

# **Political Blogging in Campaign and Political Communication: Political Leadership 2.0? \***

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\* Authors' names are ordered alphabetically; their contributions were equally important

## 1. Introduction

Needless to say, Internet is reframing different areas of our societies. It is contributing to both the diffusion and instrumentation of new digital systems of social and political organization and mobilization (Castells, 2001; Norris, 2001; West, 2005), and the emergence and development of virtual communities based on the collaborative principles of the so called *Web 2.0 Philosophy* (Cerezo, 2005; Musser & O'Reilly, 2006).

Moreover, this actuality is transcending progressively the social stage to take roots in the political ground of the citizenry communicative behavior (Ferdinand, 2004). Indeed, the political use of the *blogging* phenomenon is one of the most outstanding symptoms of the impact that the e-communication is making on the political arena (Pole, 2006; Barrero *et alia*, 2006). The introduction of the blogging practice into the electoral political game through Web campaigning attaches new links to the large chain of questions that ties up two central issues in representative democracies: political communication and political leadership. Does political blogging give a new meaning to the communicative dimension of the democratic political leadership while campaigning? Does it introduce a transformation into the relational dynamics between

political leaders/candidates and (potential) followers/voters?

In this paper we present a tentative approximation to such subject matter and its features in the Spanish casuistry. In so doing, we distribute the presentation in four sections. The following one approaches the area under discussion by conciliating overlapped viewpoints respectively pertained to the leadership studies, the political research on modern electoral campaigns and the ICTs theories. Setting out such theoretical framework, we hypothesize *the political blogging might entail mostly either an emulation of the so called modern model of campaigning* (Mancini and Swanson, 1996) – then being the political blog a new technological mean for media-focused party campaign and candidate-centered mass media campaign coverage – *or an innovation*. The third section makes this pose operative by suggesting an analytical framework that focuses in the characteristics of the context and content of the electoral political leadership communication through the leaders/candidate blogs. Implementing this analytical framework in the Spanish scenario, the fourth part inquires into the context and content features of a selection of political blogs conducted by the mayors of the major cities while competing in the municipal election of May 2007. Finally, the fifth section discusses the results achieved.

## **2. The Cross-Roads of the Political Communication in Western Democracies**

### **2.1. *Information and Communication Technologies (TIC) and Electoral Campaigns: Communicative Patterns of Democratic Political Leadership.***

*Leadership rests on relational processes. Leadership involves leader-followers interaction in a group context. Leadership entails collective goal attainment.* Each one of the abovementioned statements can be identified within the multitude ways that leadership phenomenon has been conceptualized (Northouse, 2001). Everyone makes out a particular leadership communicative aspect. All together suggest that contextual, collective and intentional interaction is the core of leadership, while communication is the heart of the leadership interaction.

Political leadership is based on the same logic. Thus is, the processes of political leadership are funded on political interactions within a group context in the seeking for the achievement of certain political goals. Therefore, political leadership and political communication come out inseparable.

Equally, democratic political leadership is ultimately based on contextual, collective and intentional political interaction (Bass, 1990; Elgie, 1995; Baldersheim and Daloz, 2003), being political communication a key issue within. Nonetheless, the interactive behaviour of democratic political leadership shall be distinguished due to its specificity, just as the political leadership communicative dimension in the representative democracies can be differentiated because of its particular attributes.

First, information exchange, linkage endorsement and networking promotion are the intentional attributes of the democratic political leadership interaction. In reality, one of the main characteristic behaviours of democratic political leaders is the seeking for the creation of political links and the expansion of these relations in networks of supports that are employed as channels of two-ways information and facilitators of filtration and aggregation of demands and interests between the leaders and the leader's political domain (Robles, 2005). More to the point, when these nets of information and influence do not work, there is no way for the consolidation of the leadership (Natera, 2001).

Second, in non-electoral contexts, democratic political leaders hold *directive*, *aggregative*, *representative* and *legitimizing* functions (Natera, 2001), all of them traversed by information exchange, linkage endorsement and networking promotion requirements. These communicative conditions come to be even accentuated in electoral contexts (pre-campaigning and campaigning periods), when *persuading* and *mobilizing* functions are also attached to the political leaders communicative actuation when campaigning (Mcnair, 1995).

Third, given in liberal democracies elections constitutes a central activity that for many in the population forms their only engagement with politics, the fact is the electoral contests have come to embody the factual leitmotif for leader/followers linkages (Mughan and Patterson, 1992). On the one hand, elections provide leaders and would-be leaders with opportunities to test their political ideas, policy initiatives and leadership styles in the crucible of public debate and competition. On the other hand, elections give partisan and non-affiliated citizenry chances to influence who will be the leaders, what will they do and how responsive they can be.

Fourth, the electoral communicative behaviour of the democratic political leadership is intermediated (Bennet and Etman, 2001; Cases, 2005; Castedo, 2005). Whereas in small groups leaders and followers can readily be linked together directly

through interpersonal interaction, in large organizations and societies the linkages cannot be merely direct but crowded with mediate groups and institutions that provides channels through which the leaders positions and visions can be communicated to followers, and the followers needs, demands or preferences can be communicated to leaders. Concretely, political parties provide a linkage between political leaders and followers through participation in party activities and loyalty to party leaders, channel the electoral ambition of leaders, foster the competitive politics required for democratic leadership selection, and permit the interplay of responsiveness and accountability (Mughan and Patterson, 1992). From their part, mass media interfere into the communicative dimension of the democratic political leadership by informing, making opinion and setting the political agenda when covering the political actuality.

Fifth, the electoral communicative behaviour of the democratic political leadership is patterned by the archetypical features of the so called *video-democracy* (Sartori, 2003, 2004) and the characteristic facets of the *modern model of campaigning* within (Mancini and Swanson, 1996; Holtz-Bacha, 2004). They are the media-focused party campaigning, the candidate-centered mass media campaign coverage, the personality driven politics, the professionalization of the electoral marketing and the promotion of the video-leadership. Despite being obvious that national factors – as the structure of the media systems, particularly different electoral systems, the structure of the party competition, campaign regulation and political culture – have an impact on the way electoral campaigns are designed and performed, all liberal democracies coincide in this sense. In due course, it does not surprise. In all western democracies political leaders perform central electoral communicative functions within the party electoral structures and television is the main communication media through which the electorate acquires political information and follows the electoral campaign. In such way, media-focused party electoral structures have tended to use television as a principal tool of electoral communication, and therefore the television has become the key channel by which political parties communicate to the mass audience their electoral message.

