Brazilian elections in social media: reviewing and systematizing the results of the main researches

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Abstract:
This article presents and compares, through a literature review, the results of the major researches that discuss communication strategies taken in the social media by candidates running for public positions during the political campaigns in Brazil from 2010 on. The digital media have gained relevance in the Brazilian political context in the wake of the popularity “phenomenon” achieved by Barack Obama – especially on the Internet – during 2008 US presidential elections, and due to the changes in Brazil’s electoral legislation, which took place in the following year, and allowed the candidates to use those tools in their campaign strategy. In order to support such analysis, scientific articles published in journals and/or presented at national conferences on communication, sociology and political science have been chosen. The selected essays focused on characterising and discussing the use of social media by candidates running for the positions of president of the republic, state governor, senator, congressman, state representative, city mayor and/or councillor in the elections of 2010, 2012 and/or 2014. By the end of the review, one compares the main findings of the cases discussed, and debates the common characteristics among them by setting the hypothesis that they can be defined as standard electoral communication strategies in social media developed by competitors running for mayor and proportional representative positions in Brazil. As a conclusion, one affirms that some strategies can be considered as standard, due to the high frequency of incidence in different campaigns, while the other one needs further research on the subject for its effective evidence.

Keywords: Internet and elections. Social media. Online political campaigns.
1. Introduction

The popularity of social media websites has been gradually increasing in Brazil. The outbreak of Orkut in 2004 was maybe the most remarkable event of the beginning of digital media in Brazil. That social network site (SNS), launched in January that year, was widely accepted in Brazil, so much that by July, Brazilians made up the majority of users in absolute terms. By September of the same year, when candidates running for mayor and for city councillor were in full campaign, about 700 thousand would have already been in the grip of the social media “fever”.¹

More than a decade later, although Orkut was shut down, social media outlets continue to move forward. Brazil is second only to the USA in the amount of time spent on such websites by internet users (Comscore, 2014). Just Facebook, which has, since 2011, reached the largest social media audience in Brazil, accounts already for 89 million monthly active Brazilian users.² YouTube, Twitter and Instagram are also other examples of digital devices that are widely accepted in South America’s biggest nation³.

It is not by chance that a survey conducted by Instituto Datafolha that heard 4.389 people across 257 cities in Brazil, in October 2014, on the eve of the second round of presidential elections, found that 47% of respondents are registered in at least one SNS; 19% of them admitted that these devices have “strongly influenced” their vote in the first round, while 20% declared they have “slightly influenced” it. Moreover, 75% of social network users declared that they learnt the news about the electoral dispute through such websites, while 47% shared this kind of information (Mendonça, 2014).

With an eye on this potential electorate, Brazil’s politicians have, mainly since 2010 elections, developed strategies to win votes by using social media. Before that period, voters were responsible for the major movements on SNSs, inasmuch as, until 2009, candidates and political parties were not allowed to use this kind of platform in their campaigns by Brazil’s electoral regulations. Only with the sanction of the Brazilian Federal Law No. 12.034/2009, candidates could try to win and to secure votes over

social media platforms, based on the possibility to establish direct contact with voters, as they had been doing with their public unpaid electoral broadcast for radio and TV and with their official websites.

Another factor that spurred on politicians to adopt those platforms was the considerable success in Obama’s 2008 presidential campaign to mobilise voter support on social media. That success established a paradigm in term of electoral strategies and political marketing. Since then, holding a Twitter account and/or setting up a Facebook page has become imperative for most candidates. That scenario is drawing the attention of communication and political science research in Brazil. (Gomes et al., 2009; Graham; Jackson & Broersma, 2014; Marques; Silva & Matos, 2011b).

The aim of this article is to compare and systematise communicative strategies of Brazil's candidates in social media. In this regard, this article is based on a literature review which took into consideration results of main researches carried out in the country since 2010 Brazilian elections. Selected articles published in scientific journals and/or presented at national conferences on communication, sociology and political science laid the foundations for this article. At first, data will be presented separately, for each political office elected post (president, governor, senator, congressman, state representative, mayor and city councillor), after, it will be discussed and cross-analysed, in order to measure the most recurrent characteristics and patterns.

Before presenting the analysis, this article frames the concept of social media, briefs its usage in electoral campaigns in Brazil and abroad and also presents the methodology applied to the selection of articles for this work.

2. Social network sites

The first website fitted as a SNS was SixDegrees.com, launched in 1997, in the United States. In 2003, two of the most popular social media emerge: MySpace and LinkedIn. One year later, Orkut is created and raises to prominence in Brazil. Also in 2004, Facebook, settled to became the most popular social network site in the world, takes its first steps (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

These websites would become part of the routine of millions of people around the world and attracts the attention of research scholars in the most diverse range of fields. In the virtual environment, people interact, cooperate, share experiences and
content with each other: opinions, musical tastes, political preferences, visited places, among other things. (Aggio, 2011a, 2014)

Specifically where politics is concerned, those websites became a new space for the debate and expression of public opinion, the organization of protests and demonstrations – like those Brazil has experienced in July 2013 – and also for politicians to try to win more votes during electoral campaign and to secure support to their ideas outside the election period (Penteado, 2012).

The concept of social media is a broad one. It includes SNSs such as Facebook and Orkut; microblogs like Twitter; audio, video and image sharing engines and websites such as Soundcloud, Flickr and YouTube; sites of content collaboratively created like Wikipedia, among others. Digital media can be defined as:

Web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 2).

In addition to those characteristics, Boyd & Elisson (2007) stated that those sites have in common the possibility to post comments and private messages, but they vary greatly in regards to user base – as they could be global or target specific purposes and groups –; in regards to the form of access – just through mobile devices or also accessible to personal computers –; and in regards to their main focus – images and video sharing, instant messaging etc..

Social media user profiles generally retain information on user's identification, like age, birthplace, address, likes and interests, among others. It's also quite common the possibility to add a picture to the profile (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Penteado (2012) highlights that social networking does not come up with the internet, as they are an structural part of society, although, with the assistance of the web, it acquired a virtual dimension, and because of that individuals do not need to be present at the same time and place to be able to interact.

Fuchs (2004) affirms that the increasing use of social media by contemporary society has sparked off debates over its implication for politics as a whole. According to authors like Marques, Sampaio & Aggio (2013, p. 12), those devices “make room for the development of alternatives that not only contribute to strategic success in campaigns, but also to reinforcing civic and democratic values of contemporary
societies”⁴. Politicians, in turn, start using those means as a way to advertise their proposals and appeal to the public in order to win votes (Penteado, 2012).

