

Media Visibility: Game-Changer or Alternative? Comparative Research between MPs in Brazil and Germany

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1 Introduction

Media visibility and political image building represent a competitive advantage for political leadership in the context of the "audience democracy" (Manin, 1997), in which "spectatorship" tends to overcome the traditional "citizenship" (Harris and Rees, 2000). The relations between politicians and journalism are now evolving rapidly as the result of technological and social change. These changes are universal (Krotz, 2007; Schultz, 2012). Most modern democracies have experienced a decline in party identification and, as a result, growing electoral volatility. The decline in party identification has increased the impact of short-term factors such as candidate orientations and candidate images on voting behavior (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000).

The technological changes in the media field coupled with representative systems that foster the cultivation of the "personal vote" (Cain et al., 1987; Carey and Shugart, 1995) have prompted scholars to make observations ranging from the "individualization", or personalization of political representation (Zittel and Gschwend, 2008), to the "presidentialisation" of politics even in parliamentary systems of government. (Mughan, 2000; Poguntke and Webb, 2005). However, carefully designed comparative studies demonstrate that many of these developments are mediated by variations in institutional incentives, the general political environment, and the level of the political contest (Bennett and Entman, 2001; Hjarvard, 2008; Lundby, 2009).

Such perspectives encourage the question whether media visibility is equally important for all kinds of electoral careers. It is, of course, plausible that individual candidates for political leadership positions such as mayoral, gubernatorial or presidential candidates experience strong and growing individual media scrutiny. Those are the "politicians who are most likely to do the media interviews and write books and articles about their experiences" (Searing, 1994, p. 11), especially if they cannot rely exclusively on their party to attract voters. Yet, despite all media's leverage, do all candidates for seats in elected assemblies (city councilors, state legislators, Congressmen), "backbenchers who shape Parliament's roles but are less likely to discuss them in print or broadcast" (Searing, 1994, p. 12), give equal importance and emphasis in their campaign strategies to media visibility and public image building?

This study was designed to compare the link between the use of media in political campaigns and electoral connections amongst Members of the Brazilian and German Parliaments (MPs). In many ways, such a comparison could be seen as a "most different systems design" (Przeworski and Teune, 1970) where a particular variable (such as growing media influence) has explanatory power across very different cases, even if they vary in terms of regime type (presidential versus parliamentary system), electoral system or political traditions. Both polities are federal in nature,

providing voters with choices – and candidates with opportunities – at different territorial levels. This creates variation in the size of the local electorate and the nature of the *electoral connection* between voters and MPs. Scholars in Brazil and Germany have shown that the use of media in political campaigns varies according to territorial level of representation and geographic voting patterns. Such constituency characteristics have been neglected in comparative research inspired by the new institutionalism in political science.

The comparison between Brazil and Germany is justified for a number of reasons. Brazil's representative system combines a plebiscitary presidential system with federalism, and open-list of candidates with proportional representation. The result of such a combination is a weak and fragmented multiparty system and the formation of coalitions based on heterogeneous political forces. Germany is a *Parteien demokratie* (party democracy), a parliamentary government, with a mixed-member electoral system that combines very different electoral rules in the same country. This fact provides a unique opportunity and a powerful analytical environment for the comparative study of institutional effects on politics, MPs' campaign styles and media strategies under identical, social, political and economic conditions. Because the German mixed-member system involves the simultaneous use of the world's two dominant forms of electoral rules--proportional representation and single-member district elections-- it allows us to isolate the impact of institutional variables on political outcomes and media strategies, by holding constant non-institutional variables such as social cleavages, socio-economic development and culture.

The representative system in Germany is unique in itself, much admired, and equally much misinterpreted. When designing the German electoral system after World War II, the idea of adopting a pure first-past-the-post (FPTP) system had strong support among several members of the parliamentary council. Post-war military government and the Christian Democrats (with support from the German Party, DP) strongly favored FPTP over proportional representation (PR). However, opposition by Social Democrats (SPD) and the Liberal Party (FDP) eventually led to the adoption of a mixture of PR and single-member districts (SMD), which became the prevalent mixed-member system. Every voter has two votes: the first for the constituency candidate, and the second for a specific party. In this way, the voter should be able to vote for a person of confidence, without feeling obliged at the same time to vote for his/her party.

This paper aims to test the claims that, just as candidates have distinct “electoral connections” (Mayhew, 2004), they might also have different media strategies for gaining mandates and being re-elected. The nature and magnitude of the electoral districts -- well researched in US-based studies on representation -- is under-studied elsewhere.¹ Thus, this article explores and tests hypotheses derived from the theoretical distributive model--based on rational-choice theory--, and the party model--built off neo-institutionalism--for a specific set of media strategies of MPs in Brazil and Germany (Mayhew, 2004; Fiorina, 1989; March and Olsen, 1989; Jacob et al., 2010; Thomassen, 1994; Mainwaring, 1999; Ames, 2001, Carvalho, 2003).

In Germany, the working hypothesis is that direct personal visibility in the media (*Medienpräsenz*) might be a strategy that is more strongly visible at the federal level

¹ Matthew Shugart (2005) emphasized the progress made so far in understanding the impact of electoral systems on party systems. In contrast, research on how electoral systems affect party organization and the relationship between MPs and constituencies still needs further studies. Evidence of this weakness is the limited number of comparative research analyzing the effects of the electoral system on the behavior of voters (Norris, 2004).

(*Bundestagswahlen*), whereas at the state level (*Landeswahlen*) this influence is more strongly mediated by party indirectly. District candidates, who compete under the majority rule, might rely more on media coverage than list-candidates under the proportional rule, who might rely more on the party label and on a good position on the *Landesliste* than on media presence.

Given the great difference between the Brazilian and German political systems in general, it is possible to study the interaction between MPs and media in different electoral contexts such as the different types of votes, position on party lists and territorial level, as well as under different geographic voting patterns. This may provide rich information on media strategies of MPs vis-à-vis the particular nature of their constituency, ranging from the party electorate for list and district candidates to the voters at different territorial levels. If the expectation that (a) the general increase of the importance of individual media strategies holds across different political systems, and (b) varies according to constituency characteristics like the ones mentioned above, it would be possible to add significantly to scholarship on electoral systems and the effect of media on political behavior.