Finally, these mutually reinforced phenomena have had a two-fold impact on the communicative dimension of the democratic political leadership in campaign. On the one hand, being the (would be) leader/candidate the focus of the TV coverage of the campaign, the candidate-centered orientation is reproduced by media- focused parties. Accordingly, the heads of the party candidatures have acquired transversal, conditioning and structuring effects on the party electoral offer gaining centrality and

visibility till the extent of personalizing the party message (Barranco, 2003; Vanaclocha, 2005). On the other hand, being the electoral race observed in terms of personality driven politics and conducted in terms of television driven campaign, winning election is all about political communication specialists whose role is to raise the candidate visibility among undecided voters and to sell candidates policies in much the same way that business sells products (Chadwick, 2006). Subsequently, the heads of the party candidature have lost both communicative capability and autonomy having to accomplish the exigencies of the television communicative format (simple message, image centrality, seeking for audience, and time-constraining) and the communicative stratagem designed by experts in political publicity.

## **2.2. *Information and Communication Technologies (ICT's) and Web Campaigning: New Frameworks for Democratic Political Leadership.***

Do the interactions between new ICTs and campaigning processes entail new challenges for political leadership in the digital era? Once the politic moved into the – yet classic – ICTs, it adopted specific patterns for the *context* and *content* of the electoral dimension of the democratic political leadership communicative function. Nowadays, the politic is moving into the new ICTs age, entrenching position in the electoral arena. Therefore, the current question is if the spread of these new ICTs – and the Internet ascendancy within – has come to reshape such context and content.

Internet is the latest in a series of major mass communication technology innovations, and in this sense, it could be contemplated as an extension of the mass media (Dahlgren, 2001). On-line versions of television, radio, news services and daily newspaper constitute a considerable degree of net activity. These on-line adaptations mostly reproduce the (would be) leader/candidate orientation while covering the campaign, providing information, making opinion and setting the electoral agenda, extending the one-to-many logic of the mass media, with the addition of hypertext, archival and interactive capacities. In this line, Internet does not necessarily introduce innovation in the electoral dimension of the communicative functions of the democratic political leadership process (Mechling, 2002).

Nevertheless, the Net offers other kind of communication possibilities for electoral campaigning, beyond the prolongation of the mass media orientation. All types of political actors – not only news producers but also advocacy groups, social movements, political parties, political institutions, government bodies, and non-affiliated

citizens – are increasingly likely to have presence in the World Wide Web (Ferdinand, 2004), turning Internet into a multimedia location for collective political interaction (Foot and Schneider, 2006). In such way, Internet may be also seen as a new political space where to inform, persuade and involve others in the promotion of the (would be) leader/candidate and the reinforcement of its network of support. That is why Web campaigning<sup>1</sup> has rushed into the field of the democratic political leadership electoral communication.

Web-based political campaigning is not a panacea by itself, even if it may imply some new potentialities. In particular, further than general instrumentations of parties Web pages as a tool of on-line political marketing (Bieber, 2004), certain form of on-line campaigning constitutes a privileged electoral device for the information exchange, linkage endorsement and networking promotion – the distinguishing features of the content of the political leadership interactive communication in representative democratic societies.

That is the case of the blog phenomenon, a new type of Web 2.0<sup>2</sup> based means that not only entails interactive instruments, but also collaborative attitudes and behaviours. Moreover, the last experience with political campaigns blogging encourages even more the study of this intriguing connection between representatives/candidates and other social and political actors in the digital sphere.

Blogs are platforms for digital publishing in the Internet, and the instrument related with the Web 2.0 more developed during the last years. From the origins of the concept, weblogs (or blogs)<sup>3</sup> have contributed to the social expansion of the Net, so they have become a specific category on the WWW. In practical terms, like conventional web sites, blogs are hosted on servers, viewed through Internet browsers (Explorer, Mozilla...), and accessed using URL addresses. Blogs are periodically

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1 Following Foot and Schneider (2006: 4) we define Web campaigning as “*those activities with political objectives that are manifested in, inscribed on, and enabled through the World Wide Web*”.

2 In the first nineties, the World Wide Web (WWW) was created by Tim Berners-Lee, within the *European Organization for Nuclear Research* (CERN), as a way to communicate among different research groups working together. The astonishing impact of the WWW derived on difficulties for a model based on web site publishing, with millions of users and dispersed contents, an scenario not expected in its origins, thus producing important threats (i.e. looking for information may be a frustrating experience), and implying structural limitations for the initial technology. Recently, staying away from architectural considerations, the WWW is experiencing an important transformation, not only related with contents, but also paticipative users and minimalism in web design. Indeed, a new generation of collaborative tools (with myriad of technological acronyms: AJAX, RSS, CSS, ATOM...) are notably influencing the next steps of the WWW, and paving the way for the so called Web 2.0 (Barrero *et alia*, 2006).

3 Due in 1997 to Jorn Barger, to mention his web site *Robot Wisdom*, using the fusion of *web* and the term *log* (weblog) (Cerezo, 2005).

updated, with posts accompanied by the date and time, and presented in chronological order, the most recent post first. With millions of practitioners around the World (Tricas *et alia*, 2006), editorial control, including the subject matter, length, and tone of each posting, is at the discretion of the blogger.

The core nature of blogs is the facility to allow visitors to respond and comment on the blogger's original posts. According with the Web 2.0 philosophy, the success of a blog derives from its external visibility in the blogosphere, and the blogger's ability to link and engage with other bloggers interested in the same fields or topics. Hence, social and collaborative dimensions of blogging derive from its capacity to interlink communities and display networks of users and institutions, participating directly with comments to past posts, making links to related web sites, connecting to other "friend" blogs using blogrolls, or setting banners to emphasize the importance of different organizations, social movements, etc. (Hewitt, 2005).

In the political realm, blogs have been adopted by very diverse political actors for different purposes. From political activists, i.e. in the organization of anti-World Trade Summits and anti-war demonstrations, to elected representatives in parliaments, there are a number of major efforts underway to harness blogging as a tool of political engagement (Ferguson & Howell, 2004). On the other hand, and like other spheres, political blogging commonly focuses on activities related with informing the readers, reporting errors or omissions in the mainstream media, engaging in political advocacy and encouraging their readers to donate or join to political parties or movements (Pole, 2006). However, "*the main political added value for blogging is not to be found in politicians presenting themselves to an audience of potential voters, but in the dense networks of intellectual and symbolic intercourse involving millions of private-public bloggers*" (Coleman, 2004: 28). At first sight, different questions may be discussed and explored from a political point of view:

*"The basic point, however, is that it seems that political blogs do demonstrate an ability to enhance political debate and communication within the online community. What needs to be examined is whether this dialogue and debate is separate from the general public debate or whether blogs serve as a bridge between politicians, activists and citizens via the Internet. This raises questions as to how elected representatives can use the communication space which blogs afford and how blogs can link into the formal representative structures that already exist".*

(Ferguson & Howell, 2004: 17)

Bearing in mind the previous, political campaigns represent one of the most stimulating moments for the study of political blogging. The 2004 United States

Presidential election was the first high impact campaign in which blogging played a relevant role in terms of political communication and leadership. The potential of political blogging was relevant addressing the thousands of commentators about the ongoing process, likewise major leaders/candidates blogging for support in the blogosphere. Trippi (2004) described the importance of this new Internet-based campaign, and the relevance of the presidential candidate Howard Dean's blog in building grassroots support. Williams *et alia* (2005) depicted that presidential candidates tend to use websites more than blogs, despite this, blogs had more external links and discussed more salient issues. Nonetheless, the study of political campaign blogging is in its first stages.