Therefore, social media can establish communication channels which are more efficient at bringing together citizens and candidates, while official campaign websites would provide information, contents and campaign tools (Aggio, 2011a).

In this context, the internet has been deliberately used to make politicians more appealing to voters. “Politicians have used the Internet as a means of providing a hinterland that shows them as likeable human beings, so representing a second strand of impression management” (Jackson & Lilleker, 2011, p. 90). Politicians have been developing such strategy on SNSs, also by the disclosure of personal information, in an effort to make them become like everyone else.

According to Jackson & Lilleker (2011), who analysed British context, most MPs have been increasingly using the internet as a way to self-promotion, although some of them have been also trying to promote political parties. According to researchers, the interaction between representatives and representees makes a big impression on the latter.

Thus, tools like Facebook and Twitter became engines available to politicians wishing to expose information of their interest, with no intermediaries. “Thus impression management strategies no longer have to rely upon media coverage, but can be an ongoing communication process controlled by the sender” (Jackson & Lilleker, 2011, p. 90).

3. Social media in electoral campaigns around the world

The use of social media in electoral campaigns around the world began to draw attention in 2004 US electoral dispute. Meetup was “deliberately aiming to bring together citizens living nearby and organise, through web-pages, meetings and face-to-face activities” (Aggio, 2013, p. 113)⁵. Thus, interacting with voters, which was something candidates had so far shown little interest (Aggio, 2013; Gomes, 2004; Stromer-Galley, 2000), takes on a potential and real dimension.

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⁴ Original text: “abrem espaço para se pensar em alternativas que contribuam não apenas para o sucesso estratégico das campanhas, mas, também, para o fortalecimento de propriedades cívicas e democráticas das sociedades contemporâneas”.

⁵ Original text: “foco direcionado a aproximar cidadãos de regiões próximas e organizar, através dos websites, encontros e atividades presenciais”.
That same year, blogs also played an important role. US politician Howard Dean, who lost the Democratic presidential primaries of 2004, constitutes an example. He used Meetup to maintain dialogue with voters and to incorporate suggestions into his government programme, which was in fact an experience pioneering and interactive (Aggio, 2013).

Also in 2004, Momoc (2010) reports the use of blogs by candidates in Romanian general elections, containing messages with predominantly positive intent. The author also reports video sharing by voters and political activists, with messages by unknown authors.

In 2006, in the United States, blogs were back under the spotlight, but then in association with other social media components, which are increasingly gaining ground. As was the case with Democrat presidential primaries candidate Hillary Clinton. Besides publishing news and contact details, she posts links to Facebook, MySpace, YouTube and Flickr campaign pages, mixing traditional and interactive aspects such as website sections to donate resources and speeches and electoral shows offered on-demand, among others (Aggio, 2013).

However, it is Barack Obama 2008 presidential campaign that first demonstrates the power of effective use of social media to mobilise people with an electoral intent. As Marques et al (2011b) pointed out, with a massive use of those tools, Obama succeeded in building a network of about 750 thousand volunteers and raise some millions of dollars in donations.

The great innovative aspect of Obama's campaign was how a wide variety of digital tools were arranged in tandem with one another, giving the impression that he was “just a click away from his voter” (Gomes et al, 2009, p. 40). The degree of commitment was felt when the campaign team created his own social network – My Barack Obama or MyBO. MyBO users gained distinctions inasmuch as they were engaged with the campaign, and also as they kept accounts on other 16 social media websites, among them, Facebook, Flickr, MySpace and YouTube. On YouTube, for instance, Obama's speeches went viral, and were remade by anonymous and celebrities (Gomes et al, 2009).

Social bookmarking websites, online games and blogs advertising, sponsored links and keywords on Google and on other internet search engines, free mobile

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6 Original text: “à distância de apenas um clique do seu eleitor”.
applications and massive SMS message sending were other strategies successfully employed by his campaign. “Obama realised that the bulk of internet and online ICT usage is associated with some twenty tools, and, thus, he achieved the greatest visibility by using all of them” (Gomes et al, 2009, p. 39).

After Obama’s success, the effective and coordinated use of social media his campaign showcased became a model to electoral campaigns around the world (Graham et al, 2014; Marques et al, 2011b). “Many political parties across Western democracies studied Obama’s campaign, often hiring his campaign advisers …, and since 2008, we have seen a further appropriation of social media in political campaigns” (Graham et al, 2014, p. 3).

Graham et al (2014) understand that experience as a standardisation of digital media use in electoral campaigns throughout the world. Romanian 2009 presidential election followed the trend, marked by the use of YouTube, podcasts and, specially, social networks and Twitter. Those media allowed online political communication and, in particular, political mudslinging (Momoc, 2012).

It is important to highlight that political culture and historical circumstances of a country may lead to a more or less widespread adoption of social media between candidates. Graham et al (2014) came to this conclusion after comparing how British and Dutch candidates used Twitter during 2010 general elections. Dutch politicians tweeted more than twice as much as their British counterparts.

This result was due to the more conservative profile of Britons, to historical differences between political systems, to varying degrees of familiarity with social media in the two countries – in Netherlands, that familiarity came earlier – and to stricter discipline imposed by the centralised coordination of political parties in the United Kingdom (Graham et al; 2014). Though the authors also weighed up their considerations stating that 2010 was just the first experience with social media for some UK candidates and that, with time, their campaigns will easily catch up with the trend and take advantage of the virtual space.

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7Original text: “Obama compreendeu que o forte do uso da internet e das tecnologias de comunicação online gira em torno de duas dezenas de ferramentas, e, assim, ao utilizar todas, conseguiu o máximo de visibilidade”.

4. Social media in Brazil: the scenario before the changes in electoral regulations

Little was documented in Brazilian literature about the influence of social media in the electoral campaigns run before the changes in electoral regulation that were introduced in 2009. Those changes allowed candidates to conduct their campaigns on these kinds of platforms. In 2004 municipal elections for mayor and city councillor, the three major contenders in São Paulo city – José Serra (PSDB), Marta Suplicy (PT) and Paulo Maluf (PP) – were heavily mentioned inside Orkut communities during the electoral dispute (Chaia, 2007). It is presumed that similar activities took place for other candidates running for mayor and city councillors in other municipalities of the country, as social media adoption has changed the behaviour of the electorate as a whole (Marques et al, 2011b).

