Using Twitter in Political Campaigns: the case of the PRI Candidate in Mexico

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Abstract: Social media has invaded elections in Mexico. However, the power of citizens through the use of this platform is still unknown. Many citizens criticize political candidates using Twitter, others build networks and some others try to collaborate with candidates. This research is focused in understanding this kind of behavior, analyzing the case of the presidential candidate Enrique Peña Nieto (PRI) in Mexico who won the presidency with a large participation but without the support of Twitter users. After two online protests against this presidential candidate - #IamnotProletariat and #Iam132 – political image could have been undermined and voters could have thought differently. But this was not the case and despite of this, the candidate won. The challenge to understand this online protest and its link to the political campaign is addressed in this paper.

Key Words: Twitter, social media, elections, online protest political marketing, politics 2.0

1. Introduction

Technology in politics has been used since information and communication technologies became commercial and popular. The use of computers to predict voters behavior is not new (Farrell, 2012; Jon B., 1998; Macintosh, Malina, & Farrell, 2002). Although, the use of technology to interact with voters and expand the political message is more recent (Best, Krueger, & Ladewig, 2007).

Nowadays the spread of the use of internet and web 2.0 technologies are changing the way politicians conduct their political campaigns using websites, forums and chats to expand their presence and interactions with citizens (Baldwin-Philippi, 2013; Bimber & Copeland, 2013).

The use of internet platforms such as blogs, YouTube, Twitter and Facebook became a new trend for political strategies (Fox & Ramos, 2012). The Obama campaign is the stepping stone of the novel use of social media communications inside a successful political campaign (Harfoush, 2009; Karlsen, 2013; Katz, Barris, & Jain, 2013).

Several scholars have followed the Obama replications in different countries such as the German election in 2009 (Jungherr, Jürgens, & Schoen, 2011), and the debate about the use of the Twitter platform to forecast electoral results (Tumasjan, Sprenger, Sandner, & Welpe, 2011b). This intrusion of technological participation using Twitter and Facebook has change the organization and structure of political campaigns, adding new elements to the complex system of attracting and convincing voters (Mashable, 2012; Towner, 2012).

A different path in the political field is the use of technology for social protests. The most studied examples are the Arab Spring revolts in Egypt, Tunisia and Iran (Anderson, 2011; Andrea Kavanaugh, Yang Seungwon, & Edward Fox, 2011; Gilad, Erhardt, Mike, Devin, & Ian, 2011). The introduction of the technological element as a new communication channel, different from the traditional media, has empowered citizen's capabilities of organization, information sharing and collaboration to reach collective goals. However, these social protests also have the cyberactivism component that starts its own transformation (Khamis & Vaughn, 2012; Michael D. yers & Maccaughey, 2003; Sandoval-Almazan & Gil- Garcia, 2013).

Mexico has not been excluded from the influence of technology in politics and social protests. The oldest example is the use of emails by the Zapatista army in 1995 (Cleaver, 1998) to expand their influence using a combination of new technologies – email – and the traditional media, the worldwide newspapers that received letters and provided coverage to the indigenous uprising (Garrido & Halavais, 2003).

A more recent case took place in 2009, when the Mexican Senate had to consider a large group of citizens who gathered on the Twitter's social network, managing to stop an Internet tax which had been approved by the House and the senators stopped just on time (Riva-Palacio, 2009). After having gathered more than a hundred thousand messages through this network, the Mexican Twitters put on so much pressure that senators had to attend the claimers. The Senate had to stop the tax on Internet. This

way, Twitters activists achieved their objective using information technology (Sandoval-Almazan and Alonzo, 2011).

The Senate's case is a clear example of the Morozov's (2011) idea of the perils to open government debates into public and the use of technology to pressure government or citizens. The case of the city of Veracruz shows Morozov's idea of net delusion clearer when the government used technologies to make authoritarian behaviors and control internet ideas in order to maintain peace and security.

The Veracruz case started with a message from the official hashtag #verfollow which confirmed: "in the primary school named Jorge Arroyo an armed group kidnapped five kids" (Monroy-Hernández, 2011). This message was re-tweeted by 12 more people and this hashtag @VerFollow had more than 5,000 followers. This one was created by the police department of Veracruz to report violence in the state. The viral influence of this tool spread the news in two hours. Many parents went to pick up their kids earlier from school in order to save them from this threat, causing massive traffic, chaos and panic across the city (Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2012).