Respecting the Spanish scene, the political blogging constitutes also a very recent experience. During the last years, some representatives and candidates have adopted blogs for political and electoral purposes, with posts derived from their parliamentary and institutional activities. Such experiences range from those of Pasqual Maragall<sup>4</sup> or Anxo Quintana<sup>5</sup>, with almost no interactive options (i.e. comments on posts were not allowed); to other like those of Toni Roig<sup>6</sup>; José López-Orozco<sup>7</sup>, Rafael Estrella<sup>8</sup>, or Lorenzo Abadía<sup>9</sup>, based on collaborative principles, as reflection and exchange political arenas, posting and receiving comments on issues attached to the citizenry and, in some aspects, without following official positions of their political parties of reference (Barrero *et alia*, 2006)<sup>10</sup>. In any case, our knowledge about these experiences remains insufficient and needs to be expanded.

### **2.3. *Electoral Blogging: New Communicative Patterns of Democratic Political Leadership?***

To summarize, it is obvious that the introduction of Internet into the political arena and the communication possibilities it offers for Web campaigning are redefining in some extent the electoral communicative frame of the democratic political leadership. What is not that clear is whether the spread of the electoral use of the weblogging is reshaping also its *communicative context and content* or not.

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4 Former-President of the Generalitat de Cataluña: <http://www.presidentmaragall.net>.

5 Candidate to the Presidency of the Xunta de Galicia for the Galician Nationalist Party in 2005 election: <http://www.quin2005.com>.

6 Speaker of the Socialist Party in Palma de Mallorca city council: <http://toniroig.balearweb.net>.

7 Major of Lugo (until 2007): <http://www.joselopezorozco.com>.

8 Socialist MP for Granada: <http://estrella.lamatriz.org>.

9 Popular Party secretary in Zaragoza: <http://blogs.periodistadigital.com/lorenzoabadia.php>.

10 There is also a well known aggregator of MP's blogs: <http://parlamentarios.info>.

Inquiring into such interrogation, we set out from the following dichotomist hypotheses:

- *H1: the electoral use that democratic political leaders give to the political blogging entails mostly an emulation of the modern model of campaigning.*
- *H2: the electoral use that democratic political leaders give to the political blogging entails mostly an innovation in political campaigning, bringing about new patterns of communicative behavior of political leadership.*

### **3. Democratic Political Leadership and Electoral Blogging. The Analytical Approach.**

Bearing in mind interaction is the core of the processes of leadership, our primary concern is the understanding of the interactive behaviour of democratic political leadership. In such way, considering the blog a digital tool for interacting while Web campaigning, our principal interests is the comprehension of the electoral use that political leaders/candidates give to such device. Consequently, we propose an analytical framework that focuses in the main features of the political leadership interaction by blogging. They are the *interaction context* and the *interaction content*.

#### ***The interaction context.***

We mentioned above that the democratic political leadership is *contextual*. The interaction between political leaders/candidates and the citizenry takes place within particular group contexts and is patterned by the particular characteristics of such contextualization. Therefore, different contexts are expected to transfer distinct attributes to the political leadership interaction.

In the same way, the democratic political leadership interaction by blogging might be conducted in different Web contexts. Thus is, the political leader/candidate might create his/her blog in an autonomous allocation, in the virtual frame of the Party Web Page or/and in the digital context of the Media Web Pages. Then, the political leadership interaction by blogging could be expected to follow different patterns depending on the autonomous, partisan or mediated nature of the blog allocation. In other terms, the political leadership interaction by blogging could be expected to follow different patterns depending on the political leader/candidate inclination toward the

*personalization, partidification or mediatization* of his/her virtual interaction by blogging.

### ***The interaction content.***

We pointed out above as well that the democratic political leadership is *intentional* and the interactions between political leaders/candidates and the citizenry bring about the information exchange, linkage endorsement and networking promotion. So does the electoral interaction between them, although in this case the information content is specially particularized by its marketing orientation and the linkage and networking seeking parallel the seeking for the leader's revalidation by the electorate. By the same token, the electoral content of the democratic political leadership interaction by blogging can be distributed in the distinct informative, involving and networking dimensions.

Respecting the *Interaction Marketing*, it shall be considered that the post tool give political leaders/candidates the chance of getting their electoral message out to (potential) followers/voters and the opportunity to do it with more flexibility than with any other mechanism of mass communication (with the exception of paid advertising). More to the point, the blog post offers several kinds of information possibilities: non issue information and issue information. While posts with non issue information might merely advertise the leader/candidate and its participation in the electoral contest, posts with issue information may contribute to the dissemination of the leader/candidate position respecting key questions, the leader/candidate records while being in office, his/her goals if re-elected in office, or even poll blog-visitors in order to catch their feel on various issues.

Then, the information or marketing dimension of the content of the political leadership interaction by blogging could be expected to follow different patterns depending on the prevalence of one or various kinds of post content:

- advertising
- reporting
- compromising
- polling
- position taking

Regarding the *Interaction Involvement*, it must be pointed out that the leader/candidate can manage discretionally the post and comment tools of his/her

electoral blog. First, the blogger can post with the frequency s/he choose and as much as s/he wishes. Second, the blogger can decide upon the style of post production. Thus is, the blogger might either give content to the post by him/herself elaborating self-produced posts, or create co-produced post by reproducing others information. In this last case, such information may proceed from mass media, political parties, advocacy groups or other independent bloggers. Third, one the one hand – and in line with its interactive nature – the blog offers the blogger the chance of receiving comments from the blog visitors, giving him/her the occasion of engaging in discussions and/or taking the pulse to his/her potential electorate. Indeed, all visitors could comment the blogger posts, and every visitor could add as many comments as s/he desires. On the other hand – and though not part of its original profile – the blog offers the leader/candidate as well the option of filtering the publication of comments that contest his/her original posts, and even the possibility of impeding the reception of comments.

Therefore, the linkage or involving dimension of the content of the political leadership interaction by blogging could be expected to follow different patterns depending on the following indicators:

- the post frequency
- the prevalence of co-produced or self-produced posting
- the nature of the information provided by co-produced posting
- the allowance or not allowance of comment reception
- the comment reception quantity (in case of being allowed)
- the free or filtering character of the comment reception (in case of being allowed).

Finally, concerning *the Interaction Connecting*, it shall be pointed out that the blog offers different tools to the leader/candidate for networking. They are hiperlinks, blogrolls and banners. Through these devises the blogger can readily show up his/her partisan militancy, media leanings and political vinculums with social and political organizations and movements. By using them from an electoral viewpoint, s/he can gamely demonstrate the identity of the social/political/media nodules of his/her network of political support and the extent of such net, and within, the nature of his ideological and pragmatic inclination. Beyond, the inclusion of links, blogroll and banners in the leader/candidate blog invites the visitor to cover the net and engage in it if they feel like doing so.