While voters discussed political platforms of candidates on Orkut, candidates themselves were banned from conducting their campaigns on it, due to restrictions imposed by electoral regulations, specifically resolutions issued by the Superior Electoral Court (Resolução TSE no. 22.610, 2004; Resolução TSE no. 22.261, 2006; Resolução TSE no. 22.718, 2008), that restricted internet campaign to the official web-pages of candidates.

Therefore, Orkut became the forum for discussion and political activism between voters during 2006 general elections, particularly for the presidential dispute, through communities such as “Eu odeio o PSDB” (I hate PSDB8), “Eu odeio Lula” (I hate Lula), “Nós votamos 13 Lula presidente” (We vote for Lula and Worker's Party9 number 13), among others. However, the most that the main candidates, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (PT) and Geraldo Alckmin (PSDB), did to take up that new space, was to include on their websites links to the communities which supported them and record videos containing notes of thanks and messages of mobilisation. Such videos would be subsequently published on YouTube10, in order to easily share them on Orkut (Barros Filho; Coutinho & Safatle, 2006; Brandão Junior, 2008; Chaia, 2007).

8 The Social Democracy Party in Brazil.
9 In Portuguese: “Partido dos Trabalhadores”.
10 Though YouTube is considered an example of social media, there is no report of punishment for its use by 2006 contenders running for president Lula da Silva and Geraldo Alckmin.
Alckmin (PSDB) and Cristovam Buarque (PDT) also kept a blog\textsuperscript{11} on their websites. PSDB candidate page also housed a photoblog, through which users could post pictures with him. Worker’s Party (PT), in turn, call on political activists to create communities on SNSs (specially, Orkut), post YouTube videos, in support of Lula, as well as to repel false information broadcast on that social network (Brandão Junior, 2008). Regarding to the race for other offices at stake in 2006, there was not enough research on the subject for the election for governors, senators, members of congress and state representatives.

Two years later, the elections to choose mayors and city councillors abide by that restrictive electoral regulation\textsuperscript{12}. Therefore, “social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube video publishing were sparsely employed, mainly due to the prohibitions on electoral campaigning on the internet that were in force by Brazilian electoral regulations at that time” (Braga, Nicolás & França, 2011, p. 137)\textsuperscript{13}.

The research carried out by Braga et al (2011) probed into communication channels used by 175 candidates for mayor of several cities in 2008 elections and noted that 36\% of the contenders kept blogs, with 29\% updating the site and only 9\% allowing comments. In spite of those prohibitive electoral provisions, 23\% of the universe of mayoral candidates kept YouTube channels. Moreover, the research gathered evidence on the use of social media by 25\% of candidates, with Orkut (11.5\% of candidates) and Twitter (2.9\%) topping the list. The results stress the low utilisation of SNSs, although, on the other hand, it is curious noting that a considerable amount of contenders defied the rules and, as far as known, they were not punished for doing so.

There is no significant research on social media use by candidates for city councillor in 2008. On September 29th the following year, Lula da Silva, then president, sanctioned Federal Law no 12.034, which lifted the ban on the use of social media by candidates in electoral campaigns, paving the way for this new channel of political

\textsuperscript{11} According to Brandão Junior (2008), electoral regulations were silent on whether candidates could write blogs. Brazil Superior Electoral Court in by its Resolution no. 22.261/2006, which regulated 2006 elections, states in Article 71 that candidates were allowed to keep web-pages on the internet as a mechanism for political campaigning, although, Article 5 introduces a ban on electoral advertising on websites of service providers (Resolução TSE no. 21.261, 2006). Thus, it is believed that because of the blogs were housed inside candidate's own pages, there were no objections by that court.

\textsuperscript{12} The Superior Electoral Court, by its Resolution no. 22.718, stated that “campaigning advertising on the internet will be strictly restricted to the candidate's web-page which is exclusively intended to their electoral campaign” (Resolução TSE no. 22.718, 2008).

\textsuperscript{13} Original text: “mídias sociais como Facebook, Twitter e postagens de vídeos no YouTube foram escassamente utilizadas, inclusive devido às interdições à campanha eleitoral pela internet vigentes na legislação eleitoral brasileira”.
campaign promotion in Brazil. This new phase, which was introduced by the lift of the ban, will be considered as soon as we explain the methodology of this work.

5. Methodology

All the articles published in scientific journals or presented at national conferences on communication, sociology and political science were used to build the empirical corpus for mapping the use of social media by candidates since Brazil's 2010 elections\textsuperscript{14}.

Two methodological procedures were applied to select from that corpus. Regarding to academic journals, a keyword search was carried out on CAPES Scientific Journal Gateway, recognised as the largest collection of scientific reports in Brazil, containing more than 37 thousand national and international titles\textsuperscript{15}.

Search was carried out between the 21st and the 28th of April. Two search parameters were combined. The keywords: “mídias sociais” (social media), “redes sociais” (social network), “mídias digitais” (digital media), “social media”, “digital media”, “new media” and “social network sites” were alternately used as the first parameter. For the second parameter, the keyword were: “eleição” (election), “eleições” (elections), “campanha eleitoral” (electoral campaign), “campanhas eleitorais” (electoral campaigns) and “campanha online” (online campaigning). All the possible combinations between the parameters were tested, thereby resulting in 35 distinct search attempts. The result was filtered down to the scientific articles which were focused on the use of social media by candidates in Brazilians elections since the ones in 2010. To check whether that focus was present, at first, the abstracts of the works were analysed; in case they were not instructive, section titles would be then also analysed. That search resulted only five texts on the theme published on periodicals.

Second, we looked for articles into the proceedings of the main scientific events on communication, political science and sociology in Brazil. In order to define which events would be considered, the methodology proposed by Bragatto, Nicolás & Sampaio (2012) was applied. It takes into consideration aspects like: if it is a national event; if it happens on a regular basis; if graduate students are allowed to take part in it;\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{14}It was decided not to include thesis, dissertations, book chapters and articles published in international conferences due to limitations of the scope of this article. Further research may extend this corpus.

\textsuperscript{15}CAPES stands for the Brazilian Federal Agency for Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education. See http://www.periodicos.capes.gov.br/.
and if it has work groups or sessions addressing the internet and media, sociology or political science. Additionally, the following criterion was adopted: online availability of the annals of all the event editions since 2010, because some event websites had stopped making the whole content available.