Our hypotheses then draw upon the electoral formula and the nature of the primary electoral units, the municipalities (Brazil) and the *Wahlkreis/Stimmenkreis* (Germany). On the one hand, the effects of electoral systems occur at the district level. This means that electoral laws relate directly to the district level and not to the macro level of the political system (Sartori, 1986; Gary Cox, 1997). On the other hand, geographically limited areas represent (a) the destination point of the electoral connection, (b) the arena where political competitions take place and MPs draw votes or seek coalitions. Candidates choose different strategies of concentration or dispersion of its resources by territory. The decision of where to focus the campaign on a few or many municipalities/districts is generally associated with the political profile and the availability of each MP's resources. Candidates with strong ties to a particular constituency tend to focus their campaign on a limited geographical area. Leadership with broader political ties, not geographically concentrated, may disperse their campaign resources along various constituencies.

From these presuppositions, we derived two variables: (a) the electoral formula and (b) the voting pattern. The former may reinforce personal vote seeking or party vote seeking campaign strategies. The horizontal vector projects into space the dimension of concentration of votes. This study is particularly interested in analyzing and comparing the different electoral formula and the voting patterns of MPs at the federal level of representation. Since a territorial basis of representation inevitably introduces particularistic and parochial concerns into the policy-making process (Cain et al, 1987), it can also produce variations in MPs' personal media strategies: high concentrations of votes coupled with electoral formulae that foster personal vote seeking significantly increase the emphasis in personal media strategy and visibility.

2 The research design

The research's design called for a postal, elite, self-administered, census survey, one that gathers information on all elements of the target population, i.e., the group of people whom the survey intends to generalize. The survey was administered to all individuals of the population, because it targeted a very specific elite group (Members of Parliaments). In so doing, sampling and margin errors, uncertainty in the estimate, and significantly increase representation and response rate could be eliminated. Precisely because it is not a representative sample of subnational and national

lawmakers from Brazil and Germany, the analysis and conclusions presented here should not be extrapolated beyond the group of interviewees.

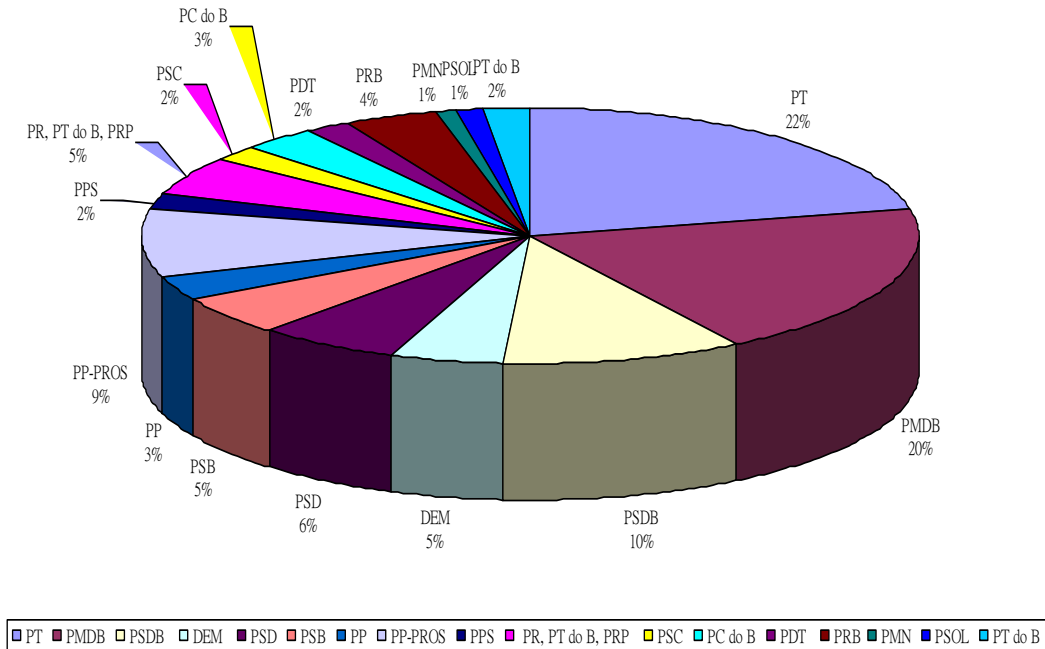
In Brazil, the target population was all members of the Chamber of Deputies (N = 513). In Germany, the target population was all members of the Bundestag (N = 620). The lists of the MPs available at official websites were used to identify the target population. In this case, the failure to give some persons in a target population a chance of participating is minimal, since these lists capture the entire population and all individuals had the same chance to respond to the survey. Fieldwork was done in the Chamber of Deputies in Brasília and in May 2013; in the Bundestag of Berlin between March 13th and April 12th, 2013. The research strategy reflected the belief that it was important to observe MPs' media and PR strategies not only at the national level, where the political contest has the greatest impact, but also at state and local levels, since political careers and electoral connections succeed or fails at the district level.

The survey "Mídia e Carreiras Eleitorais" was delivered by the internal postal service of the Chamber of Deputies to all 513 members of the 54^a Legislature (2011–2015). In order to prevent measurement errors, the wording of the questionnaire underwent a cognitive pretesting, in which a draft of the survey questions were administered to randomly selected politicians in Brazil and in Germany. The purpose was to collect information about how individuals interpret and process the questions, to detect and correct possible sources of misinterpretation, and to ensure that the survey questions resulted in measures that were both valid, i.e., they fully and accurately measured the proposed concepts and hypotheses, and reliable, i.e., they measured the constructs in a reproducible manner.

The return rate for the Chamber of Deputies was 20% (N = 100), distributed proportionally according to the party representation in plenary, as the relation "representation /respondents" clearly shows (chart below): PT = 18% / 22%. PMDB = 15% / 20%. PSDB = 9% / 10%. DEM = 5% / 5%. PSD = 8% / 6%. PSB = 5% / 5%. PP = 2% / 3%. Bloco PP-PROS 11% / 9%. PPS = 1% / 2%. Bloco PR, PT do B, PRP = 7% / 5%. PSC = 2% / 2%. PC do B = 3% / 3%. PDT = 3% / 2%. PRB = 2% / 4%. PMN = 1% / 1%. PSOL = 1% / 1%. PT do B = 3% / 2%.