That same day, the government's website published a list of sixteen Twitter accounts involved in the rumor and threatened to take legal action against them. The statement also mentioned the names of the persons associated with the account @gilius_22 named Gilberto Martínez Vera and María de Jesús Bravo Pagola (@maruchibravo). The governor used his personal Twitter account to clear the situation four hours later and disqualified the citizens who took part in the communication mess. Next Saturday, both of them were arrested on charges of terrorism. They claimed to have been tortured by the police and forced to sign confessions (Juarez, 2011).

Social pressure and the international spread of the news, published in CNN, BBC, The Guardian and Los Angeles Times put so much pressure against the state prosecutor who finally discharged and release Martinez Vera and Bravo Pagola on September 21st, after one month in prison (Martinez, 2011). The use of Twitter to make and state official postures about facts and the use of law to entrench citizens freedoms are examples of this clear condition of internet control (Morozov, 2011).

Previous cases in Mexico and the Arab Spring present the long lasting friction between citizens and governments. Both try to control each other, putting pressure, neutralizing,

promoting, establishing boundaries and limiting actions. The main difference is that information technologies are in the middle of the friction. Some citizens' groups are using it more efficiently than governments. In other cases the governments are more clever and powerful. But the statement is clear, web 2.0 technology is the middleware of this battle (Bannister & Wilson, 2011; Dutton & Peltu, 2007; Evans & Ulbig, 2012).

The fact is that information technologies have become the intermediary in many political campaigns expanding its role and influence. More recently, research has confirmed that there are significant positive relationships between the use of digital media and web 2.0 technologies and political participation and knowledge (Boulianne, 2009; Dalrymple & Scheufele, 2007; Dimitrova, Shehata, Strömbäck, & Nord, 2014; Kiousis & Dimitrova, 2006; Tolbert & Mcneal, 2003). However, the Mexican presidential race presented a different case when presidential candidate Peña Nieto had against the opinion of Twitter and Facebook users but won the presidency. He won just 38% of the votes and his margin of victory was half the double-digit spread most polls had predicted. The PRD's candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador, took second with 32%, while the PAN's candidate Josefina Vázquez Mota topped 25% at a distant third place (Padgett, 2012).

The purpose of this research is to understand how the Mexican candidate of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) undermines its social media presence as a result of two online protests. The first one during his precampaign – #IamnotProletariat – and the second one during his political campaign - #Iam132 – but won the general election. In order to achieve this goal, this research was designed in two steps: 1. The precampaing stage and, 2. The political campaign. For such purpose, I monitored Twitter and Facebook accounts of presidential candidates from 2011 until July 2nd of 2012. This paper is organized in five sections. This introductory section which states the problem. The second section is a literature review of Twitter use on elections, social media, elections and web 2.0 components as a main overview of social media. A third section describes Mexican background and electoral context. The fourth section is a methodological section. The final section will discuss conclusions for the election and its impact on politics.

2. Literature Review

Nowadays social networks have been pointed out with the use of Twitter and Facebook (Aleman-Meza et al., 2008). Twitter had over 500 million registered users in 2012 and 340 million tweets are written daily (Twitter 2014). This web application was developed by Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams and Biz Stone who have been online since 2006 and have gained popularity worldwide. The main difference between Twitter and other social networks is that the messages called "tweets" are limited to 140 characters and have the function to send URLs that are linked to audio, video or images. Twitter has also the function to send direct messages person to person or to send them to a general public of subscribers and this messages can then be resent - re-tweeted to their own network of subscribers (Swamynathan, Wilson, Boe, Almeroth, & Zhao, 2008).

Research over the use of Twitter and Facebook in several fields has exploded since 2008 Obama's presidential campaign. At least two seminal books collected research trends on this area (Fox & Ramos, 2012; Romm-Livermore, 2012). This literature review is build for three main theoretical fields of research to organize contributions on this area: 1) Social media and political participation analysis; 2) Social media contribution to political campaigns; and 3) Social media effects on politics.

The first theoretical field related to social media and political participation started with Bimber's contributions on the Internet impact in communication and interaction of citizens and politics (Bimber & Copeland, 2013; Bimber, Stohl, & Flanagin, 2009; Bimber, 1998, 1999). The contribution for this field was the analysis of integrated social media efforts that consider Facebook, YouTube and Twitter as a combined strategy in different political fields like political party communities (Effing, Hillegersberg, & Huibers, 2012) or local politics (Effing, Hillegersberg, & Huibers, 2013). This integrated analysis of social media by Effing and colleagues have a seminal work that analyses the impact of these social media tools on political systems (Effing, van Hillegersberg, & Huibers, 2011).