Seven events meet the criteria to be used as sources to select articles from: National Association of Graduate Programs in Communication Annual Meeting\textsuperscript{16} (Compós); National Association of Graduate Programs in Social Sciences Annual Meeting\textsuperscript{17} (Anpocs); National Association of Researchers in Politics and Media Meeting\textsuperscript{18} (Compólitica); Brazilian Association of Political Science Meeting\textsuperscript{19} (ABCP); Brazilian Forum of Graduate Studies on Political Science\textsuperscript{20}; the Conference of the Brazilian Society for Interdisciplinary Studies of Communication\textsuperscript{21} (Intercom); and the Brazilian Conference on Sociology\textsuperscript{22} (CBS).

All the works published in those events were thoroughly verified, thereby resulting in 28 articles addressing social media use by candidates in Brazil's elections since 2010.

As the number of articles found in scientific journals (just five) were deemed low, we appealed to bibliographic references of all 33 articles found, in search of essays published in scientific periodicals from 2010 to 2015, on the use of social media by Brazilian candidates. That further attempt resulted in more seven articles, which were later incorporated to the empirical corpus. In total, it was 40 academic articles on the theme in Brazil since 2010, all published in journals or presented in national events.

Nonetheless, five of them consisted of adaptations of the same research to different platforms (articles which were initially delivered in academic event, and later, submitted to a scientific periodical). It was the case for Aggio & Reis (2013a); Cervi & Massuchin (2011a, 2011b); Marques & Sampaio (2011a); and Marques, Silva & Matos (2011a). In such cases, just the most recent scientific articles were considered, following the presumption that the final versions of research works published show improvements in comparison to the original text.

\textsuperscript{16} In Portuguese: “Encontro da Associação Nacional dos Programas de Pós-graduação em Comunicação”.
\textsuperscript{17} In Portuguese: “Encontro da Associação Nacional de Pós-graduação em Ciências Sociais”.
\textsuperscript{18} In Portuguese: “Encontro da Associação Nacional de Pesquisadores em Comunicação e Política”.
\textsuperscript{19} In Portuguese: “Encontro da Associação Brasileira de Ciência Política”.
\textsuperscript{20} In Portuguese: “Fórum Brasileiro de Pós-graduação em Ciência Política”.
\textsuperscript{21} In Portuguese: “Congresso da Sociedade Brasileira de Estudos Interdisciplinares da Comunicação”.
\textsuperscript{22} In Portuguese: “Congresso Brasileiro de Sociologia”.
Thus, the empirical corpus for this research accounts for 35 scientific articles. From each of them, the main findings were extracted in terms of the strategies employed when Brazilian candidates make use of social media and the features which characterise that use, since 2010. The findings were grouped by the related elected public office and are discussed in the next section. Subsequently, common features and details are discussed for each of those electoral disputes and then the conclusions of this work are drawn.


The amounts of articles for each type of election analysed are showed on Chart 1 as follows. As noticed, some researches focused on just one electoral dispute, while others addressed several:

Chart 1 – Number of articles by type of election analysed

SOURCE: Compilation by the author.
The most common features of the use of social media by Brazilian candidates running for each of those public offices are highlighted as following.

6.1 Between presidential candidates (2010 and 2014)

The dispute for occupying Brazil's Palácio do Planalto was the most addressed category by the articles found. Altogether, 19 works – removing those ones revering to the same researches – were collected, with 16 discussing Brazilian presidential dispute in 2010 (Aggio, 2011a; 2011b; 2014; 2015; Baldioti, 2011; 2012; Braga, 2011; Costa, 2011; Cremonese, 2012; Fonseca & Vasconcelos, 2013; Lima, 2011; Marques & Sampaio, 2011b; Marques et al, 2011b; Pereira, 2011; Steffen, 2011; Telles & Mundim, 2012).

Though not long ago, presidential elections in October 2014 were analysed by two researches (Azevedo Junior & Lima, 2015; Oliveira & Leal, 2015) and a third work which made a comparative approach of the use of the internet in campaigns from 1998 to 2014, also investigating the use of social media in the last two elections – 2010 and 2014 (Carlomagno, 2015).

In both presidential elections, the rate of social media adoption was 100%, with Twitter leading the preference in 2010 and, in 2014, shared its position with Facebook (Braga, 2011; Carlomagno, 2015)\(^{23}\). One of the striking features of 2010 presidential elections was the low level of interaction between Dilma Rousseff (PT) and Twitter users, while her main rivals – José Serra (PSDB) and Marina Silva (PV) – kept more in touch with their followers (Aggio, 2011a, Aggio 2014; Baldioti, 2011, 2012; Fonseca & Vasconcelos, 2013; Pereira, 2011; Steffen, 2011). There was no similar research on Twitter usage for 2014 presidential campaign, but Azevedo Junior & Lima (2015) reports that Dilma – this time, running to be re-elected – also corresponded little with her followers on the Instagram app. Nonetheless, her main rival this time unlike the rivals of four years ago, Aécio Neves (PSDB), is also reported not to have given the required attention on that social network, dedicated to share pictures and short videos (Azevedo Junior & Lima, 2015).

\(^{23}\) It is possible that other social media, like YouTube, have been also used by candidates, Carlomagno (2015) only cites the use of Facebook and Twitter though. The works of Azevedo Junior & Lima (2015) and Oliveira & Leal (2015) do not contain information on that.
Drawing more meaningful comparison between the last two presidential elections is certainly hindered by the small number of studies on 2014 elections so far, but, it is possible to highlight the increase in social media use in the runoff campaigns both in 2010 with Dilma and Serra on Twitter and four years later with Dilma and Aécio on Instagram (Azevedo Junior & Lima, 2015; Cremonese, 2012; Fonseca & Vasconcelos, 2013; Pereira, 2011).

There is another correlation between the two elections as far as negative campaigning is concerned. In 2010, such strategy was little employed by candidates on Twitter, as Aggio (2011a, 2014, 2015), Pereira (2011) and Marques et al (2011b) pointed out, but according to Lima (2011), in that same year, PSDB party spurred on political activists to attack Dilma Rousseff on Facebook, in what regards her opinion on abortion, her sexual and religious orientations, among other things. Four years later, on that same social network, Dilma and her Worker's Party (PT) would once more be attacked by PSDB partisans, this time on Aécio Neves' fan-page (Oliveira & Leal, 2015). Both that works, although, did not verify the occurrence of the reverse practise – in other words, if the president attacked her main rival.

