“People-Powered Politics:” How the New Media affects Political Change

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Introduction

The world is becoming more reliant on technology. Computers can be found in almost every household. Anybody who has a computer can do almost anything online from buying household items to balancing check accounts. The internet has also become a place where people can interact with one another through social networks like Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, and YouTube. Features of these social networks include sharing photos, videos, and thoughts to the internet world. Recently social networks have been used to invoke political change. This research project looks deeper into how the new media plays a role in politics, particularly presidential campaigns and government uprisings. By specifically examining how new media was used in the 2010 Colombian presidential campaign of Antanas Mockus in comparison with the revolutions in the Arab spring, it will be easier to understand how the new media can be used to someone’s advantage. This research project will look at how the new media was used and how effective it can be in situations that involve political change.

What is New Media?
Three Different Types of Media

The media is a way to get information out to many different people. When media is a topic of discussion most people think of the mass media, which includes television, news, magazines, etc. There are three different types of media or mediums used to convey information to people: interpersonal media, mass media, and the new media. The first medium, interpersonal media, deals with the conversation and exchanging of information through two people. As the author of “What is New Media?” Vin Crosbie (2002) points out interpersonal media can include “the postal letter, telephone call, and electronic mail (Crosbie 2002).” Mass media is the second medium of communication. This type of media conveys information to a group of people, not just one person. Information is delivered by one person through speeches, stories, newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and bulletin boards just to name a few (Crosbie 2002). The newest form of media is the new media, which unlike the other two mediums originated through technology and not through
people. In this particular medium the information is coming from many different people and can be accessed by many people. New media includes news and information seen on personalized websites, and social networks like MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. This new media is also known as social media. Each type of media has its advantages and disadvantages regarding what and how the messages are conveyed to an audience and how that audience can respond.

Interpersonal media is different from the others because it can be personalized to fit both parties’ interests and needs (Crosbie 2002). Each person can take control of the conversation and can explain their opinions to one another. This is different from mass media because instead of both people having an equal amount of control over the content, only one person has control over what is being said. When watching the news or listening to the radio the viewer cannot control nor have an input in on what the broadcaster is saying. This may be somewhat of a disadvantage when looking at the viewpoint of a single viewer but the advantage about this type of media is that any news or information is getting to a larger and wider variety of audiences. Crosbie (2002) explains this further in his article, stating “the Mass Medium can simultaneously deliver messages to an infinite number of people but its message cannot be individualized for each recipient (Crosbie 2002).” Crosbie (2002) found that the amazing thing about the new media is that it shares the advantages of both interpersonal and mass media but does not share the same disadvantages. Information through this medium can be sent out to a large audience and the audience has the opportunity to share ideas and the people who are involved get to respond to the ideas or messages.

Social Networks

As stated before, the new media has now been coined as social media. Popular social networks such as, Myspace, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are used as avenues to share all types of ideas, information, and opinions. These social networks allow people to share their personal lives with others and those people can leave comments as well as share their ideas. Phillip N. Howard and Malcolm R. Parks (2012) define social media in somewhat of a different way than Vin Crosbie, in their article, “Social Media and Political Change: Capacity, Constraint, and Consequence”. The authors define social media in three different parts,

“social media may be defined in three parts, consisting of (a) the information infrastructure and tools used to produce and distribute content; (b) the content that takes the digital form of personal messages, news, ideas, and cultural products; and (c) the people, organizations, and industries that produce and consume digital content (Howard and Parks 2012, 362).”

These three sections involve the information, the way the information is presented, and the people who make and use the digital content. Howard and Parks (2012) also makes it clear that social media deals with social matters no matter what the
exact tool is that it is displayed on. They state, “But social media are inherently social; meaning that beyond a particular proprietary tool, there is very social content (Howard and Parks 2012, 362).” Just as Vin Crosbie made it clear in his article that the tools to display the information do not define the type of medium but they are the “vehicles [Facebook, Twitter, YouTube etc.] within a medium (Crosbie 2002).” Social networks have been mentioned plenty of times in the paper, but what exactly are social networks like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

Social networking sites have become very popular with the birth of chat rooms, Myspace, and Facebook. Larry Richman (2008) defines social networking sites in his article, “What are Social Networks?”. He states, “Social networking sites provide the ability to create a personal profile and various ways to interact with other people, such as messaging, e-mail, video, text or voice chat, file sharing, blogging, and discussion groups (Richman 2008).” The most popular social networking sites on the Web are Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Facebook, to date, is the most popular site out of the three sites. There are approximately 845 million monthly users according to the Facebook Newsroom (Facebook, 2012). Facebook is offered in 70 different languages and 80% of the monthly users live outside of the United States and Canada (Facebook 2012). Facebook is a site where anyone with an email address can make their own personal page listing that individual’s interests, place of work, family members, and friends. Facebook also has a feature that allows its users to make different group pages that involve certain issues like breast cancer and education. These group pages allow for other Facebookers to join groups that interest them and to receive information about the topic of that particular group. The website also has a “What’s on your mind?” space where the user can share with friends anything going on in his/her life. The like feature on Facebook is used often to show that someone likes another person’s status, group page, picture, video, comment, etc.