Research on social media can be divided accordingly in different tools: blogs, Facebook and Twitter. For the case of the blog analysis, Wallsten researched prior and after Obama's campaign and it is a starting point on this topic. (Wallsten, 2008, 2010). Later on, using the construct expressive or consumptive to determine the engagement on political activity research was done by Zúñiga, Bachmann, Hsu, & Brundidge, (2013).

Similar research about blog use was made by Nahon & Hemsley,(2011) to determine how volatile the content on political blogs is.

Regarding Facebook, Robertson, Vatrapu, & Medina (2009) examined two years of posts on Facebook walls of the three major contenders for the U.S. Presidency in 2008, analyzing participation patterns of usage along dimensions of breadth and frequency, and interpreting them in terms of the concept of the "public sphere" (Robertson, Vatrapu, & Medina, 2010). Recent research from Robertson et al., (2012) based on posts from two candidates for US Congress found that political dialogue on social networks is always more positive than negative and the content analysis reveals that expressions of support are the most frequent, followed by questions and suggestions. Other scholars have been following the same path, focusing on political behavior (Bode, 2012), political engagement (Conroy, Feezell, & Guerrero, 2012) and political participation (Tang & Lee, 2013).

Research on Twitter is more recent than Facebook. A first notice about the impact of this web 2.0 tool was the research done by Lassen and Brown (2011) analyzing the electoral connection using Twitter, followed by the research from Gainous & Wagner, (2013) and research of how political candidates use Twitter by Kruikemeier (2014) and Gruzd and Roy, (2014) whose research on political polarization in Canada through Twitter determined a new path to be followed. A controversial research was made by Tumasjan, Sprenger, Sandner, & Welpe, (2011) when they revealed the positive impact of Twitter on elections, but was later on contradicted by another research (Daniel Gayo-Avello & Panagiotis, 2011) studying congress election on the US in 2010.

For the second theoretical research field, after the Obama's Presidential Campaign in 2008, many studies have been conducted on national and local elections (Baumgartner y Morris 2010) (Gibson y McAllister 2011). Andersen and Medaglia's (2009) research about the national campaign of the Danish Parliament suggests that candidates and voters were influenced by the use of Facebook. Feezell, Conroy, and Guerrero (2009) surveyed 455 undergraduate students and found that participation in online political groups strongly predicted offline political participation by engaging members online. Other cases such as social media campaign on Spanish mayor elections (Criado, Martínez-Fuentes, & Silván, 2012) confirmed this posture as well as the popularity analysis on US Midterm elections (Vaccari & Nielsen, 2013) and influence of opinion

leaders in elections (Dubois & Gaffney, 2014). Another example of the usefulness of these tools is the research of Wandhoefer, Thamm, and Joshi (2011) on the German Parliament using social media tools.

Finally the third theoretical field focuses on the effects of social media on politics. There is research over different reactions on digital media technologies used accordingly in different countries, considering culture or education (Rhue & Sundararajan, 2014). The influence of the source is also supported by different attitudes, credibility and salience on the link between politics and technology (Kiousis & Dimitrova, 2006). However the contribution that is important for this research considers two concepts: the political knowledge and the political participation in electoral campaigns influenced by social media. Research on both topics have been made by Dimitrova (Dimitrova & Bystrom, 2013; Dimitrova et al., 2014) in order to understand the friction between citizens and politicians during campaigns.

3. Context. Internet in Mexico and Peña Nieto's Background

Internet use has grown quickly in recent years in Mexico. According to the latest study of AMIPCI (2012) there are 45.1 million Internet users in the country. The 30% of Internet users in Mexico is in the range of 25 to 44 years. During 2013 the average daily time connection for Mexican surfers was 5 hours and one minute.

INEGI (2013) reported that in terms of connectivity, 9.5 million Mexican households have internet access which represents 30.7% of the total in Mexico. This means an increase of 20.6% compared to 2012. There are 11.1 million households equipped with computerswhich represent 35.8% of households in the country and an increase of 13.3% in relation to last year and 65% with cell phone.