Consequently, the connecting or networking dimension of the content of the

political leadership interaction by blogging could be expected to vary relating to the next aspects:

- the hiperlinks, blogroll and banner quantity
- the hiperlinks, blogroll and banner nature (given they may refer to and interconnect political parties, political institution, advocacy groups, mass media or other political actors)

Figure 1 systematizes variables and indicators aforementioned:

**Figure 1. Electoral Blogging. Analytical Framework**

Contextual dimension			
<b>Variable 1 . Interaction context:</b>			
Indicator 1. Blog allocation	Autonomous <input type="checkbox"/>	Political party <input type="checkbox"/>	Media <input type="checkbox"/>
Content dimension			
<b>Variable 2 . Interaction marketing:</b>			
Indicator 2.1. Leader's post advertising content			
Indicator 2.2. Leader's post reporting content			
Indicator 2.3. Leader's post position taking content			
Indicator 2.4. Leader's post compromising content			
Indicator 2.5. Leader's post polling content			
<b>Variable 3 . Interaction involvement:</b>			
Indicator 3.1. Post delivery quantity			
Indicator 3.2. Post delivery frequency			
Indicator 3.3. Self-produce post quantity			
Indicator 3.4. Co-produced post quantity			
Indicator 3.5. Co-produced post nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importation of mass media content <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Importation of other electoral blogs content <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Importation of content from other kinds of blog <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Importation of political party content <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Importation of other content <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>		
Indicator 3.6. Comment reception allowance	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Indicator 3.7. Comment publishing filtering	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Indicator 3.8. Comment reception quantity			
<b>Variable 4 . Interaction connecting:</b>			
Indicator 4.1. Links quantity			
Indicator 4.2. Links nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutions <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Political party <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Mass media <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Advocacy groups <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Individual political actors <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Other <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>		
Indicator 4.3. Blogroll quantity			
Indicator 4.4. Blogroll nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutions <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Political party <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Mass media <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Advocacy groups <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Individual political actors <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Other <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>		
Indicator 4.5. Banner quantity			
Indicator 4.6. Banner nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutions <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Political party <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Mass media <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Advocacy groups <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Individual political actors <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Other <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>		

#### 4. Democratic Political Leadership and Electoral Blogging. The Empirical Treatment.

##### ***The Case Study Methodology: Focusing the Spanish Local Scene***

Distinct factors have enriched the importance of the local political sub-system within the Spanish political system as a whole since the 90s. They are the link between *europeization*, globalization and the impulse of the political decentralization in Spain; the evolution of the political behaviour of the local electorate; the emerging networks of political influence and clientèles within the local frameworks; the long-running pattern of mayoralty; and the trend of localism-seeking in the municipal political life (Alba, 1997; Gomá and Subirats, 1998; Brugué and Gomá, 1998; Natera, 1997, 2001; Navarro, 2002).

The same circumstances have equally contributed to accentuate the significance of the main political actors in municipal governments: the mayors. Institutionally, Spanish mayors develop *directive*, *aggregative*, *representative* and *legitimating* functions. Politically, they play the role of “political brokers”, due to the privileged position they occupied in the chain of implementation of the policies of the upper levels of government. In electoral terms, they *persuading* and *mobilizing* functions when campaigning. Indeed, the centrality and visibility acquired by those who hold the mayoralty presidency have brought about a *personalization effect* in municipal politics<sup>11</sup>, making mayors be hardly ever controlled by the political opposition, seldom contested by local party factions and rarely sanctioned at the local elections (Martínez, 2006: 5).

Thus is, Spanish mayors can be properly considered local political leaders, and the political leadership they promote shall be observed as fundamental for the local politics and beyond. In this sense Borraz and John (2004: 12) note: “*Leadership is crucial to the functioning and success of local governance. The politics of decentralization, networks, participation, partnerships, bureaucratic reform, rapid policy change and central intervention need powerful but creative figures to give a direction to local policy-making. In a time of institutional fragmentation and complexity, leaders can make the shifting framework of individuals and organizations work together*”. In the same line Haveri (2006: 31) concludes: “*In the changing local governance (...), more than before, the implementation of change depends on the emergence of political leaders willing and able to take responsibility for reforms*”.

### ***Methodological Considerations.***

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11 CIS studies, num. 1749 (April 1987), num. 1870 (April 1990) and num. 2154 (April 1995).

Assuming these reflections – and the relevance of the political subfield of the local in Spain within – we focus the local political leadership endorsed by the mayors/leaders and led citizens and the political interaction sustained between mayor/candidates and the local electorate while campaigning through Internet facilities.

Particularly, we centre the attention in the recent municipal electoral contest of 27<sup>th</sup> May 2007. This event has been selected given it has been outstanding not only because of the generalization of the party Web campaigning (Junta Electoral Central, 2007) and mass media Web covering of the electoral process, but also on account of the rise of the personal engagement of visible local heads of party candidatures in blogging practices. In so doing, we observe the communicative behaviour of mayors who competed in such contests for the revalidation of their political leadership in the so called *major cities*<sup>12</sup>.

On the one hand, the justification of the *major cities* methodological criterion is three-fold. First, we have taken into account the fact that while the 40% of the Spaniards use Internet, those are mostly concentrated in urban areas (Fundación France Telecom España, 2006). Second, we have attended to the fact that despite municipal election are mostly personality driven, in rural areas and minor cities the relation mayor/candidate – led/electorate is generally proximal and direct, while in urban areas and especially in major cities this relation is distant, mediated by political parties and mass media (Navarro, 2002). Third, we have considered that whereas in rural areas and minor cities local campaigning is likely to be more oriented to the local issues, in major cities it could be contaminated by questions proper of national politics in a way (Delgado and López, 1997). Therefore, we agreed the electoral blogging could be employed in major cities in a greater extent given that its interactive tools serve to their mayor/candidates in a higher degree.

On the other hand, the selective criterion “mayors/candidate” is rationalized by the present argument: we discriminate non-mayor/candidates because they could not be distinguished as local political leaders but as “would be local political leaders”. Then, given we focus actually on *current* local political leadership phenomena,

12 Accordingly with the *Law 57/2003 of 16 December* – the so called Law of Measures to Modernise Local Government (LMMGL) – “large population municipalities” that could enjoy directly the consideration of *major cities* were municipalities with more than 250.00 inhabitants (no matter they are provincial capitals or not) – as it was the case of Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Sevilla, Zaragoza, Malaga, Murcia, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Palma de Mallorca, Bilbao, Valladolid, Cordoba, Alicante, Vigo and Gijón –, and provincial capitals with more than 175.000 inhabitants – being the case of La Coruña, Granada, Vitoria, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Oviedo, Pamplona, Santander, San Sebastián and Almería.

considering mayors as *current* local political leaders, we have concluded to contemplate exclusively how visible and consolidated local political leaders attempt to revalidate their local political leadership using blogging practices. Then the number of cases of our constellation was reduced to the following thirteen:

- Luis Díaz (Mayor/candidate of Alicante)
- Luis Rogelio (Mayor/candidate of Almería)
- Jordi Hereu (Mayor/candidate of Barcelona)
- Pilar Fernández (Mayor/candidate of Gijón)
- José Torres (Mayor/candidate of Granada)
- Josefa Luzardo (Mayor/candidate of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria)
- Miguel Angel Cámara (Mayor/candidate of Murcia)
- Yolanda Bacina (Mayor/candidate of Pamplona)
- Odón Elorza (Mayor/candidate of San Sebastián)
- Alfredo Sánchez (Mayor/candidate of Sevilla)
- Francisco Javier León (Mayor/candidate of Valladolid)
- Corina Porro (Mayor/candidate of Vigo)
- Juan Alberto Belloch (Mayor/candidate of Zaragoza)

The analysis of the selected cases took place during the local electoral campaign (25<sup>th</sup> April - 25<sup>th</sup> May 2007) by using direct observation of each blog available. Such timing responds to the legal period comprised between the date when the candidatures were published and the date when the campaign finished. Despite the lawful time for campaigning is entailed just between 11<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> May, we have considered informally the time 25<sup>th</sup> April- 11<sup>th</sup> May as the bonus time for pre-campaigning yet generally known the identity of those local leaders who were going to engage in the competition in order to revalidate their leaderships. Finally, the research was conducted by following the Figure 1 guideline.

## 5. Results

At a glance, results from the analysis provide some interesting ideas about different aspects developed by Spanish mayors/candidates of major cities when blogging. In consequence, even if the majority of them are relatively recent bloggers, some of them have captured the abovementioned features of Web 2.0, in some extent, giving signs about the future potential for digital political leadership, and taking into

account peculiarities of Spanish local political system.

### ***General description of bloggers.***

A broad overview of the sociological attributes of the mayors/candidates observed underlines that the 69% of the bloggers were male. The cases ranged from 41 (Jordi Hereu) to 62 (Luis Díaz) years old, overall older than general bloggers (Tricas *et alia*, 2005). The population of the cities they leaded varied from the 183.308 inhabitants (San Sebastián) to 1.605.602 (Barcelona). Exceptionally, one case had more than six months of blogging experience, before the electoral campaign (Alfredo Sánchez), and other two between three and six months (Luis Rogelio & José Torres). Therefore, all of them shared being the first time in which they were involved in blogging as an instrument for political communication and looking for support during the electoral campaign.

In political terms, we found out that the half of the cases remained more than one legislature in office (54%), being part of one-party governments in more than three-fifths (61%). Besides, the observation of the indicator party affiliation confirmed the half of the candidates pertained to the Popular Party (7 cases, with 1 more from UPN, the Popular Party's landmark in Navarra). These general attributes provide a broad overview of mayors/candidates analysed, confirming the inexistence of bias addressing the rest of candidates/leaders in the same type of cities, but not using blogs as an instrument for political communication at that time.

### ***Context dimension of blogging.***

This first dimension relates with the idea of leader/candidates' inclination toward *personalization*, *partidification* or *mediatization* of his/her virtual interaction by blogging. *Personalization* denotes major/candidate's blogs expressing personal design, as well as a limited linkage to the political party of reference. Conversely, *partidification* indicates major/candidate's blogs with strong references to the political party of reference, using similar URL domains, the same hosting, or equivalent communicative strategies. Finally, *mediatization* entails major/candidate's blogs closely attached to mass media (mostly, electronic journals), using them as platforms to communicate with potential readers. In sum, *blog allocation* conveys the context in which political leadership was being exercised by majors/candidates while blogging in campaign.

Results from this dimension do not confirm a general tendency, but the almost equal presence of the three different patterns of blogging allocation identified before. Indeed, mayor/candidates allocated their blogs *autonomously* in the relative majority of cases (38%), however the other two options (*partidification* and *mediatization*) also shared more than a third of cases (31%) each. The salient cases in the first group are Jordi Hereu, Odón Elorza, and Alfredo Sánchez, three of the most recognized majors in Spain (Barcelona, San Sebastián and Sevilla, all three re-elected). On the other hand, it may be underlined that almost all the cases in the other two categories were *Popular Party's* mayors, excluding Juan Alberto Belloch in Zaragoza.

At first sight, it may be surprising that *personalization* was implemented in such a limited fashion, diminishing blogging potential to reinforce personal leadership, independently from political parties and mainstream mass media. However, it indicates a preliminary stage on electoral blogging as a personal instrument of political communication among local political leaders<sup>13</sup>. Nevertheless, some blogs gave excellent illustrations of personal orientation and attributes using these digital means, with relevant elements of contents and design completely customised. This is the case of Alfredo Sanchez's blog.

**Image 1. Blog of Alfredo Sánchez. Mayor of Sevilla**

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13 Nonetheless, blog's names confirmed, in some extent, *personalization* attempts in the majority of mayor/candidates. The majority of blogs underlined mayor/candidates' names in their home page in order to provide a personal taste, using alternative routes to complete it: *Luis Díaz Alperi*; *Luis Rogelio's blog*; *Jordi Hereu. Mayor*; *Paz Fernández Felgueroso*; *José Torres. My feelings about the electoral campaign*; *Pepa Luzardo's blog. Candidate to the City Council of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria*; *Miguel Ángel Cámaras Botía*; *Yolanda Barcina. Yes to Pamplona*; *Francisco Javier León de la Riva*; *Corina×Vigo*; and *Campaign blog by Alberto Belloch*. Only the cases of Alfredo Sánchez (*The second modernization of Sevilla*), and Odón Elorza (*Mayor's blog*) eluded their personal names as principal identification reference in their blogs.



Source: <http://smsevilla.wordpress.com/>

*Partidification and mediatization* of blogging contexts indicates important limits in personal involvement of candidate/leaders to build this new instrument for political communication. In that regard, the majority of cases of *partidification* implied blog connection with political party's campaign design (logos, colours, discourses...), giving the impression of being more a platform for political party communication, than a new personal self-expression channel independently developed by the leader/candidate. Consequently, the existence of this political party allocation confirms, in some extent, the centrality of parties in Spanish political system, even in the digital sphere. Here, it is underlined the case of the re-elected Popular Party's mayor Luis Rogelio, using in his blog important identification elements with his party of reference, as the main logo, general design, colours, even the type of font.

**Image 2. Blog of Luis Rogelio. Mayor of Almería**

Source: <http://www.luisrogelio.com/?cat=4>

Finally, it was also interesting the analysis of blogs allocated by digital mass

media. This media context for blogging was mostly developed by an important media group (*Vocento*), giving the opportunity for local candidates, also mayors/candidates, in different regions to developed a blog within the electronic version of two of its newspapers *La Verdad de Murcia* (Luis Díaz & Miguel Ángel Cámara) and *El Norte de Castilla* (Francisco Javier León), as it similarly made possible the electronic journal *Periodistadigital.com* (Yolanda Barcina). In those cases, it was remarkable their significant impact on the citizenry addressing the higher amount of comments received, in comparison with previous counterparts, al least, during the period of analysis. Therefore, even if this type of media context for political blogging also reduced the margins for leader/candidates to reinforce *personalization* within the interaction process with their representatives, it gave the opportunity for expanding their general audience.