Twitter is another social networking website that was reported to have 200 million users in 2011 (Bennett 2011). Twitter is in 20 different languages and is still growing (Bennett 2011). Twitter is different from Facebook in that it is more focused around statuses that people write also called tweets. Users can write whatever is on their mind as many times as they want in a 140 characters or less. Twitter users can use these tweets to upload pictures and videos as well. A feature that is different from Facebook is the use of trending topics these are topics that begin with a hash tag. Anybody can start the trending topics and if people show interest to the topic they may say whatever they like about it by just adding the hash tag symbol and the name. Another feature that Twitter has is called retweeting; this is when someone quotes someone else’s tweet and displays this tweet on his/her page. When someone does this they either agree with what that person is stating or want to spread information to their followers on twitter. Retweeting is similar to Facebook’s like feature it basically lets others know what someone’s interests are or where that person stands on certain issues. Many people use Twitter to see what
is on the mind of famous music stars, actors, and athletes. A similarity between Facebook and Twitter is that both websites are also places where users can network with bosses of top companies.

The third social networking website is YouTube. YouTube is a very different website from Facebook and Twitter; it is a website where videos are the main focus. According to Julia Boorstin (2010), CNBC correspondent, in 2010 YouTube “streams over 2 billion videos each day and 24 hours of video are uploaded to the site every minute (Boorstin 2010).” YouTube can be translated into 51 languages and is centered in 22 countries (siteimpulse 2010). Although a person does not have to have an account with YouTube in order to watch the videos an individual can create an account. By creating an account a person can upload as many videos as he/she wants to his/her page. A person can also comment on other user’s videos as well. People also can get paid depending on how many views their video gets. Usually these are people that have their own page and have a multiple number of subscribers. Subscribers are somewhat similar to followers on twitter these people subscribe to a certain page in to make it easier to see what the videos that the page owner uploads. This is only a small synopsis of what Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube has to offer. All of these social networks are growing rapidly by the year and changing how individuals communicate with one another.

To sum everything up social media is a part of new media and the vehicles used in new media to get information to the world usually involve the internet. The great thing about new media is that the information being displayed can be seen by many and also many people can respond. There is a reciprocal relationship between the people producing the news or information and the people viewing it. This means that the people viewing the information can also produce different and new information, as result changing roles. This relationship can be seen very clear on social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. The ideas and conversations that are produced on these networks deal with social matters which are a key part to social media. With the development of new technology and social networking sites the new media has been used in ways other than catching up with old classmates and seeing what the superstars are up to. Recently these networks have been the focal point of invoking social and political change. Examples of this can be seen through campaigns like Occupy Wall Street, Stop Kony Movement, the Arab Spring, and in presidential campaigns.

Recent Examples

Two examples of new media being used to invoke social and political change are Occupy Wall Street and Stop Kony. Occupy Wall Street began September 17, 2011 in New York City, the purpose of the movement was to protest the corruption and political involvement of big corporations on the government as well as the social and economic inequality in the United States. Facebook was a big contributor to the growth of Occupy Wall Street throughout the United States. Neal Caren and Sarah Gaby (2011) explain how Facebook played an active role in Oc-
ocup Wall Street in their paper, “Occupy Online: Facebook and the Spread of Occupy Wall Street.” In Caren and Gaby’s research they discovered more than 400 Facebook pages related to different occupy mobilizations around the United States (Caren and Gaby 2011). The authors reported that 43 of the 50 largest Facebook pages are about local occupations. Also more than 40,000 users have posted over 200,000 comments on the largest of the occupation pages, which is the Occupy Wall Street page (Caren and Gaby 2011). There was not much activity on Facebook in the beginning of the protest but as news media attention and other groups advocating for local participation such as, Occupy Together and Occupy Colleges, grew so did the activity on Facebook. The growth helped people to start their own occupation protests in their community. The activity on Facebook was not just a onetime thing, Caren and Gaby reported a total of 153,056 active users on occupation related Facebook pages. Caren and Gaby found that out of the 153,056 active users, “55,150 individuals active on Occupy Wall Street related pages; 23,641 on national pages; 5,989 on state or regional pages, and 99,664 on local pages (Caren and Gaby 2011).”

With the use of Facebook and other websites like Occupy Colleges local protest began to grow within the United States. Facebook allowed for people interested in Occupy Wall Street to communicate and interact with one another on a local level.