The study of the World Internet Project (WIP) (2011), a national survey carried out two thousand interviews, with a confidence interval of 95%, indicating that there are 59.2 million internet users in Mexico. The analysis of this study indicates that 91% of users access social networks, showing an increase of 70% in comparison with 2010. It also shows that in 2011 97% of users check their emails accounts but in 2013 there was a decrease of this activity since 85% of the people used social networks.

The Mexican Internet Association (AMIPCI) revealed in its 9th study on habits of Internet users in Mexico (2013) Mexicans sending and receiving mails is the first activity online with 87% of users followed by the search of information which became the second most important activity with 84% and that access to social networks became the third activity for online Mexican Internet users with 82% of the total being the main entertainment activity where 9 out of 10 Mexican Internet clients use social networks; further 93% do so daily.

Enrique Peña Nieto was the former governor of the State of Mexico. He belongs to the ancient ruling party Revolutionary Party (PRI) that has ruled Mexico for 70 years. He suddenly became the first runner on the presidential campaign in Mexico, followed by Josefina Vazquez Mota, from the National Action Party (PAN), that hold the presidency for the last 12 years and the left wing candidate Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador from the Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD).

The presidential race in Mexico started officially in May 2012 and continued till July 2, the day of the election. However, the three candidates started their campaigns at the beginning of 2012, using internet as a potential communication channel, not limited by law. One of these actions was the use of Internet to make campaign and gather followers. The purpose of this research was to follow the Twitter account of Enrique Peña Nieto (@EPN) prior the official electoral campaign and specifically to analyze a political scandal on Twitter.

Peña Nieto started his Facebook (facebook.com/EnriquePN) account four years before elections. On the early 2012 he had 1,373,912 friends that followed his activities. The Twitter account (Twitter.com/epn) started in October 2011, with an amazing response; the numbers of followers grew instantly in about one month to get 349,231 followers. Peña Nieto used his Twitter account to provide information of his political activities, and some thoughts about actual issues or political trends.

3.1. Pre-campaign Online Protest: #IamProletariat

On December 4th 2011, the Mexican presidential candidate presented his own book at the International Book Fair in Guadalajara. During the press conference he hold on this regard, some journalist asked him about 3 books that had marked his life and political

career. Unfortunately, the candidate was not able to respond. He also managed to mix the names of the authors of two well know books.

In the following hours the Twitter response to this mistake was intense. The hashtag #libreriaPeñaNieto (#PeñaNietoBookstore) became a trending topic and the Twitter followers started mocking at the candidate. Some of them created Photoshop images from a popular Mexican bookstore named Gandhi, introducing Peña's mistake and circulated it through the Twitter platform during the weekend without any response from the political team of the candidate.

Even worse, the breaking point was on Saturday night, when Paulina Peña, the candidates' daughter, made a re-tweet from her boyfriend cellphone where she insulted Mexican citizens calling them "proletariat" in a clear discriminatory way – assuring that Peña Nieto was criticized because people envied him. The word "proletariat" caused a lot of anger among the Twitter users and escaladed the press, TV and online news. Immediately a new hashtag was launched (#I am proletariat) making fun out of the candidate's daughter tweet and her father. The first response from the campaign team was to close Paulina's Twitter account and they also decided not to reply to the message. The universe of Twitter messages on that black Monday for Peña Nieto reached more than 100 thousand tweets and became another trending topic on that day.

Electronic editions of all Mexican newspapers, radio and TV news reproduced the Twitter protest and made fun of the PRI candidate during the whole day. In the afternoon the candidate posted a new tweet message from his Twitter account: "Sorry for Paulina`s mistake, I will talk to her about this…" and Paulina's account came suddenly to life again. Twitter followers answered Peña Nieto's statement but not as furious as before.

3.2. Campaign Online Protest: #Iam132

On May 11, 2012, Peña Nieto was invited to a conference at a catholic university, named Universidad Iberoamericana, in one of the wealthiest neighborhoods of Mexico City. During his lecture, he was strongly questioned about several matters related to his term as the governor of the State of Mexico. At the end he was confronted by a massive protest of students that waited for him, shouting things like "coward," "murderer," and the "Ibero University does not like you" (The economist, 2012).