CHART 01

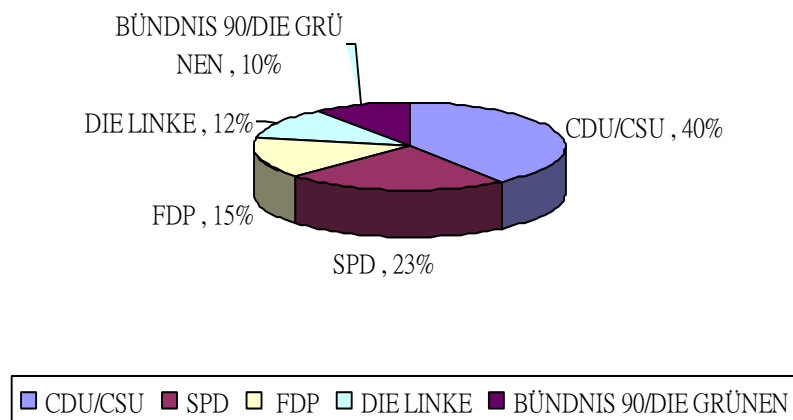
RETURN RATE – CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES (N = 100)



The relation “representation / respondents” for Bundestag was the following (chart below): CDU/CSU 38% / 40%. SPD 23% / 23%. FDP 15% / 15%. DIE LINKE 12% / 12%. BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN 10% / 10%. In the following section, we analyze and discuss the results of the survey.

CHART 02

RETURN RATE – BUNDESTAG (N = 224)



3 Exploratory data analysis

The data was explored using factor analysis (FA) as a scaling technique. It begins by computing a correlation matrix for all variables. The correlation matrix (R-matrix) or a table of correlation coefficients between variables becomes the input for the factor analysis, which extracts the factors, the “latent variables”, necessary to represent the matrix. The extent to which each item is measured by a score is known as a *factor loading*. Factor loadings range from 0.0 to 1.0. Items having high loadings on particular factors are highly related to the underlying dimension or concept represented by that factor. In this manner, scales are developed by selecting variables that are shown to load highly on particular factors, normally, a factor loading of 0.500 or higher is required for the identification of variables to comprise a particular scale.

The current exploratory factor analysis applies to the entire population of interest. The sample used is the population, and so the results cannot extrapolate that particular sample, i.e., the conclusions are restricted to the sample collected and generalization of the results can be achieved only if analysis using different samples reveals the same factor structure.

Three dimensions of media strategy were identified between German and Brazilian MPs. (1) *The traditional media-based strategy* refers to the predominant use of mass media. (2) *The internet-based strategy* refers to the use of so-called “self-mass-media” (Castells, 2009) or networked social media. (3) *The pragmatic promoter of local interests*, whose highest positive factor loading is on the use of benefits delivered to the electoral district as the most important mediums of attracting media attention coupled with a high negative loading on taking positions on controversial issues.

All items in the questionnaire that capture the communication between legislators and the public were selected. This includes both mediated and other channels of communication. In a first battery of questions, Legislators were asked to provide information about the media they use most frequently to contact their voters. The questionnaire items were standardized and offered four response categories: “not important at all”, “less important”, “important” and “very important”. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of (i) local television and radio as mediums of communication, (ii) national television and radio, (iii) the local press, (iv) the national press, (v) the internet and (vi) posters. In a second battery of items, legislators were asked to provide more precise information on the type of internet-based communication they use independent of their party’s internet presence. Legislators were asked to answer with “yes” if they used the relevant medium and “no” otherwise. They were asked whether they (i) maintained a personal website designed and maintained by their party, (ii) a personal website designed and maintained by their own campaign team, (iii) used mailing lists, (iv) used their own campaign spots accessible via the internet, (v) conducted on-line chats with voters and (vi) used a blog during the election campaign. Finally, legislators were asked to provide information on more traditional institutional ways of communicating and interacting with their voters. They were asked to indicate about the most important ways of attracting the interest of the media as legislators: (i) delivery of ‘pork’ to their districts, (ii) work in legislative committees, (iii) speeches in parliament and (iv) taking positions on controversial issues in public debates.

In a first step, an exploratory factor analysis was performed to discover any latent dimensions underlying these various activities. We used an Eigenvalue of 1.0 as a cut-off point for the

identification of important dimensions. The factor matrix was rotated using a standard orthogonal Varimax rotation and the Kaiser Normalization criterion. The factor analysis was conducted for the pooled sample of legislators from both chambers (N=324) and separately for the Chamber of Representatives (N=100) and the German Bundestag (N=224). The results are presented in Tables 1-3.

Table 1: Factor Analysis of important channels of communication of Brazilian and German legislators (N=324)

Variable	Factor 1: Internet-based strategy	Factor 2: Traditional media-based strategy	Uniqueness
<i>Media used most frequently to contact voters:</i>			
Local TV and radio	-0.4337	0.5924	0.4610
National TV and radio	-0.1252	0.8114	0.3260
Local press	0.0400	0.4419	0.8032
National press	0.1222	0.7210	0.4652
Internet	-0.2079	0.0146	0.9566
Posters	0.1173	0.0279	0.9855
<i>Use of internet tools in the last election campaign</i>			
Personal website maintained by party	-0.0699	-0.1447	0.9742
Personal website maintained by own campaign team	0.3489	-0.0277	0.8775
Mailing lists	0.2278	0.0199	0.9477
Internet-based campaign spot	0.6487	-0.0498	0.5767
Online chats	0.6639	-0.0587	0.5558
Blog	0.5746	-0.0049	0.6698
<i>Attracts media interest mainly by...</i>			
Delivering government funds to district	-0.3122	0.069	0.8978
Work in legislative committees	-0.0453	0.1108	0.9857
Speeches in the chamber	0.1231	0.1131	0.9721
Taking positions in controversial debates	0.2100	0.1196	0.9416

Note: Factor loadings > 0.25 and <-0.25 in bold type

For the entire sample, two factors were extracted based on the Eigenvalue criterion of 1.0. These two factors captured 79.01% of the total variance. The first factor (capturing 39.6% of the variance) could be termed ‘internet-based strategy’. It shows *positive loadings* of over .33 for a number of internet-based mediums of communicating with voters and *loads negatively*, firstly, on the use of regional TV and radio stations as the most important form of communication and, secondly, to a strategy highlighting the delivery of ‘pork ‘ to the district. The second factor accounts for 39.41% of the variance and could be characterized as ‘traditional media-based strategy’, which loads *highly and positively* on the use of regional television and, national television and radio, the regional press

and the national press as primary means of communication. The highest loading is for *national TV and radio* as well as the *national press*.