A common conclusion reached by researchers is the preference demonstrated by the main candidates to posting campaign schedules, featuring and highlighting their campaign events around Brazil. That happened to Dilma, Serra and Marina on Twitter, in 2010, and to Dilma and Aécio on Instagram, in 2014 (Aggio, 2011a; Azevedo Junior & Lima, 2015; Cremonese, 2012; Fonseca & Vasconcelos, 2013; Pereira, 2011; Steffen, 2011).

Specifically on 2010 elections, the candidate running for re-election is reported to have published a number of microblog posts well below that of her major contenders (Aggio, 2011a; Cremonese, 2012; Fonseca & Vasconcelos, 2013; Pereira, 2011; Steffen, 2011). Aécio and Marina, though being reported to post and to interact more with voters, made little use of that to discuss proposals and ideas (Aggio, 2011a; Cremonese, 2012; Fonseca & Vasconcelos, 2013; Marques & Sampaio, 2011b; Pereira, 2011; Steffen, 2011).

Among the substantial differences, it was found that Serra and Dilma made considerable use of Twitter to publish curiosities, personal information and flippant remarks, while Marina focused on mobilising her political activists and integrating with other digital resources of her campaign (Aggio, 2011a; Baldioti, 2012; Fonseca &

2010 presidential elections also showcased how the internet could give online popularity to candidates of minor and fringe parties. That happened to Plínio de Arruda Sampaio (PSOL). By promoting the “tuitaços” and virtual debates, he succeeded, many times, in appearing between Brazil's trending topics (Aggio, 2011a; Marques & Sampaio, 2011b; Baldioti, 2011). It is possible to conclude from the researches aforementioned, the most employed social media by the three major contenders in Brazil's 2010 election was Twitter, but YouTube, Facebook and Orkut played an important part too (Carломагно, 2015; Steffen, 2011; Costa, 2011). Whereas in 2014, Facebook led the preference of Dilma, Aécio and Marina Silva (PSB), followed by YouTube and Twitter, respectively (Carломагно, 2015).

6.2 Between candidates for state governors (2010 and 2014)

The number of scientific articles which addressed the campaigns for state governors is well below those addressing presidential campaigns. Just five academic articles were found (Braga; Cervi & Becher, 2012; Braga; Nicolás & Becher, 2011; Cervi & Massuchin, 2012), with two of them also discussing presidential elections (Braga, 2011; Carlomagno, 2015).

Four articles highlighted national data, i.e. data for candidates for governor in the 26 Brazilian states and in the Federal District (Braga, 2011; Braga et al, 2011; Braga et al, 2012; Carlomagno, 2015).

One interesting conclusion is the increase of the use of social media between contenders running for state governors, comparing 2010 and 2014 elections, from 76% to 85%, according to Carlomagno (2015) – Braga (2011) states that 74.8% of candidates used Twitter and 49.7% used other SNSs in 2010.

It is noticeable a change of preference regarding social media used by politicians. In 2010, Twitter lead the preference of candidates (ahead of Orkut, YouTube and Facebook), but four years later, the social network built by Mark Zuckerberg was the most employed one by aspirants to the palaces of Brazilian states.

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24 This term (colloquial Portuguese for tweet-fuss) was created to express when a candidate spurred on his/her supporters to rally around a particular hash-tag, in an effort to appear between Twitter trending topics.
Other interesting comparative data detected by Carlomagno (2015) was the digital divide between Brazilian regions, as far as social media use by candidates for state governor is concerned. It was slightly reduced since 2010 until 2014, to 18.6% (the difference between South-east and North) down from 19.4% (between West-Central and North-east).

Specifically on 2010 elections, it is important to highlight that there were no ideological discrepancy in terms of social media adoption. Candidates for governors and senators of great centre-left, centre and centre-right parties have actively employed social media, with pretty much the same rate of activity (Braga; 2011; Braga et al, 2011; Braga et al, 2012).

In turn, Cervi & Massuchin (2012) conducted a research on the use of Twitter between only two main candidates for Parana State governor in 2010 elections. Two relevant conclusions were that the candidates increased in frequency of tweets as the dispute escalated and became bitter and that most posts referred to campaign schedules – as shown in presidential campaigns the same year.

6.3 **Between candidates for senator (2010 and 2014)**

The aspects of the use of social media by Senate candidates are the object of study of four works, all of them also analysed the dispute for other offices (Braga, 2011; Braga et al, 2011; Braga et al, 2012; Carlomagno, 2015). All articles collected show national data, and the results are slightly similar to those obtained for governor.

The incidence of the use of social media by aspirants to a seat in the Senate between 2010 and 2014 reached to 84.3% up from 70%, according to Carlomagno (2015) – in 2010, Braga (2011) states that 64.4% of candidates used Twitter, while 52.6% preferred other social networks.

Just like the other disputes for president and state governors, Senate candidates also demonstrated changing preferences in connection with social media, with Twitter being surpassed by Facebook in 2014 (Carlomagno, 2015).

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25 Authors like Braga (2011) and Carlomagno (2015) use that term to express the gap between candidates more or less connected to the internet and social media, considering the five Brazilian regions. Historically, regions where more people have access to the internet would tend to replicate, in politics, this power conditions in relation to other regions less connected.
Regarding the “digital divide”, an even more expressive reduction is reported from 2010 to 2014 among Senate candidates: it fell to 19.1% (between South and North) down from 41.2% (between West-Central and North).

As previously stated, Braga (2011); Braga et al (2011); Braga et al (2012) pointed out the absence of ideological discrepancy in the adoption of social media in the elections for state governors and senators, with the great centre-left, centre and centre-right parties playing a leading role.

6.4 Between candidates for members of congress (2010 and 2014)

Three of the 35 works collected analysed the aspects of the use of social media among candidates for congressman, with two researches focusing 2010 elections (Braga, 2011; Gilmore, 2011) and a third on a specific case in 2014 (Murta & Mariano, 2015).

As regards overall data on the use of social media in 2010 elections, there is divergence between authors. Braga (2011) states that 35.5% of contenders running to become members of congress used Twitter and that 44.5% joined other websites of the same kind. In turn, Gilmore (2011) assures that the rate adoption was 31%, with Twitter and Orkut being the preferred outlets, with around 30% each one. However, that author came to the conclusion that that microblog exerted a much bigger influence upon the increase in the popularity of candidates.

Gilmore (2011) highlights that a strong presence on the web, which employs several social media, can help under-represented political groups to gain more recognition, among them: women, non incumbents and candidates with access to limited funds or not belonging to major coalitions.