**Image 3. Blog of Yolanda Barcina. Mayor of Pamplona**



Source: <http://blogs.periodistadigital.com/yolandabarcina.php>

### **Content dimension of blogging.**

This second dimension reflects the importance of different elements that conforms the interactive possibilities for political blogging.

#### *i) The Interaction Marketing*

The results on *Interaction Marketing* provides evidences about the patterns in which mayor/leaders have developed political leadeship by blogging, depending on the prevalence of practices of *advertising*, *reporting*, *position-taking*, *compromising*, or *polling* in their posts delivery, bearing in mind that a single post may content one or more types of those practices.

Fundamentally, mayors/candidates engaged in *compromising*, *advertising* and *reporting*, being the first the most salient. Local candidates were less likely to engage in *polling* evidenced by the fact that all of them never undertook this practice at all. Bloggers' posts took on *compromising* in 50.0% of cases, *advertising* in 31.4%, *reporting* in 22.9%, and *position-taking* in 12.7%. More accurate attention to the posts' origins shows important differences among cases. In fact, the majority within the *compromising* category were due to a succinct number of bloggers (Miguel Ángel Cámara, Francisco Javier León, Jordi Hereu, Luis Díaz, and Juan Alberto Belloch), even if only Corina Porro and Luis Rogelio did not get involved in this type of practice. *Advertising* were predominant in Jordi Hereu, Luis Rogelio and Yolanda Barcina's blogs (with no *advertising* at all in Alfredo Sánchez, Corina Porro, and José Torres). The variance in the case of *reporting* was even higher, addressing that Miguel Ángel Cámara and Francisco Javier León concentrated the majority of posts, with no other case with more than two posts under this category. At the end, *position taking* was the less developed by bloggers (no adopted by José Torres, Yolanda Barcina, Corina Porro, and Odón Elorza), not only overall, but also in particular cases, even if it was the most implemented, in relative terms, by Paz Fernández or Pepa Lizardo.

In this sphere it is interesting to capture some specific examples of each category directly adopted from the blogs. As expected, *compromising* was highly developed during the electoral period, with very different types of promises and goals detailed for re-election (public works, environment, urban development, etc.). An example of *compromising* was found on Miguel Ángel Cámara Botía's blog:

*"The inhabitants of Murcia will enjoy during the next four years more than one hundred municipal facilities if I am revalidated as Major the coming Sunday. The neighbourhoods will go on seeing the improvement of the dynamic of construction of cultural, social, sporty and health centres. In such way I have explained my self during a meeting with members of mass media of Murcia".*

<http://blogs.laverdad.es/miguelangelcamara>. Date: 05/24/2007

*Advertising* was another usual use of political blogging. This type of posts did not provide information about political issues, but the opportunity for bloggers to advertise themselves, some events they attended, media appearances, or electoral meetings with other local, regional or national leaders. An example of *advertising* found on Luis Rogelio's blog:

*"Thank you very much for being there. Thank you to more than 4.000 people from different areas of Almería for coming to listen us during the last meeting of our national leader, Mariano Rajoy, in our city. I am aware of the important effort that*

*represents for you to attend a political meeting during working days. And thank you to all who gave supportt for the success of that day”.*

<http://www.luisrogelio.com/?cat=4>. Date: 05/04/2007

Mayors/candidates did not engage in *reporting* so enthusiastically than in previous categories. This type of posts gave the opportunity for leaders to record on their experiences as mayors, stimulating debate about past issues related with the governmental practice during the last years in office. Here, an example of this type of blogging practice on Francisco Javier León de la Riva's blog:

*“During three legislatures in office, my different local governments prioritised a number of public services offered to the citizens. We aimed to facilitate bureaucratic procedures, symplify management, extend open hours of public buildings, or open access on the Internet to public services (...) In that regard, it congratulates me to confirm the high-quality performance of our city council Web site in different and recognized studies and satisfaction surveys. This technological channel has allowed us to develop new areas of activity in order to improve our services to the citizens”.*

<http://blogs.nortecastilla.es/javierleondelariva>. Date: 05/15/2007

Finally, data show candidates-leaders engaged in *position-taking* less frequently. It seems that during the electoral campaign political leaders rather prefer to make promises about the future, also in the digital sphere, than references about present controversial issues. Besides, it was infrequent for bloggers to take a clear position on general issues, even if some cases can be underlined as exceptional (i.e. Paz Fernández Felgueroso's blog):

*“In May 1<sup>st</sup> 1886, some thousands North-American workers began a strike to demand the Ingersoll Law accomplishment, to achieve an 8 hours labour day (...) Today, labour conditions are fundamentaly better than before, however it is necessary to remember that all of these things did not happen by themselves and that during more than a century many men and women have fought to improve the life conditions of workers, here and in other areas of the World. This May 1<sup>st</sup> we recognise to those men and women and reflect on the past steps, founded difficulties, and the instability of results. We have all received a legacy that we must not spoilt, and to avoid it the best way is to be conscious of the efforts and pain that suffered our forebears in the past”.*

<http://www.pazfelgueroso.es/interior.asp?MP=2&MS=5>. Date: 05/02/2007

## ii) *Interaction Involvement*

Secondly, *Interaction Involvement* indicators give evidence about the intensity of political leaders/candidates when using their blogs. When analysing the post frequency we distinguished two moments: the pre-campaign after the electoral call and the campaign period (two weeks prior the election day). Regarding that it should be remarked that even if the majority of blogs were built on electoral purposes, it was

interesting to find out a higher number of posts delivered during the pre-electoral period. All through the electoral campaign period the post contents were more attached to specific issues, and in general, they concentrated on communicate *compromise*. In terms of intensity, the majority of posts were detected in a few number of bloggers, leading by Miguel Ángel Cámara (39), Francisco Javier León (24), or Jordi Hereu (12). On the other side, cases such as those of Yolanda Barcina (3), Odón Elorza (2) or José Torres (2) almost did not posted in the course of the electoral campaign<sup>14</sup>. In resume, those data give an idea of the variety of patterns of blogging performed by mayor/candidates.

Respecting the *self-production* and *co-production* alternatives, we found out that local leaders preferred the first option when given content to their posts, (83.1% of the total posts). Such majority *self-production* preference appears as a clear indicator of the growing trend of *personalization* of the communicative behaviour of the local leaders when campaigning by blogging. From its part, the minority *co-production* choice, followed by the remarkable examples of the local leaders Jordi Hereu, José Torres, and Alfredo Sánchez, comes together with the posting of different types of material (i.e. journal news, institutional videos, photos...) generally extracted from the local leader's political party and rarely taken from mass media.