3.1 Traditional media-based strategy and Internet-based strategy: the German Bundestag

Disaggregating these findings by parliament reveals interesting variations between the legislatures. If an Eigenvalue criterion of 1.0 is applied, two factors are extracted for the German Bundestag, which account for 73.16% of the variance. These correspond largely to the picture for the pooled data, except that the *traditional media-based strategy* accounts for 48.9% of the variance, whereas *the internet-based strategy* is clearly secondary and captures approximately 24.26% of the variance (table 2).

The first factor, the “*traditional media-based strategy*”, loads *highly and positively* on the use of local (.75) and national (.83) TV/Radio, and on the local (.47) and national (.66) press as primary mediums of communication with voters. The second factor “*the Internet-based strategy*”, loads negatively as mediums of communicating with voters, and positively with loadings for a number of internet tools used in campaign, such as *personal websites* (.41), *Internet-based campaign spots* (.52), *on line chats* (.44), and *blogs* (.49).

Table 2: Factor Analysis of important channels of communication of Members of the German Bundestag (N=224)

Variable	Factor 1: Traditional media-based strategy	Factor 2: Internet-based strategy	Uniqueness
<i>Media used most frequently to contact voters:</i>			
Local TV and radio	0.7511	-0.0794	0.4296
National TV and radio	0.8374	-0.0034	0.2987
Local press	0.4720	-0.0017	0.7772
National press	0.6697	0.0799	0.5451
Internet	0.0110	-0.1258	0.9841
Posters	-0.0701	-0.0657	0.9908
<i>Use of internet tools in the last election campaign:</i>			
Personal website maintained by party	-0.2212	-0.2213	0.9021
Personal website maintained by own campaign team	-0.0409	0.4191	0.8226
Mailing lists	0.0292	0.2020	0.9583
Internet-based campaign spot	-0.0929	0.5269	0.7138
Online chats	-0.1046	0.4407	0.7948
Blog	-0.1228	0.4958	0.7391
<i>Attracts media interest mainly by ...</i>			
Delivering government funds to district	0.0187	-0.0070	0.9996
Work in legislative committees	0.0481	0.0029	0.9977
Speeches in the chamber	0.0143	0.0476	0.9975
Taking positions in controversial debates	0.1648	-0.0503	0.9703

Note: Factor loadings > 0.25 and <-0.25 in bold type

3.2 The pragmatic promotion of local interests as media strategy: the chamber of deputies

The case of the Chamber of Deputies is somewhat more complex. Three factors were extracted, accounting for 83.91% of the variance. The first factor, accounting for 30.33% of the variance, is similar to the first factor in the German Bundestag and characterizes *a traditional media-based strategy*. Interestingly, it also shows relatively high and positive factor loadings on *parliamentary speeches* as the most important mediums of *attracting media attention*. The second factor, accounting for 45.87% of the variance, seems puzzling. It loads *highly and negatively* on the use of the internet as important *channel for the MPs communication with voters* and, seemingly paradoxically, *positively* on the use of a personal website designed and maintained by the legislator's own campaign team, the use of mailing lists, own campaign spots accessible via the internet, on-line chats with voters and blogs.

There are also *negative loadings* for *speeches in parliament* and *taking positions on controversial topics*. It would seem that this strategy could be termed as one of an “*indirect internet-based strategy*”, which does not use the new web-based media as an important medium of communicating with voters, but still has an extensive internet presence – most likely to project a modern image or to communicate with persons in their own networks. It is also possible that this factor reveals an indirect media strategy.

The third factor, accounting for approximately 23.8% of the variance, could be termed as strategy of a ‘*pragmatic promoter of local interests*’. The highest positive factor loading is on the use of benefits delivered to the electoral district as the most important mediums of *attracting media attention* coupled with a high negative *loading on taking positions on controversial issues*. There are also relatively high positive factor loadings on the *use of local and regional TV*, radio stations and newspapers as well as the use of personal advertisements and – as the only internet-based channel of communication – a personal website maintained by the party.

Table 3: Factor Analysis of important channels of communication of Members of the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies (N=100)

Variable	Factor 1: Traditional media-based strategy	Factor 2: Indirect internet-based strategy	Factor 3: Pragmatic promoter of local interests	Uniqueness
<i>Media used most frequently to contact voters:</i>				
Local TV and radio	0.4578	-0.2280	0.3650	0.6052
National TV and radio	0.7992	0.0273	0.0824	0.3538
Local press	0.4094	-0.2161	0.4140	0.6143
National press	0.7805	0.1371	0.1006	0.3619
Internet	-0.0176	-0.5952	0.1784	0.6136
Posters	0.2681	0.0724	0.4802	0.6923
<i>Use of internet tools in the last election campaign:</i>				
Personal website maintained by party	0.0063	0.1462	0.3541	0.8532
Personal website maintained by own campaign team	0.0156	0.7305	-0.0208	0.4657
Mailing lists	-0.0914	0.3600	0.0300	0.8612
Internet-based campaign spot	0.0138	0.6283	0.1859	0.5704
Online chats	0.0465	0.3465	0.1187	0.8637
Blog	0.3092	0.3558	0.0484	0.7754
<i>Attracts media interest mainly by ...</i>				
Delivering government funds to district	-0.0438	-0.077	0.6874	0.5196
Work in legislative committees	0.2393	0.0263	-0.1424	0.9218
Speeches in the chamber	0.4165	-0.3692	-0.1978	0.6511
Taking positions in controversial debates	0.1931	-0.3002	-0.5776	0.539

Note: Factor loadings > 0.25 and <-0.25 in bold type.