That researcher also said that the use of social media with electoral intent is still a phenomenon in its emergence in the country:

These results then point to the central power that digital media can play as an integral part of a candidate’s overall campaign strategy, specifically in a developing country such as Brazil where many politicians are still learning the full range of benefits that using digital media tools can have for political purposes (Gilmore, 2011, p. 629).

The only research article addressing 2014 elections analyses a specific case: the use of Facebook, during the last 15 days of the campaign, by the candidate for re-
election as member of congress Alessandro Molon (PT) from Rio de Janeiro State. Interesting findings include the fact that that candidate gave priority to posting campaign schedules and, and secondly to, messages about political allegiances pledged to him (Murta & Mariano, 2015). Moreover, the research reports the low level of interaction between the politician and internet users that made comments on his fan-page.

6.5 **Between candidates for state representatives (2010)**

The race for a place in the state assemblies is the least studied one among Brazilian researchers. The only relevant information is reported by Braga (2011), in connection with the 2010 campaign.

In that year, 41.1% of aspirants to state representatives kept Twitter profiles, while 47.1% joined other social media. The lack of data on 2014 elections renders impossible any comparison.

6.6 **Between mayoral candidates (2012)**

Altogether, ten articles that discuss strategies adopted in social media by mayoral candidates in Brazil were incorporated to the corpus of this research. All of them analyse 2012 elections (Aggio & Reis, 2013b; Assunção & Santos, 2013; Araújo & Pereira, 2013; Bachini, 2013; Bachini et al, 2013; Beirão, 2014; Carlomagno, 2015; Morbach, 2014; Silva; Sales & Luft, 2013; Souza, 2013).

As one may observe, it is a substantial number, second only to the amount of works on presidential candidates. As an assumption, it is believed that such strong interest of researchers is due because the races for mayor are the only majoritarian election taking place according to Brazilian electoral schedule, since they happen at an in-between stage in the middle of two presidential elections, and are only simultaneous with city councils elections.

Of all ten articles, just Carlomagno (2015) has overall data on 2012 mayoral elections. According to the author, SNSs usage rate among mayoral contenders in the 26 capital municipalities was 90.5% that year. Among candidates in other municipalities, the rate is about the same (89.6%). For both cases, capital cities and towns, the order of
preference of social media was the same: Facebook first, followed by Twitter and YouTube.

The research reveals that the digital divide in terms of social media usage by mayoral candidates in towns was still high in 2012: 36.1%, considering the disparity between cities in South-east and West-Central. In the capitals, the gap between the same regions was 15%.

The other research articles which were collected examined municipal disputes in different cities and from distinct angles. Bachini et al (2013) analysed campaign strategies on Facebook of four major mayoral candidates in São Paulo, the country's biggest electoral college, during the electoral period. They were Fernando Haddad (PT), José Serra (PSDB), Celso Russomano (PRB) and Gabriel Chalita (PMDB). Among those candidates, Morbach (2014) analysed the behaviour, on the same social network, of the two that reached the runoff election – Haddad and Serra – also drawing a comparison with the two runoff candidates in Belém in Northern Brazil – Zenaldo Coutinho (PSDB) and Edmilson Rodrigues (PSOL). Bachini (2013), in turn, discussed Russomano's strategies also on Facebook for that same election. While Aggio & Reis (2013b) compared the use of that SNS made by Haddad (the winner in São Paulo) with those made by the elected mayors in Salvador in North-eastern Brazil – ACM Neto (DEM) – and in Manaus in the Amazon region – Arthur Virgílio Neto (PSDB), the winner in Bahia state capital (Salvador) also had his communication strategies analysed by Beirão (2014), this time on Twitter though.

The microblog is equally the research subject of Assunção & Santos (2013), who studied the communication strategies of Marcelo Freixo (PSOL), aspirant to mayor of Rio de Janeiro, and of Araújo & Pereira (2013), who discussed the interaction between internet users and the eight mayoral candidates in Maceió in North-eastern Brazil. Souza (2013) observed Facebook use by major mayoral candidates in Macaé town in Rio de Janeiro state – Aluzio Júnior (PV) and Christino Silva (PSD). Finally, Silva et al (2013) discussed the adoption of Orkut, Facebook and Twitter by two candidates in an undisclosed municipality in North-east region.

Notwithstanding the fact that these are researches into different corpora, some findings deserve to be emphasised: in no less than six of that works, it was clear that the candidates prioritiize posts about campaign scheduled events, be on Facebook or on Twitter (Aggio & Reis, 2013b; Assunção & Santos, 2013; Bachini, 2013; Beirão, 2014; Silva et al, 2013; Souza, 2013).
Four works also detected the intense posting whose objective was to mobilise voters through social media (Aggio & Reis, 2013b; Bachini et al, 2013; Silva et al, 2013; Souza, 2013). It is also worthy underlining the recurrence of the use of such spaces to spotlight political allegiances pledged during the campaigns (Aggio & Reis, 2013b; Assunção & Santos, 2013; Bachini et al, 2013; Silva et al, 2013). In three Facebook focused researches, it was made clear the predilection for multimedia resources, such as photographs, videos and pictures, in posts made by politicians (Aggio & Reis, 2013b; Bachini et al, 2013; Silva et al, 2013).

However, there were also conflicting findings in the researches. It was the case for interactivity with the public, feature that clearly varied with the politicians. Candidates that showed a high rate of interaction where Marcelo Freixo, in Rio (Assunção & Santos, 2013), Alexandre Fleming (PSOL), in Maceió (Araújo & Pereira, 2013); ACM Neto, in Salvador (Beirão, 2014); José Serra, in São Paulo (Morbach, 2014); and Edmilson Rodrigues, in Belém (idem).

On the other hand, low interactivity was reported in virtual campaigns of Fernando Haddad, Celso Russomano and Gabriel Chalita, in São Paulo (Bachini, 2013; Bachini et al, 2013; Morbach, 2014), and of seven of the candidates for mayor of Maceió (Araújo; Pereira, 2013); and of Zenaldo Coutinho, in Belém (Morbach, 2014).

Curiously, one of the candidates whose name was not disclosed in Silva et al (2013) achieved a high rate of interaction on Twitter, but a low one on Orkut – one of the possible explanations for that was that, in 2012, that social network were already falling into disuse in Brazil, as it had been surpassed by Facebook the year before.