Attending to the behaviour of the local political leaders while addressing comments released and made by visitors, we studied (1) leaders *allowance or not allowance of comment reception*, (2) *comment reception quantity* (in case of being allowed), and (3) *free or filtering character of the comment reception* (in case of being allowed). We found out a general disposition among local leaders/candidates to welcome external comment of visitors/voters. Indeed, just two local leaders did not open their blogs to external comments (Luis Rogelio and José Torres). Nevertheless, we observed as well that the common allowance of comments reception had not correlation with a common level of comments reception. The amount of comments received by the political leaders ranged from 667 (Francisco Javier León de la Riva), 66 (Odón Elorza), or 62 (Luis Díaz) to 13 (Alfredo Sánchez), 6 (Juan Alberto Belloch), or 5 (Paz Fernández Felgueroso). Different factors may explain these variations: the leader/candidate capacity to address and attract the citizenship interests, the extend and dynamism of the digital networks of the candidate, and the type of allocation of his/her blog (being more visible from digital mass media, as mentioned above). In

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<sup>14</sup> In the case of Corina Porro, she did not posted at all, even if the blog was adopted months before the campaigning process, and it presented some posts since then, but prior the period of analysis.

particular blogs, it was also clear previous filtering of comments before publishing, a practice out of the collaborative and cooperative nature than should nurture blogging experiences.

iii) *The Interaction Marketing*

Finally, we pay attention to the *Interaction Connecting* issue by studying the most important tools used for networking by bloggers, particularly, *hiperlinks*, *blogrolls*, and *banners*, as much as the identity of the actors networked by these procedures. In general, this dimension was relatively developed by political leaders, even if the majority of them adopted some tools to make effective connections with other social and political agents. Among the aforementioned instruments, *blogrolls* were the most developed within the leader's blogs, followed by *banners*. In that regard, it seems to be of growing importance being connected to the social and political community of bloggers, raising the potential audience for the blog, and giving them the opportunity to interact. Particularly, those candidates/leaders who allocated their blogs using mass media facilities (Luis Díaz, Miguel Ángel Cámara, Yolanda Barcina, and Francisco Javier León) developed in more extent these relational capacities, above all, because digital journals placed generic blogrolls and banners as part of their blogs. The rest of cases undeveloped this dimension and, in the case on *links* directed to external websites, they almost ignored the blogging relational dimension.

Finally, bearing in mind the type of nodes in the network community, different candidates/leaders have shown diverse preferences. Overall, political parties and individual political actors related to them monopolised the most important sources of networking. Nonetheless, alternative types of nodes have been created with some local institutions (i.e. city councils, regional and national public governments and administrations), advocacy groups (local associations), mass media (digital journals and blogrolls with digital journalists) and other institutions (in some cases, they included advertising of private companies), however, leader's blogs under analysis did not exploited their node centrality or developed a realized necessity to engage virtual communities using this new instrument for political communication.

## 6. Discussion

This paper has aimed to unfold the emergent electoral significance of the political blogging practice in the Spanish scenario. In so doing, it has centred the

attention in the real repercussion of such phenomenon on the electoral communicative behaviour of principal political actors: the political leaders.

Approaching the political leadership phenomena from the political communication viewpoint, the theoretical part of the article conciliates literature on the political meaning of the diffusion of the social use of ICTs and the function and role of political leaders in electoral campaign. From this perspective we posed that the expansion of the ICTs has progressively modelled the context and content of the communicative behaviour of political leaders while campaigning for the revalidation of their leadership. In this line, we opened an empirical question: Is the proliferation of the political blogging reshaping now the electoral strategy and style of political communication of democratic political leaders? Facing this interrogation, we proposed dichotomist hypothesis:

- *H1: the electoral use that democratic political leaders give to the political blogging entails mostly an emulation of the modern model of campaigning.*
- *H2: the electoral use that democratic political leaders give to the political blogging entails mostly an innovation in political campaigning, bringing about new patterns of communicative behavior of political leadership.*

Subsequently, we conducted a tentative approximation to the Spanish panorama on the subject matter by testing our hypothesis in frame of the local political arena. Following a case study methodology, we inquired into the context and content of the electoral instrumentation of the political blogging by the mayors of the Spanish Major Cities who competed in the recent municipal elections for the revalidation of their political leadership position.

**Are local political leaders campaigning by poitical blogging?** The results of our analysis allow us to outline an increasing use of ICTs, being political blogs in the forefront of this transformative process. Following certain European and American experiences (Ferguson and Howell, 2005; Kline, 2005), in Spain several local political leaders/candidates are attempting to make more straightforward the communication arrangements with the public by using these new means to interact in the digital sphere and promote an emergent dyalogue in deliberative form. In broader terms, it could be said that blogging in the Spanish local political arena remains in its infancy.

**How much are local political leaders blogging?** At this stage, the practice of political blogging has not been generalised among local political leaders when facing

the preparation of the municipal elections. In this sense, the Spanish casuistry matches with others proper of South-European liberal democracies, in which political parties still remain pivotal within the political system, including digital means (Cunha *et alia*, 2004).

**How are local political leaders-bloggers blogging?** Some of them rather attempted to follow ambitious approaches to the innovative relational capacities that blogs may attain, whereas the majority merely tried to explore this new digital means. As a commentator has pointed out, “*the problem facing politicians who blog is that they are professionally implicated in the very culture that blogging seeks to transcend. Politicians live in a world of certainty and tribal loyalty which is at odds with the blogging ethos of open-mindedness and knowledge-sharing. As long as politicians are expected to be never in doubt and ever faithful to catechistic party messages, their blogging efforts are always likely to look more like simulation than authentic self-expression*” (Coleman, 2005: 27).

Nevertheless, even if the most of the local political leaders studied continue using their blogs as an emulation of the features of the video-democracy and the modern model of campaigning, the analyses has given tangible evidences of electoral use of blogging facilities as a political innovation:

- Concerning the ***contextual dimension*** of the local political leadership campaigning by blogging, it should be noted that minority innovative local political leaders have made diverse efforts to personalize and differentiate the context of their campaign from the traditional party electoral platform (i.e. Odón Elorza, Jordi Hereu, Josefa Luzardo, or Alfredo Sánchez) by setting their blogs in autonomous or mass media allocations (i.e. Yolanda Barcina, Francisco Javier León, or Miguel Ángel Cámara). In any case, the development/involution of this emergent trend of re-contextualization of the communicative behaviour of the local political leaders will require attention in future elections.
- Equally, the introduction of innovation in the ***content dimension*** in the behaviour of local political leaders by blogging has been marginal. First, respecting the *marketing interaction* variable, data show some cases of compromising practices attached to “dialogue” between the representatives and the represented to confront future political projects of candidates/leaders with ideas and comments coming from the public. It also occurred when position-taking regarding controversial projects (landmark buildings, major public works,

local festivals...; see different blogs) were the objective of some candidates/leaders posts, providing opportunities to open up personal views about general issues to different perspectives. Second, in terms of the *interaction involvement* variable, the patterns of behaviour followed by the local leaders/candidates in the Spanish local blogosphere diverge from a group of very involved leaders (more than ten posts during the analysis: Miguel Ángel Cámara, Francisco Javier León, and Jordi Hereu), to other much more reluctant to use their blogs during the same period (up to five posts during the analysis: Corina Porro, José Torres, Odón Elorza, Yolanda Barcina). The same actuality could be identified about the *interaction connecting* variable.