After encountering a barrier on his way out, the candidate could not use the front door and had to leave the University using another exit. He was interviewed by the media and he stated that he presumed that the protesters were not students from the university, but were instead supporters of the other candidate. Later on, the president of the PRI party was also interviewed on television and radio stations where he mentioned that these were not students, but provokers, and regardless they did not represent the whole university. On May 14, students from this university organized themselves to record a video in which they show their student ID cards, saying their names, and making a small declaration against the PRI candidate. In the 11 minute video, 131 students claim for a more open and fair access to information through the electronic media and complained about the protest coverage of the two main TV broadcast stations- Televisa and TV Azteca. No one could say that these activists were not students or deny the originality of their claim. This homemade video, named "#131 Ibero Students Respond," received more than one million views in one week(Milenio, 2012; Villamil, 2012).

A few days later, students from other universities made more videos like this one, with the hashtag "#I'm number 132." This hashtag was mentioned more than 769,000 times in four days and exceeded the number of mentions about the presidential candidates, as shown at the bottom of the chart. The number of online protest increased and led to street protests in a couple of days. The shadow of #Iamnumber 132 will chase Peña Nieto during the rest of his political campaign online and offline.

4. Methodology

The online research has become the best way to collect, compare and analyze data for Web 2.0 tools such as Twitter and Facebook. However, very few methodologies and research models have been developed for this purpose. This situation creates confusion and difficulty about the validity and trust in research findings that collect data online (Galliers, F, & Myers M, 2002). The e-research does not only make tasks easier or automates them, it raises a whole range of methodological and epistemic issues (Estalella and Ardevol, 2011). Even though, using innovative data collection strategies does not compromise the validity of the findings. Gallupe (2007) mentions that current research on information systems (IS) seem more concerned with "how" the research is

conducted more than "which" research is conducted and "why". Hewson (2008) developed the concept of Internet-Mediated Research (IMR): "Internet-Mediated Research involves the gathering of novel, original data to be subjected to analysis in order to provide new evidence in relation to a particular research question" (p. 58).

This research was divided into two main steps. Step 1 - The pre-campaign analysis and Step 2 - Campaign Analysis. For the first step, the most relevant event for the purpose of this research was the #IamProletariat online protest where the main activities were:

1. Data collection and validation. For this stage, the Twitter account of the presidential candidate was validated – some other fake accounts were released – then 2,816 tweets were downloaded using the Twitter app that allows this purpose. A sample of 314 tweets randomly selected were analyzed.

2. Data classification. This stage was divided into two steps. A research assistant identified and selected 314 messages with the hashtag #Iamproletariat.. In the second stage, in order to obtain keywords from the most repeated messages, we analyzed their meaning and content using the program Textfitter (now DiscoverText.com). This is a cloud-based, collaborative text analytics solution with dozens of powerful text mining features within the same program.

3. Analysis. As the result of the previous analysis – human and machine – messages were organized accordingly into four main categories: 1) Criticism; 2) Candidate's support; 3) Mockery of the candidate; 4) Vote preferences. To identify these categories we made keyword definitions and analyzed them using Table 1.

Category	Description	Keywords
Criticism	Comments or post criticism about the candidate's mistake with arguments or ideas about the conference and his daughter's behavior	Read, learn to read, government wages, support candidates, support politics, country, proud, deceptive
Candidate's Support	Comments supporting and agreeing with the candidate's arguments	Support, courage, enough, high aspiration, high, understand, great candidate

Mockery of the Candidate	Complains, jokes and references to the candidate's mistake	Ruin, father, daughter reputation, discrimination, mad to read
Voter Preferences	Bringing up vote preferences against and in favor of	Remember, election day, no vote, vote against, PRI
* Note: the words were chosen in Spanish and translated for the purpose of this paper.		

Table 1. Categories and Keywords for the Social Media Analysis: #Iamproletariat Case

For the second step, during official political campaign in Mexico, the most relevant event was the #Iam132 protest, activities for analyzing were the following:

1. Collection of quantitative data from Twitter, Facebook and YouTube accounts. During this activity data were retrieved directly from each social media account and compared with statistics of the Electoral Observatory from the UNAM University.
2. Data was organized and classified for each presidential candidate. Data was added every month and compared among each other. Data from sentiment analysis was retrieved from Aristegui, (2012).
3. Data analysis and trends. The analysis of the quantitative data was compiled and charted.

5. Findings and Discussion

The first event that undermined Peña Nieto`s political image was the online protest: #I am not a proletariat – it was a pre-campaign event. Most of the Twitter users made fun (83.76%) of the candidate's mistake instead of criticizing him (10.51%). Only a very small group provided an argument to support him (0.96%) (See Figure 1).