4 Voting pattern and media visibility

In this section, an exploratory analysis on the correlation between choices of different media strategies and patterns of MPs' vote-concentration is conducted. We aim at testing the strength of this correlation. The first battery of questions from the questionnaire was picked, which offers four response categories: "not important", "less important", "important" and "very important". Respondents were asked to rate the importance of (i) local television and radio as mediums of communication, (ii) national television and radio, (iii) the local press, (iv) the national press, (v) the

internet and (vi) posters. The respondents differ each in terms of concentration of vote at federal and state levels.

4.1 Methodology

In order to measure MPs' voting patterns in Brazil, the database of the *Tribunal Superior Eleitoral* (TSE) was used to create a *vote concentration index* (c) of each individual MP elected in 2010 to the Chamber of Deputies in Brazil, who responded to our survey and interviews ($N = 100$). The following equation was used to create the index: $c = (x/y).100$, where x is the number of nominal votes obtained by a MP in the first 10 municipalities, and y is the sum of valid votes in the first 10 municipalities (TSE, 2010). In the case of the Bundestag, we used the databank of the *Bundeswahlleiter* (BUNDESWAHLLEITER, 2013) and the following equation: $c = x / (x + y' - z)$, where x is the number of first vote (*Erststimmen*) in the district (*Stimmkreis*), and y is the number of the second vote (*Zweitstimmen*) on the party's list (*Wahlkreisliste*), and z the number of vote abstention in the district. The following criteria were adopted:

- *Low vote concentration*: less than or equal to 39 % of the votes in the 10 first districts.
- *Medium vote concentration*: between 40% and 64% of the votes in the 10 first districts.
- *High vote concentration*: equal to or greater than 65 % of the votes in the 10 first districts.²

In order to investigate a possible causal relationship between the main variables (media type/vote concentration), an econometric model was developed based on linear regressions using *Ordered Logit* regression analysis, in which the dependent variable is the preference on the use of media and the independent variable is the concentration of votes. The reason behind choosing a Logit model is that the dependent variable in this model is the MPs' media choice, which is an ordered/ranked variable. The following equation was applied:

$$M_{ij} = \alpha + \beta C_j + \epsilon$$

Here M is the variable called *Media* (degree of use of a particular media) and it is a ranked variable, which can take values either: 1 = not important, 2 = less important, 3= important and 4= very important. C represents the concentration of vote and it is a categorical variable too. C can take three values 1 = low, 2 = medium, and 3 = high. However, in this analysis, because of the small sample size, the medium and high concentration have been merged into one. In this model, C is a variable that can take two values: 1 = low or 2 = high. *Low concentration* was taken as our reference category. Here α is the intercept parameter and β is the slope parameter. ϵ denotes the random error which is normally distributed. In this model 'i' denotes the type of media viz. T.V and Radio (local), T.V. and Radio (national), print media (local), print media (national), Internet, and poster. 'J' denotes the four layers of the political institutions in Brazil and Germany.

² These criteria draw upon the empirical studies of Barry Ames (2001), Scott Mainwaring (1999) and Nelson Rojas de Carvalho (2003).

4.2 Logit analysis for the Bundestag

Table 4 reports the results of the ordered logit regression analysis for each of the six media types for each category, and presents the marginal effects after logit.

Table 4: Marginal effect after logit for T.V and Radio (local): The German Bundestag (N=224)

Category	Coefficient	Std. Error	Z	P> Z	95% C.I.	X
Not important	0.0091209	0.04303	0.21	0.832	-.075218 .09346	0.373333
Less important	0.0040101	0.01865	0.22	0.83	-.032542 .040562	0.373333
Important	-0.0075303	0.03549	-0.21	0.832	-.077086 .062025	0.373333
Very important	-0.0056007	0.02618	-0.21	0.831	-.05692 .045719	0.373333

The regression estimates shows a *negative association* between T.V and Radio (local) and concentration of vote. The coefficients (table 4) reveal that the higher the concentration of vote, the lesser is the probability of the respondent to give importance to this type of media. In contrast, table 5 reports a *positive correlation* between TV and Radio (national) and concentration of votes.

Table 5: Marginal effect after logit for T.V and Radio (National): The German Bundestag (N=224).

Category	Coefficient	Std. Error	Z	P> Z	95% C.I.	X
Not important	-.0645917	.06225	-1.04	0.299	-.186604 .057421	.373333
Less important	.0149505	.01419	1.05	0.292	-.012855 .042756	.373333
Important	.0241102	.02372	1.02	0.309	-.02237 .070591	.373333
Very important	.025531	.02566	0.99	0.320	-.024765 .075827	.373333

Tables 6 and 7 suggest a *positive correlation with concentration of vote* for local and national print media. A respondent with high concentration of votes has, on average, higher chance of being in category 4 (very important) than a respondent with low concentration of votes.

Table 6: Marginal effect after logit for print media (local): The German Bundestag (N=224)

Category	Coefficient	Std. Error	Z	P> Z	95% C.I.	X
Not important	-.0015257	.00186	-0.82	0.411	-.005166 .002115	.373333
Less important	-.0117976	.00925	-1.28	0.202	-.029919 .006324	.373333
Important	-.0774667	.05801	-1.34	0.182	-.19116 .036226	.373333
Very important	.0907899	.06728	1.35	0.177	-.041086 .222665	.373333

Table 7: Marginal effect after logit for print media (national): The German Bundestag (N=224)

Category	Coefficient	Std. Error	Z	P> Z	95% C.I.	X
Not important	-.0200046	.03544	-0.56	0.572	-.089475 .049466	.373333
Less important	-.0140599	.02601	-0.54	0.589	-.06503 .036911	.373333
Important	.0204114	.03651	0.56	0.576	-.051149 .091972	.373333
Very important	.0136531	.02488	0.55	0.583	-.035115 .062422	.373333

Table 8 indicates a *negative correlation for the usage of Internet*: a respondent with high concentration of vote has, on average, lesser chance of giving importance to Internet compared to someone with low concentration of vote. In contrast, table 9 shows a *positive correlation for the use of posters*: there is 11% of chance for a respondent with high concentration of votes to give more importance to posts compared to a respondent with less concentration of vote.