Another strategy which was not unanimously used among candidates was the adoption or not of negative campaigning. Such resource was adopted by José Serra in São Paulo's runoff elections (Bachini et al, 2013), by Marcelo Freixo on his secondary profile, in the electoral dispute in Rio (Assunção & Santos, 2013); and by one of the Northeaster candidates whose names were kept undisclosed by Silva et al (2013).

On the other hand, it was considered that negative campaigning was low in the campaigns of Fernando Haddad, ACM Neto and Arthur Virgílio Neto (Aggio & Reis, 2013b) of Celso Russomano (Bachini, 2013); and of the contenders of Macaé (Souza, 2014).

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26 Marcelo Freixo kept a personal profile on Twitter, fed by himself, and a secondary profile, whose publications were made by his communication advisory board (Assunção & Santos, 2013).
6.7 Between candidates for city councillors (2012)

Electoral disputes for offices in city councils were the object of study of only two articles collected in our theoretical review (Braga & Becher, 2013; Marques & Mont’alverne, 2013). The first analysed the use of social media by 496 city councillors that were serving their term in 16 capitals in South, South-east and North-east regions, during the first month of 2012 electoral campaign – July (Braga & Becher, 2013). The second tried to understand the use made by 25 city councillors in Fortaleza in North-eastern Brazil of their Twitter accounts while running for re-election in 2012 between July 6th and November 18th of that year. Such dates comprehend all the electoral period plus the six subsequent weeks (Marques & Mont’alverne, 2013).

The only feature mentioned by both researches was on the influence of ideology on the adoption of digital media. While Braga & Becher (2013) measured that candidates from left-wing and centre-left parties adhered more to those tools than those from other parties, Marques & Mont’alverne (2013) did not report such distinction between candidates for re-election in Fortaleza City Council. It is necessary to consider, however, that the universe of the first research accounts for 16 capitals, while the universe of the second was just one of those capitals.

Other aspects include Facebook preference among candidates for city councillor in the South, South-east and North-east regions, followed by Twitter and YouTube. Other relevant data were that the digital divide between South-east and North-east regions is narrower in relation to Facebook user (13.7%) than Twitter user (18.3%) (Braga & Becher, 2013) – notice that this research showed no data on social media adoption for North and West-Central regions.

The findings in Marques & Mont’alverne (2013) include the increase in the number of tweets by candidates along the electoral period. Other relevant information was the eventual reduction of the numbers of profiles followed by microblogs accounts of councillors, who were running for re-election. In the assessment of researchers, that demonstrated their unwillingness for dialogue.

7. Discussion

The cross-checking of collected all data lead us to conclude that five features are becoming the standard use of social media for political campaign in Brazil. They are:
(1) the increasing adoption of social media; (2) the consolidation of a preference for Facebook among candidates; (3) the increasing frequency of posting along electoral campaigning; (4) the predilection for posts about campaign scheduled events, posts to mobilise voters and to expose political allegiance; and (5) the narrowing digital divide between Brazilian regions.

As regards campaign adoption of social media, it was demonstrated that that rate increased from 2010 to 2014, both for state government (reached to 85%) and for the senate (84.3%) – among presidential candidates, the adoption remained 100% in the last election, but added Facebook as an unanimous tool alongside Twitter, which had already been of unanimous use four years before. It is relevant to underline that social media use among mayoral candidates in 2012 (around 89% and 90%) was higher than in 2014, nevertheless, as they were distinct disputes, those numbers are not believed to go against the increasing trend. The increasing presence in municipal campaigns should be seen from 2016 elections and ahead (Braga, 2011; Carlomagno, 2015; Steffen, 2011).

Such increasing use of social media among candidates may be the result of Barak Obama's success, in 2008, since in the first Brazilian electoral dispute after Obama two years later, not all contenders were given the infrastructure to adhere to social media. One has to consider that SNSs are relatively cheap, free to adhere to and easier to maintain comparing to traditional websites (Carlomagno, 2015; Gilmore, 2011; Graham et al, 2014).

As regards the second feature – most used social media websites –, in 2010 elections, candidates running for president, for state governor, for the Senate and for member of congress preferred Twitter. However, since 2012 mayoral elections, the scenario changed, with Facebook taking the lead. Such scenario was consolidated in 2014, when potential presidents, governors and senators demonstrated a preference for Facebook – despite extensive use of Twitter by presidential candidates (Braga, 2011; Braga et al, 2011; Braga et al, 2012; Carlomagno, 2015; Gilmore, 2011; Steffen, 2011).

It is believed that the main factor for that change was Facebook's popularity “boom”. Since 2011, it is the top social network among Brazilian audience, having reached 89 million of users in 2014. However, social media are an evolving phenomenon and just like Orkut lost prominence between Brazilians, it is necessary to follow these adjustments closely.
The third standard feature we conceived was the increasing number of posts along electoral periods. Reported for both majoritarian and proportional elections, such strategy is influenced by several factors, such as dispute escalation, the proximity of the Election Day and the runoff elections (Azevedo Junior & Lima, 2015; Cremonese, 2012; Cervi & Massuchin, 2011; Fonseca & Vasconcelos, 2011; Marques & Mont’alverne, 2013; Pereira, 2011). It is interesting noting that, this feature generally follows the candidate's offline conduct, as they became busier with rallies, and trips in search of votes on the eve of the elections.

With this literature review we are also able to establish the kinds of post most sent by Brazilian candidates in social media. The most frequent were about the campaign schedule, through which politicians inform what they will be doing and where they will be. That was verified in the race for president, member of congress and mayor (Aggio, 2011a, Aggio & Reis, 2013b; Assunção & Santos, 2013; Bachini, 2013; Beirão, 2014; Cremonese, 2012; Fonseca & Vasconcelos, 2011; Murta & Mariano, 2015; Pereira, 2011; Silva et al, 2013; Souza, 2013).

That kind of message is directly related to another one sent by candidates: those that try to mobilise political activists, in other words, to engage internet users into winning more votes; verified in presidential and mayoral elections. Finally, there were repetitions of publications aiming to highlight allegiances pledged to candidates by politicians and personalities, in an effort to win over voters influenced by the latter (Aggio, 2011a, Aggio & Reis, 2013b; Assunção & Santos, 2013; Bachini, 2013; Bachini et al, 2013; Fonseca & Vasconceos, 2011; Telles & Mundim, 2012; Murta & Mariano, 2015; Morbach, 2014; Silva et al 2013; Steffen, 2011). Important is the fact that the high frequency of that kind of content was already verified on the public unpaid electoral broadcast for radio and TV, for instance (Aldé & Borges, 2004; Borba, 2012; Lourenço, 2007).