#Iamproletariat

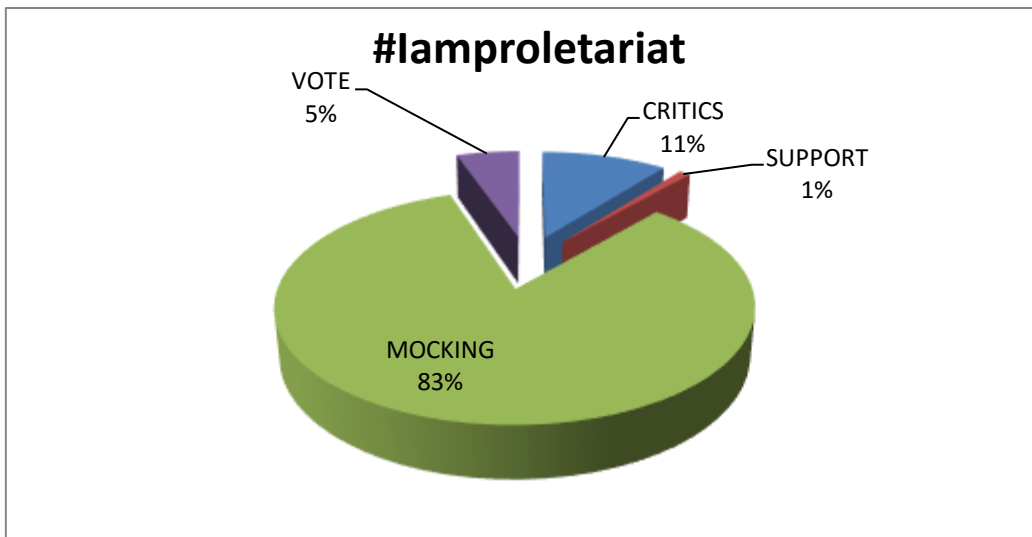VOTE
5%

CRITICS
11%

SUPPORT
1%

MOCKING
83%

Figure 1. Results of #Iamproletariat

Mocking at political candidates could be the first action to start using Twitter for political purposes. Literature indicates that the use of digital media and specifically Twitter has a positive impact on electoral campaigns (Dimitrova, 2014). Mocking means no political commitment or intrusion to political ideas. It is a fun comment and a reason for gossiping or rumoring. This can also spread the viral effect through the Internet. Previous research mentions different directions; for example, Robertson, et. al. (2012) mentions that supporters of candidates online – in this case Facebook – send positive messages instead a negative ones, as in the case of the Mexican candidate. On the other side, research of Small (2011) describes the use of Twitter only as a communication channel to send updates on elections and candidates. In the Mexican case, the citizens' engagement was to diminish the popularity of the candidate of the PRI.

The viral influence of these messages contaminated the public opinion during several days, because traditional media replicated them. The viral influence provided users with a new tool to criticize or to talk about candidates. There were only 11% of critiques, which provided arguments, the rest were only reactions or re-tweets from other sources. According to related literature (Boynton, 2009; Wallsten, 2010), this citizens' behavior and the use of Twitter can be understood as a way of making a message viral and "interact" with the information.

The second event was the uprising of the movement #Iam132 on May 2012. This social movement was initially against the presidential candidate of the PRI; even though the discourse considered developing more democracy and opening mass media. However, references and critiques focused mostly on Peña Nieto. This movement transformed cyberactivism actions, agenda and behavior through the Mexican students that took part in this online protest through several months (Sandoval-Almazan & Gil- Garcia, 2013). The results from the data collection of TwitterTwitter, Facebook and YouTube on the political campaign revealed several things (see Table 2). The Peña Nieto online campaign was successful only on YouTube; the number of YouTube video reproductions was above 13 million, despite the constant decrease of Twitter followers, which dropped from 19% on April-May to 11% on May-June, and the relative increase of tweets send 27% April-May and 19% May June. An important factor is the sentiment analysis of the tweets during the campaign, positive mentions on this platform continue dropping until 25% for the last month of the campaign and negative mentions 60% remain constant on two consecutive months, without any increase of neutral mentions that could balance between positive or negative tweet messages sent by the candidate. However these data show that the main strategy was focused on video productions and diffusion through YouTube rather than changing the opinion of the Twitter users.