Table 8: Marginal effect after logit for Internet: The German Bundestag (N=224)

Category	Coefficient	Std. Error	Z	P> Z	95% C.I.	X
Not important	.016311	.01261	1.29	0.196	-.008398 .04102	.373333
Less important	.0573753	.04036	1.42	0.155	-.021737 .136488	.373333
Important	-.0030034	.00934	-0.32	0.748	-.0213 .015293	.373333
Very important	-.070683	.0478	-1.48	0.139	-.164377 .023011	.373333

Table 9: Marginal effect after logit for Poster: The German Bundestag (N=224)

Category	Coefficient	Std. Error	Z	P> Z	95% C.I.	X
Not important	-.0359746	.01717	-2.10	0.036	-.069617 -.002332	.373333
Less important	-.0705302	.03252	-2.17	0.030	-.13426 -.006801	.373333
Important	-.0129155	.01435	-0.90	0.368	-.041037 .015206	.373333
Very important	.1194203	.05566	2.15	0.032	.010328 .228513	.373333

Table 10 reports a negative association between concentration of vote and preference given to mayors and city counselors. As can be seen from the last column of the table, if the person has a high concentration of vote then he is 37.6% less likely to give importance to the support of mayor and councilors compared to a person with lower concentration of vote. The coefficients in Table 11 also suggest a negative association between concentration of vote and preference given to media visibility. However, here also there are very high P values, which imply a rather weak and negligible association between the variables.

Table 10: Marginal effect after Logit regression for support of Mayors: The Chamber of Deputies (N=100)

Category	Coefficient	Std. Error	Z	P> Z	95% C.I.	X
Not important	.1147712	.03659	3.14	0.002	.043055 .186488	.85
Less important	.1563094	.04921	3.18	0.001	.059867 .252752	.85
Important	.1051845	.04586	2.29	0.022	.015307 .195062	.85
Very important	-.3762651	.10145	-3.71	0.000	-.575098 -.177433	.85

Table 11: Marginal effect after Logit regression for media visibility: Chamber of Deputies (N=100)

Category	Coefficient	Std. Error	Z	P> Z	98% C.I.	X
Not important	.0195811	.04108	0.48	0.634	-.060928 .10009	.85
Less important	.0333414	.07429	0.45	0.654	-.112262 .178945	.85
Important	-.0183859	.03488	-0.53	0.598	-.086753 .049981	.85
Very important	-.0345366	.08103	-0.43	0.670	-.193355 .124282	.85

To sum up, we have found that the test of the correlation between concentration of votes and the dependent variable, “support of mayors/city counselors” has shown a positive probability of 17.5% among Bundestag-elected MPs, and only 3.8% for the variable “media visibility”. These findings suggest that (i) surveyed German MPs elected for the Bundestag with high concentration of votes is highly likely to give more preference to the support of mayors and city counselor as a factor of electoral success than to media visibility; (ii) these MPs are more akin to “local promoter of interests” than to “policy advocates”. By contrast, a negative association of -37.6% was found between concentration of vote and preference given to mayors and city counselors among surveyed Brazilian MPs.

5 German cultural and political environments

These findings should be matched against the overall picture of the present development of the German party system, which reveals declining voter participation, an age-specific varying decrease of interest in politics, a change in information behavior, especially among the younger generation, and an increasing distrust of the parties and their representatives. While among the older age group, over 50, hardly any change can be detected in self-confessed political interest, the decrease of interest among the under 40 group and especially among those under 30 is highly visible. Although voter participation at Bundestag elections is still at the international average level (69%), it has fallen dramatically at the state elections. The overrepresentation of the youngest among nonvoters has never been as large as it is now. Fewer than 30% of the 18 - to 30-year-olds describe themselves as being politically interested or very interested. This in spite of the increase in education, which in the meantime has led to almost 40% with a high school diploma or university entrance qualification, while it is less than 20% with the 60-year-olds (Gles, 2009).

The decrease in voter participation is not an isolate event. There has been a gradual and persistent shrinkage of the parties' membership. Since 1990, the SPD has lost a third of its members. The CDU has lost 200,000 members since the reunification. With the exception of the Greens and the Left party, this trend is valid for all parties. Only the CSU has managed to remain relatively constant compared to the reunification year (Niedermayer, 2008). During the same period, there was a downward trend in the number of people with long-term fixed associations with a party. In 1980, four out five on the electoral register indicated a party identification. In 2005 it was only two out of three, a loss of 13%. About one third of the voters change parties from one election to another (Schoen, 2000).

According to Falter (2010), the decrease in political interest over the generations relates to a change in information behavior. Daily and weekly newspapers and the information programs of public television and public radio stations are hardly used by the generation under 30. There is a great difference in the television habits of the generations. The first and the second German public television networks (*Erstes and Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen*) and the regional channels of public television (*Dritte Programme*), with their comparatively high percentage of political programs, are watched by an audience that on average is over 50, but are scarcely watched by anyone under 30 years old. The younger and middle generations, especially the youngest viewers and listeners, rely almost entirely on private stations, which on average have very little political coverage. Entertainment has a higher subjective value than information, and the news without the human touch is barely followed. The political apathy is reinforced by media-compatible, candidate-centered and program-diffuse election campaigning. The parties make populist promises and thereby produce unavoidable voter disappointment.

The author also points to the turning away of many people from collective forms of organization and the concomitant turning toward stronger private, sporadic, and individual-structured participation forms as possible causes of these tendencies. Large organizations, such as trade unions and church affiliation have dramatically decreased. The rate of unionization in Germany has declined from 34.4% in 1991 to 23.3% in 2002. The share of the Christian denominations (Catholic and Protestant) was reduced nationwide from 72.3% in 1990 to 62.6 % in 2004.