The fifth standard feature was the reduction of the digital divide regarding social media as a political communication tool among candidates from different regions in Brazil. That can be confirmed by comparison between rate of adoption of that tools in 2010 and 2014 elections, which stayed at 18% and 19% among aspirants to governor and senator respectively. Data available for candidates for mayor and city councillor in 2012 elections varied from 13.7% to 36%. Since there was no base for comparison from a similar dispute, we could expect the numbers to fall in 2016 municipal elections (Braga, 2011; Braga & Becher, 2012; Carlomagno, 2015).
On the other hand, four aspects need further analysis and much attention; therefore they cannot be confirmed by researches on the three elections held in Brazil after 2009 deregulation. They are: (6) the level of interaction between candidates and users; (7) negative campaigning; (8) the possibility of social media mitigating disadvantages of under-represented groups; and (9) the possible impact of ideology on social media adoption.

As regards item 6, this article reviewed cases of candidates demonstrating a considerable level of interaction with the public on social media websites, cases like José Serra and Marina Silva, on Twitter, in 2010 presidential elections; and the case of six mayoral candidates, in several cities and on many web platforms, in 2012 elections. Notwithstanding, Dilma Rousseff, in 2010, on Twitter, Dilma and Aécio Neves, in 2014, on Instagram; and 11 mayoral candidates, in 2012, are reported low levels of interactivity. Data indicated that an interactive approach with the public is possible, but it is not a trend in Brazilian polls (Aggio, 2011a, 2014; Araújo & Pereira, 2013; Assunção & Santos, 2013; Azevedo Junior & Lima, 2015; Bachini, 2013; Bachini et al, 2013; Baldioti, 2011, 2012; Beirão, 2014; Fonseca & Vasconcelos, 2011; Murta & Mariano, 2015; Morbach, 2014; Silva et al, 2013; Marques & Mont’alverne, 2013; Pereira, 2011; Steffen, 2011).

It is worth adding that, more than measuring whether interactivity between candidates and users is present, it is important to verify the conditions associated with that interaction, since, many times, that could be a process controlled by the politician and, therefore, an apparent interactivity only.

Another dissonant element among the studies was the practise of negative campaigning in social media. Such phenomenon was studied in presidential and mayoral disputes, being reported in 2010 (on Facebook) and 2014 presidential elections and in 2012 mayoral elections in São Paulo, Rio and in an undisclosed city in North-east region. On the other hand, low rates of attacks were reported among major presidential contenders in 2010 on Twitter and among some of the mayoral candidates in São Paulo, Salvador, Manaus and Macaé, in 2012 (Aggio, 2011a, 2014, 2015; Aggio; Reis, 2013b; Assunção & Santos, 2013; Bachini, 2013; Bachini et al, 2013; Marques et al, 2011b; Pereira, 2011; Silva et al; Souza, 2013).

In addition to the existence of distinct scenarios, it is the fact that most works did not address comprehensively negative campaigning practise. Thus, for instance, it is known that PSDB party would have encouraged attacks against Dilma on Facebook in
2010, but there were no data on a possible retaliation. It is known that Marcelo Freixo attacked his opponents on Twitter in 2012, but there was no information on how his rivals reacted. These scenarios illustrate that that is a theme which deserves further investigation.

More elements are needed to confirm if social media could help underrepresented groups to overcome visibility deficits. That is because our review only gave us two examples of occurrence: for Plínio de Arruda Sampaio in 2010 presidential elections and for the campaign for members of congress the same year (Aggio, 2011a; Baldioti, 2011; Gilmore, 2011; Marques & Sampaio, 2011b). As there were no more cases, it is recommended cautious before confirming if this is a trend in Brazilian elections.

Finally, the possible stronger use of SNSs by left-wing and centre-left parties goes back to the first global researches on the internet and elections (Aggio, 2013; Stromer-Galley, 2000). After the studies of Braga (2011); Braga et al (2011); Braga et al (2012); and Marques & Mont’alverne (2013), such possibility could be discarded, as no article found substantial differences in social media presence of parties as consequence of their ideological orientation. However, Braga & Becher (2013) detected that left-wing groups are, in fact, using more social media with an electoral intent. Three of that researches are for 2010 elections and two, for 2012, which leads us to believe that it is prudent wait for new studies being published on the same theme for the last Brazilian elections, in order to develop a more accurate analysis of one or other trend.

It is believed that all the other aspects verified in the 35 articles gathered cannot be identified as features of Brazilian electoral processes because of their limited extent of incidence, but of course they deserve to be followed closely.

8. Conclusion

This piece of work aimed at presenting and comparing, by a review of literature, the results of main researches discussing features and communication strategies developed on social media by candidates for political office during electoral campaigns in Brazil since 2010.

Thirty-five articles were collected; they analysed and presented information on political activity on social media in 2010, 2012 and 2014 elections, in campaigns for majoritarian and proportional representation offices. It was found that there was a great
number of works on presidential and mayoral disputes, but also that, the studies on elections for governors, senators, member of congress, state representatives and city councillors are still incipient.

The data were mapped and presented according to each office in dispute, and the most recurrent characteristics in such studies were highlighted. Thus, five characteristics of the use of social media by Brazilian candidates were identified: (1) the increasing adoption of SNSs; (2) the consolidation of a preference for Facebook among candidates; (3) the increasing frequency of posting along electoral campaigning; (4) the predilection for posts about campaign scheduled events, posts to mobilise voters and to expose political allegiance; and (5) the narrowing digital divide between Brazilian regions. It is important noting that items 3 and 4 are not inherent in social media, being already common strategies by the time campaigns were an offline business.

On the other hand, other four elements need further research, in order to be confirmed or discarded: (6) the level of interaction between candidates and users; (7) negative campaigning practise; (8) the possibility of social media mitigating disadvantages of under-represented groups; and (9) the possible impact of ideology on social media adoption.

We recognise a risk in this piece of work developing a comparative approach among articles following distinct methodologies. Nevertheless, the strategy of working only with data obtained by its respective authors, which were grouped by related themes, was a decision taken aiming at minimising eventual distortions, in order to assure comparisons only between similar categories.

Looking ahead, analysing the trends of digital tools usage in Brazilian politics constitutes an important study niche for researches. As it was well affirmed by Gilmore (2011) and Graham et al (2014), social media are a recent phenomenon, that is why they are still at a normalisation stage in many countries including Brazil.

**References**