	Enrique Peña Nieto		
	April	May	June
Facebook friends	2,468,494	2,935,468	3,333,609
Talk about him on Facebook	245,756	335,722	488,093
Twitter followers	599,493	742,848	837,419
Tweets	682	942	1,173
Following (Twitter)	82	82	85
Average positive mentions (Twitter)	38%	28%	25%
Average negative mentions (Twitter)	46%	60%	60%
Average neutral mentions (Twitter)	16%	12%	15%
YouTube subscriptions	5,379	7,346	9,494
YouTube video reproductions	3,497,114	9,549,580	13,835,201

Table 2. Mexican Election 2012, Presidential Candidate Enrique Peña Nieto (PRI)

Although the candidate increased the number of friends over his Facebook account every month during the campaign, very few of them got in contact or interact with his campaign – using the "like function" – this social media platform was only useful for information purposes rather than maintaining interaction, creating a political knowledge and developing a network of supporters as other scholars refer to (Andersen & Medaglia, 2009; Tang & Lee, 2013).

Peña Nieto's support on Facebook was strong because his account was four years old but it seems there was no electoral strategy to take advantage of all these members supporting and encouraging them to convince others and developing more engagement or even considering a vote for him (Conroy et al., 2012).

The combination of these three social media technologies – YouTube, Facebook and Twitter – are present for Mexican political candidates, although data presented different strategies for each social media tool. Or perhaps the lack of a strategy to use social media as an interactive communications channel that allows citizens to share ideas and debates with candidates or followers. On the other hand the political knowledge through social media tools could increase with these two events.

Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to understand the influence of two events using social media technologies during the Mexican presidential race in 2012. The tweet analysis of #Iamproletariat and the consequences of the emergence of #Iam132 seem not to impact on the political knowledge of Mexicans except on their political participation.

Mexican electoral participation increased after #Iam132 to reach more than 60% of Mexicans that went to the polls. Maybe the synergy created through new media and traditional media rose this participation, especially young people. But this could be an interesting research path for the future.

However the main contribution of this paper contradicts previous research that indicates a positive impact on candidates who use social media tools on campaigns (Boulianne, 2009; Dalrymple & Scheufele, 2007; Dimitrova, Shehata, Strömbäck, & Nord, 2014;

Kiousis & Dimitrova, 2006; Tolbert & Mcneal, 2003). Peña Nieto won against the opinion of Twitter users and Facebook lack of activity.

Another contribution is the analysis of social media created events on political campaigns that affects – positive or negatively – candidates' public image. This research also presents quantitative data to analyze impact of political campaigns. There a no previous research on social media events that affects political campaign, this research is an starting point on this topic.

The case of #Iamproletariat is the starting point of Enrique Peña undermined presence on Twitter, but it shows the weakness of the candidate through all the electoral campaign and remained until the election day. This blind side of the campaign was hit by #Iam132.

The PRI candidate that appears unbeatable and leading the polls was debilitated using social media after May 11, 2012 conference in the Iberoamericana university. The main weapon was a combined strategy of social media: the intelligent use of YouTube - with a video of 131 students - and the viral use of the tools of Twitter and Facebook to impact on traditional media and call the attention of the general public to make their claim clear and hard into the Mexican political system.

The limitations of this research in terms on validaty are important. This is just one case to be analyzed, more cases like Peña Nieto must be needed in order to contradict previous research. However it is worth to mention that social media needs more research on political campaigns. Another limitation is the lack of content analysis on the electoral campaign, specially the #Iam132 case. I only present a content analysis of the #Iamproletariat on precampaign. Also both events can be debated because are in two differente political stages – preCampaign and offical campaign – however this distinction do not apply to social media tools. But it is clear that there is an impact through social media in politics when candidates, media and citizens use it to participate, debate and share information through these technological platforms.

More research has to be done on the social media and elections impact. This research analyzed one case of this phenomenon; it is important to analyze the rest of the hashtags, video content or posts during the campaign. This content analysis is an unexplored field of research on Twitter and Facebook's impact on political campaigns.

Another path for future research is still open which provides evidence that supports the impact of social media on political knowledge and participation. This research provides a small contribution about political engagement through Twitter with the cases of #Iamproletariat and #Iam132, but there is still a long way to understand how citizens and politicians are going to use web 2.0 tools to improve our democratic life.

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