In due course, we consider the convenience of future research on this subject matter in order to determine more accurately the significance of blogging within the understanding of the political communication patterns of democratic leadership. In that regard, attention to next electoral campaigns in different political levels will be necessary, as it will also be needed to expand the type of analysis, if possible exploring personal motivations of leaders/candidates bloggers as well as the exact impact of comments from their representatives in terms of political initiatives and public policies in office.

**Appendix 1. Sample with mayors/candidates in Spanish major cities**

	<b>City, council Mayor/candidate Political affiliation</b>	<b>Principal virtual campaign elements</b>
1)	Alicante Luis Díaz Alperi PP	Personal weblog <a href="http://blogs.laverdad.es/luisdiazalperi">http://blogs.laverdad.es/luisdiazalperi</a>
2)	Almería Luis Rogelio PP	Personal web site <a href="http://www.luisrogelio.com">www.luisrogelio.com</a>
3)		Personal weblog <a href="http://www.luisrogelio.com/?cat=4">http://www.luisrogelio.com/?cat=4</a>
4)	Barcelona Jordi Hereu i Boher Barcelona PSC-PSOE	Personal web site <a href="http://www.jordihereu.cat/">http://www.jordihereu.cat/</a>
5)		Personal weblog <a href="http://www.blogcaldebcn.cat/">http://www.blogcaldebcn.cat/</a>
6)	Bilbao Iñaki Azkuna Urreta PNV	Personalized partisan webpage <a href="http://www.hayquehacer.com/bilbao">http://www.hayquehacer.com/bilbao</a>
7)	Córdoba Rosa Aguilar Rivero IU	Personal web site <a href="http://www.cordobaviva.es/index.htm">http://www.cordobaviva.es/index.htm</a>
8)	Coruña (A) Javier Losada PSOE	Personal web site <a href="http://www.javierlosada.com">www.javierlosada.com</a>
9)	Gijón Paz Fernández Felgueroso PSOE	Personal web site <a href="http://www.pazfelgueroso.es/index.asp">http://www.pazfelgueroso.es/index.asp</a>
10 )		Personal weblog <a href="http://www.pazfelgueroso.es/interior.asp?MP=2&amp;MS=5">http://www.pazfelgueroso.es/interior.asp?MP=2&amp;MS=5</a>
11 )	Granada José Torres PP	Personal web site <a href="http://www.pptorres.com">www.pptorres.com</a>
12 )		Personal weblog <a href="http://blogs.pptorres.com/PpTorres/">http://blogs.pptorres.com/PpTorres/</a>
13 )	Las Palmas de Gran Canaria Josefa Luzardo Romano PP	Personal web site <a href="http://www.pepaluzardo.com/">http://www.pepaluzardo.com/</a>
14 )		Personal weblog <a href="http://pepaluzardo.com/blog/blogs/index.php?blog=1&amp;cat=14">http://pepaluzardo.com/blog/blogs/index.php?blog=1&amp;cat=14</a>
15 )	Madrid Alberto Ruiz Gallardón Madrid PP	Personal web site <a href="http://www.ruiz-gallardon.es">http://www.ruiz-gallardon.es</a>
16 )	Málaga Francisco de la Torre Prados PP	Personal web site <a href="http://www.franciscodelatorre.com/">http://www.franciscodelatorre.com/</a>
17 )	Murcia Miguel Ángel Cámara Botía PP	Personal weblog <a href="http://blogs.laverdad.es/miguelangelcamara">http://blogs.laverdad.es/miguelangelcamara</a>

18 )	Oviedo Gabino de Lorenzo PP	Personal web site <a href="http://www.gabinodelorenzo.info">www.gabinodelorenzo.info</a>
19 )	Palma de Mallorca Catalina Cirer Adrover PP	Personal web site <a href="http://www.catalinacirer.com">http://www.catalinacirer.com</a>
20 )	Pamplona Yolanda Barcina PP	Personalized partisan webpage <a href="http://www.sianavarra.es/yolandabarcina.php">www.sianavarra.es/yolandabarcina.php</a>
21 )		Personal weblog <a href="http://blogs.periodistadigital.com/yolandabarcina.php">http://blogs.periodistadigital.com/yolandabarcina.php</a>
22 )	San Sebastián Odón Elorza PSE-EE-PSOE	Personal web site <a href="http://www.odonelorza.com/">http://www.odonelorza.com/</a>
23 )		Personal weblog <a href="http://www.odonelorza.com/op4-c.asp">http://www.odonelorza.com/op4-c.asp</a>
24 )	Santa Cruz de Tenerife Miguel Zerolo Aguilar Coalición Canaria	n.d.a.
25 )	Santander Gonzalo Piñeiro García-Lago PP	n.d.a.
26 )	Sevilla Alfredo Sánchez Monteseirín PSOE	Personal web site <a href="http://www.sevilla2007.psoeandalucia.com/demo/inicio.asp">http://www.sevilla2007.psoeandalucia.com/demo/inicio.asp</a>
27 )		Personal weblog <a href="http://smsevilla.wordpress.com">http://smsevilla.wordpress.com</a>
28 )	Valencia Rita Barberá Nolla PP	Personal web site <a href="http://www.ritabarbera.com/">http://www.ritabarbera.com/</a>
29 )	Valladolid Francisco Javier León de la Riva PP	Personal web site <a href="http://elecciones2007.ppvalladolid.com/municipios.shtml?nmu ni=valladolid">http://elecciones2007.ppvalladolid.com/municipios.shtml?nmu ni=valladolid</a>
30 )		Personal weblog <a href="http://blogs.nortecastilla.es/javierleondelariva">http://blogs.nortecastilla.es/javierleondelariva</a>
31 )	Vigo Corina Porro PP	Personal web site <a href="http://www.corinaxvigo.com">www.corinaxvigo.com</a>
32 )		Personal weblog <a href="http://www.corinaxvigo.com/index.php?option=com_content&amp;task=blogsection&amp;id=10&amp;Itemid=138">www.corinaxvigo.com/index.php?option=com_content&amp;task=blogsection&amp;id=10&amp;Itemid=138</a>
33 )	Vitoria Alfonso Rojo PP	n.d.a.
34 )	Zaragoza Juan Alberto Belloch Julbe PSOE	Personal web site <a href="http://www.juanalbertobelloch.es/">http://www.juanalbertobelloch.es/</a>
35 )		Personal weblog <a href="http://blog.juanalbertobelloch.es/">http://blog.juanalbertobelloch.es/</a>

n. d. a. No data available

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