Ideologia'. In Norberto Bobbio, Nicola Matteucci and Gianfranco Pasquino (eds) *Dizionario di Politica*. Torino: UTET, p. 486.

Tarditi V (2017) Podemos: Alla ricerca dell'equilibrio tra efficienza e democrazia. In Bianchi DG and Raniolo F (eds), *Limiti e Sfide Della Rappresentanza Politica*. Milano: Franco Angeli, pp. 192–214.

Vaccari C (2013) *Digital Politics in Western Democracies*. A comparative Study. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Ward S (2008) Introduction: Parties and election campaigning online: A New Era? In Ward S, Owen D, Davis R and Taras D (eds), *Making A Difference: A Comparative View of the Role of the Internet in Election Politics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, pp. 1–13.

Ware A (1996) *Political Parties and Party System*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wring D and Horrocks I (2000) Virtual hype? The transformation of political parties?. In Axford B and Huggins R (eds), *New Media and Politics*, London: Sage, pp. 191–209.

Parties' Documents

Ciudadanos

Ciudadanos (2017) Estatutos. Coslada, 5 February. Available at https://www.ciudadanos-cs.org/var/public/sections/page-estatutos/estatutos.pdf?__v=339_0 (Accessed 2 October 2018).

Rivera A (2015) *El cambio sensato. 100 preguntas, 100 respuestas*. Espasa Libros. Barcelona.

Podemos

Podemos (2014) *Principios organizativos*. Available at https://euskadi.podemos.info/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2016/12/01_Principios_Organizativos.pdf (Accessed 2 October 2018).

Podemos (2017*a*) *Documento organizativo*. Available at https://podemos.info/documentos/ (Accessed 2 October 2018).

Podemos (2017*b*) *Estatutos de Podemos*. Available at https://podemos.info/documentos/ (Accessed 2 October 2018).

Podemos para Todas (2017) *Mandar obedeciendo. Documento Organizativo*. Available at https://vistalegre2.podemos.info/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/PPT_Doc_Organizativo.pdf (Accessed 2 October 2018)

Recuperar la Ilusión (2017) *Recuperar la ilusión. Desplegar las velas: un Podems para gobernar. Documento político*. Available at http://estaticos.elmundo.es/documentos/2017/01/13/Errejon.pdf (Accessed 28 September 2018).

Secretaría de organización y programa Podemos (2017) *Tú costruyes Podemos. Reglamento para conformar el censo de militantes*. Available at https://files.podemos.info/CpMByRams8.pdf (Accessed 2 October 2018).

PP

PP (2008) *16 Congreso Popular. Ponencia Estatutos*. Available at http://www.partidopopular.us/documentos/normas/Estatutos_PP_XVI.pdf (Accessed 2 October 2018).

PP (2012) *17 Congreso Popular. Comprometidos con España*. Available at http://17congreso.pp.es/ponencias/1%20PONENCIA%20ESTATUTOS.pdf (Accessed 2 October 2018).

PP (2017) *España adelante!18 Congreso popular*. Available at http://www.pp.es/sites/default/files/documentos/estatutos_definitivos.pdf (Accessed 2 October 2018).

PSOE

PSOE (2008) *PSOE 37 Congreso Federal. Estatutos. La fuerza del cambio*. Available at http://www.psoe.es/media-content/2015/09/205507-000000139216.pdf (Accessed 2 October 2018).

PSOE (2012) *38 PSOE Resoluciones*. Available at http://www.psoe.es/media-content/2016/04/resoluciones-201202-38-congreso.pdf (Accessed 2 October 2018).

PSOE (2013) *Resolución política. Conferencia política*. Noviembre 2013. Available at https://www.psoe.es/media-content/2016/04/resoluciones-201310-Conferencia-Politica.pdf (Accessed 2 October 2018).

PSOE (2014) *Consulta para la secretaría general del PSOE. 13 de Julio de 2014*. Available at https://www.ecestaticos.com/file/0ff593f5fe7c0fee2a701a9e390de924/1449088037.pdf (Accessed 2 October 2018).

PSOE (2017) *Somos la izquierda. Estatutos Federales 39 Congreso*. Available at http://www.psoe.es/media-content/2015/04/Estatutos-Federales-39-Congreso-Federal-PSOE-2017.pdf Accessed 2 October 2018).