For the first time in History, polls in the Federal Republic showed slightly more Roman Catholics than Protestants church members. These tendencies are important because the unions and the churches, especially the Catholic Church, have played an important role in structuring the German party system. The unions, closely associated with the SPD, provided a natural recruiting base for the SPD and served as transmission belts bringing social democratic beliefs into the factories. For decades, both Christian denominations formed the roots of the CDU and CSU. As these organizations shrink, so does voter support for both large parties.

The processes of Europeanization and globalization, the expansion of an increasing borderless world, finance capital and large companies, including the communication branches, are no longer taxable to the same extent as before. They have become largely free of party politically motivated actions. Politics now lacks the instruments of control, since national state instruments are becoming insufficient and transnational and supranational instruments have not yet been adequately developed. Doubt of the party competence to find solutions grow and with it a diffuse systemic criticism.

6 Brazilian cultural and political environments

In sharp contrast with Germany, Brazil is a country of great magnitude districts and an open-list system, which make the community lose its privileged position occupied in systems of small-magnitude districts.³ Brazil is also the only country in the world that, besides combining proportionality, a multiparty system, and an “imperial” presidential system, organizes the Executive based in large coalitions. No other democracy in the world grants politicians so much autonomy vis-à-vis their parties. The legislation reinforces the individualistic behavior of politicians and contributes to undermining the efforts to build solid political parties. It also tolerates extremely low degrees of party loyalty and discipline with the exception of the parties on the left side of the ideological spectrum

In terms of MPs’ media strategy, the political marketing in Brazil seems to shine on TV and Internet, but the reality is that 90% of the candidates for the Chamber of Deputies do campaign without TV, and there is still no clear indication of the relevance of cyber-campaigns in the political arena. Like their German counterparts, the candidates for proportional elections in Brazil still rely heavily on “pre-television” strategies, such as door-to-door campaigns, meetings in clubs and

³ According to Douglas Rae (1967), representative systems can vary in three independent ways. The first variable is the *magnitude of the districts* (M), i.e., the amount of seats the electoral law assigns to each constituency. The constituencies are single-member (SMD) when there is only one vacancy in dispute, and multimember (MMD) when the number of seats are equal or superior to two per district. In majoritarian representation --“First-past-the-post” (FPTP), predominate single-member districts. Proportional representation (PR) are associated with multi-member districts. The second variable is the *structure of the vote*, which determines the voters’ degree of freedom in relation to the effective number of electoral candidates (ENEC) and the effective number of electoral parties (ENEP) in an election. The vote can be *categorical* when the elector can only choose a single candidate or party among all contenders. The *ordinal* vote gives the elector the opportunity to rank the various competitors according their preferences. The third variable is the *electoral formula*, which derives directly from the principle of representation and allows differentiate winners from losers in an election. The three main types of electoral formulas are the *plurality*, the *absolute majority*, both pertaining to the *majority principle of representation*, and the *proportional representation*. The combination of these three variables generates the various electoral systems.

associations, and a large usage of political posters. For most of them, the format of HGPE airtime,⁴ which reaches an undifferentiated public, adds little to campaigns focused on specific social groups, defined by corporate bonding and district spatial characteristics.

This is due to the Brazilian electoral system of open-list, proportional representation that heavily customizes the dispute. Each candidate simultaneously competes against his party or coalition fellow, and depends on their votes to achieve the electoral coefficient. The internal competition normally prevents a unified campaign strategy. Given the differences in dynamics between the majoritarian and proportional campaigns, the impact of the latter on TV and radio (HGPE) is much lower if compared to the former. With a relatively small number of candidates, the majority campaigns attract reasonable visibility in the media. In the proportional campaigns, with hundreds of candidates,⁵ the HGPE political advertisement often takes the form of a succession of small "clips", i.e., a parade of anonymous faces announcing their names, candidacy number, and brief exposition of proposals (Albuquerque, 1996, 2005, 2009).

Most candidates need to rely on their creativity to figure out efficient ways to reach voters and make a successful campaign, even without any electronic medium, through the sounds, colors, images and words that make up the peculiar scenario widely known by the people in inland towns of Brazil. This is the "election time", a "kairotic time, a point in time filled with significance, charged with a means derived from its relation to the end" (Alexander, 2010, p. 17). A "time of promises", a period of face-to-face politics and "dreams of collective life", characterized by the presence of visual and discursive symbols distributed over a territory, comparable only to other religious and festive rituals (Barreira, 1998, 2006).

7 Conclusion

Most fundamentally, this paper questioned whether media visibility is equally important for all kinds of electoral careers. Sample of 324 observations with MPs in Brazil and Germany was used to test the hypotheses. The research question assumed that individual candidates for political leadership positions such as mayoral, gubernatorial or presidential candidates experience strong and growing individual media scrutiny. Yet, despite all the advantage of the media, do all candidates for seats in elected assemblies (city councilors, state legislators, Congressmen) give equal importance and emphasis in their campaign to media visibility and public image building?

The hypotheses draw upon two variables: (a) the electoral formula and (b) the voting concentration pattern. On the one hand, it is assumed that the proportional representation (PR) coupled with open list of candidates reinforces personal vote seeking strategies. On the other, the "horizontal vector" projects into space the dimension of vote concentration. Differences in MPs' media strategies according to incentives emanating from a territorial basis of representation were

⁴HGPE stands for "Horário Gratuito de Propaganda Eleitoral" (Free Time for Political Advertising). According to the Party Law (No. 9.096/1995), all radio and television stations operating in the VHF and UHF channels and paid TV under the responsibility of municipalities are required to transmit the party and coalitions advertising spots. Free two-hour airtime (one hour at lunch and one hour at dinner) runs for 45 days until three days before the first round of the election and two days before the second round.

⁵ In the 2010-elections, there were 4878 candidates for federal deputy in all states. This represents a competition of 9.5 candidates per seat in the House of Representatives, considering the country as a whole and not taking into account differences in the size of electoral districts (TSE, 2010).

expected, which may introduce particularistic and parochial concerns into the policy-making and credit-claiming processes.

Indeed, the effects of electoral systems occur at the district level. This means that electoral laws relate directly to the district level and not to the macro level of the political system. Thus, geographically limited areas represent (a) the destination point of the electoral connection, (b) the arena where political competitions take place and MPs draw votes or seek coalitions. It is assumed that candidates choose different strategies of concentration or dispersion of its resources by territory. The decision of where to focus the campaign on a few or many municipalities/districts is generally associated with the political profile and the availability of each MP's resources. Candidates with strong ties to a particular constituency tend to focus their campaign on a limited geographical area. Leadership with broader political ties, not geographically concentrated, may disperse their campaign resources along various constituencies.

The analysis presented in this paper is obviously limited by its exploratory nature, scope, and design. The aim of this investigation was not to *explain*, but rather to *describe* a specific population, as it exists at one point in time. The focus was on the data collected in our field research, and the relationships between some variables were investigated. In this specific case, how the preferences of surveyed MPs in Brazil and Germany differ vis-à-vis the various types of media strategies and electoral connections.

The research's design basically called for a postal, elite, self-administered, census survey, one which gathers information on all elements of the target population, i.e., the group of people to whom the survey intends to generalize. Yet, the analysis and conclusions presented here should not be extrapolated beyond the group of interviewees. Thus, it could be compared to a "snapshot" (MPs' responses) of a "moving target" (media strategies). The analysis of longer electoral periods and bigger dataset would allow for more advanced techniques of statistical analysis and robust inferences.

From what could be observed in the previous analysis, it can be said that despite the stark differences in the media and political systems in Brazil and Germany, online politics is found to offer new opportunities for MPs to compensate for eventual offline disadvantages, such as lack of publicity and fewer financial and human resources. Yet, the traditional print and broadcasting mass media still appear more important for their election/re-election strategies as well as for keeping in contact with voters.

These findings connote that the surveyed Brazilian and German MPs tend to use the Internet as a communication tool that complements, but in no case replaces the off-line activities, especially the traditional voter contact and articulation of canvassers, as well as the use of print and broadcasting media. The so-called "Obama effect" appears to be a distant parameter, a far-away horizon rather than a political reality that is checking and spreading in countries with different political and socio-institutional contexts. Far from replacing the "old" media, the Internet seems to consolidate them in a relation of complementarity, in which the logics of various technological and social media systems mix to form a *hybrid media system*. This may suggest that the debate on political communication should get over the split that separates "traditional" and "new" media systems, and move on to map how these systems interact.

The multilevel character of the election campaigns in Brazil and in Germany accounted for surprising differences in MPs' media strategies. In Germany, top candidates for the federal level

encompass political celebrities, whose main communication strategy relies on media, massive political advertisements, and large-scale rallies. Yet, what was found in the field research was a peculiar trend among surveyed MPs and candidates to rely more on the support of local politicians than on media coverage for their electoral success. These findings are in line with the literature, which shows that incumbents in Germany actively cultivate personal vote through constituency service or by bringing government-funded projects to the district (Bawn, 1999).

The direct observation during the peak months of the German federal and state elections of 2013 revealed that both list and district candidates ran their campaigns in small constituencies, where they usually meet potential voters face-to-face on market squares and *Bier Garten*. Alternatively, they simply knock on front doors. By contrast, Brazilian MPs rely much more on media visibility than on the support of local politicians.

These findings suggest different ways of cultivating personal reputation, and justify our research question as to whether all candidates for seats in elected assemblies (city councilors, state legislators, Congressmen), the so-called *backbenchers*, give equal importance and emphasis in their campaign strategies to media visibility and public image building. The implication that there might be different kinds of electoral connections, not necessarily dependent on mass media, which may also account for the electoral success of *backbenchers* in Brazil and Germany, found confirmation in our research. It could be said, then, that media presence may be crucial to achieving electoral success depending on the incentives emanating from the electoral system, the level of candidacy, and the nation's political culture. Yet, the multifaceted aspects of the electoral connections may compensate for poor media coverage, and crown with success the electoral careers of candidates to proportional seats in Brazil and Germany.

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Media Visibility: Game-Changer or Alternative? Comparative Research between MPs in Brazil and Germany

Abstract. This paper draws upon a field research conducted with Brazilian and German members of the Federal Parliaments (MPs). It aims to compare communication strategies and electoral connections in both countries. Methodology: The research design drew upon an elite survey sample (N=324) to provide a sufficient number of respondents for analysis. Results: The research found two basic kinds of politicians: (i) MPs who use national and regional media to communicate with voters, work in committees, deliver speeches at the House's floor, but whose activities are not primarily related to district interests. (ii) MPs who heavily use the local broadcasting and print media, and whose activities are primarily focused on delivering services and pork to constituencies. For both types, the Internet and media visibility are not perceived as a "game-changer". Conclusion: As an instrument of political communication the Internet and social media emerged not as a globalizing force, but as a tool used and adapted to local political contexts.

Key-words: Electoral careers, media visibility, comparative politics, electoral system.

Visibilidade Midiática: Mudança no Jogo ou Alternativa? Pesquisa Comparativa entre os Parlamentares do Brasil e da Alemanha

Resumo: Este artigo se baseia em uma pesquisa de campo realizada com deputados brasileiros e alemães (MPs). O paper visa comparar estratégias de comunicação e conexões eleitorais em ambos os países. Metodologia: O projeto utilizou uma amostra (N= 324) suficiente de participantes para análise. Resultados: A pesquisa encontrou dois tipos básicos de políticos: (i) deputados que utilizam meios de comunicação nacionais e regionais para se comunicar com os eleitores, que trabalham em comissões, e fazem discursos em plenário, mas cujas atividades não estão relacionadas principalmente aos interesses específicos de seus distritos. (ii) Deputados que usam pesadamente os meios de radiodifusão e de imprensa locais, cujas atividades estão focadas principalmente na prestação de serviços e benefícios seus círculos eleitorais. Para ambos os tipos, a Internet e visibilidade midiática não foram percebidas como um dos fatores decisivos. Conclusão: Como instrumento de comunicação política, a Internet e as redes sociais não emergiram como forças globais, mas como ferramentas utilizadas e adaptadas a contextos políticos locais.

Palavras-chave: Carreiras eleitorais, visibilidade midiática, política comparativa, sistema eleitoral.