“Facebook pages may play less of a role as the movement develops its own online and offline structures, but it has been a mechanism for a large number of people to encounter and interact with other potential supporters in a familiar setting (Caren and Gaby 2011).”

A more recent example of new media being used to get support from the public is the Stop Kony 2012 movement. This movement began through the Invisible Children organization and started off as a simple 30 minute video posted on YouTube about a leader of a rebel group in Africa, Joseph Kony. The 30 minute video informed the public about Joseph Kony and how he forces children to kill their parents and become soldiers in the Lord’s Resistance Army (L.R.A.). The video also asks people to donate money, write to political leaders about the issue, and share the video on their social network pages. All of this is a movement to help find Kony and charge him for his criminal acts in the International Criminal Court. This particular video became viral, “only four days after being posted on YouTube, the video had already been viewed over 60 million times and has received 500,000 comments (Kao 2012).” This does not include how many times it was shared on Facebook or Twitter. These two cases are just examples of how fast information spreads through these particular social networks. The new media is a way to share facts, news, and opinions with a wide variety of people. The examples show that new media can be very beneficial to individuals trying to reach out to the public whether it involves international or local political affairs, but how beneficial is it when trying to win a presidential campaign or overthrowing the government. The rest of this paper will examine the effects of new media in the Colombian presidential campaign of Antanas Mockus in 2010 and the Arab Spring of 2011.
2010 Colombian Presidential Campaign  
The Use of New Media

A pivotal part of Antanas Mockus’ 2010 presidential campaign was the use of social networks and the new media. The most interesting component about the use of these social networks is that most of the campaigning was done by citizens who supported Antanas Mockus. Mockus’ campaign focused on encouraging and maintaining morality in the government. Colombia is no stranger to corruption in the government, the former president Alvaro Uribe had recently been involved in scandals during the time of the upcoming election. The citizens of Colombia had been faced with violent crimes and seemed to be growing tired of the corruption and violence. Antanas Mockus realized this and understood how the citizens felt, especially since he too lost a close friend to violence. Charles Lemos (2010) quoted one of the Green Party’s slogans regarding corruption and violence in his article “A Green Tsunami Gathers Steam in Colombia.” He wrote, “Our message is simple: every life is sacred, every peso in the public treasury is sacred.” The Green Party actually turned down 4,500 million pesos (341.46 million U.S. dollars) that is given to candidates in order to campaign (Lemos 2010). This move showed the citizens of Colombia that both the president and vice presidential candidates were serious about stopping financial corruption. It is almost impossible to run in a presidential campaign without any money but Antanas Mockus found the best tool to use: the new media.

The odds were somewhat stacked against Antanas Mockus, he was running under a fairly new political party, the Green Party, which originated in October of 2009 and his top contender Juan Manuel Santos was extremely popular in the political sphere. The use of the new media seemed to help switch the odds around. The new media and social networks seemed to help Mockus gain popularity in such a short amount of time. Mockus first created an official website to help with marketing. On this website there are links to his Facebook and Twitter as well as links to make donations. The website also updated supporters on upcoming news and events happening in the campaign. The famous slogan, “I’m voting for Antanas, ask me why” appeared on his official website, Facebook, Twitter, and the blog Yo Voto por Antanas. This slogan encouraged his supporters to convert their friends and invite them to flash mobs and rallies (Lemos 2010). Mockus’ Twitter page had 11,896 followers in March and by May his followers grew to 37,162 (Lemos 2010 and Rauline 2010). The trending topics, #MockusPresidente and #elecciones2010 were created for people to talk about the upcoming Colombian election. The Green Party’s first official Facebook page, Partido Verde, posted daily alerts to its fans telling them to inform ten people without internet about Mockus’ campaign. This page was created around March and started with 30,000 fans and quickly grew to 320,000 fans in just one month (Lemos 2010). On top of the increasing number of fans there were also an increasing number of other Facebook groups that emerged in support of Antanas Mockus and his presidential campaign. One of the most fa-
mous Facebook groups was Creativos Con Antanas Mockus (Creatives with Antanas Mockus) which was known for its creative and effective campaign videos. Here’s an example of one of the videos posted online: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-pEJPtZLLU&feature=player_embedded. In the video it shows a plethora of campaign posters created by supporters of Mockus. The caption underneath the video reads, “A sample of the talent and commitment of who we support Antanas Mockus (YouTube 2012)!!!” These posters can be found all over the internet, so much so that the Mockus campaign decided to drop its ad agency and only use posters made by volunteers (Lemos 2010). Partido Verde de Colombia uses YouTube to post official party videos and campaign commercials. Citizens also used YouTube to post personal videos of their own creative commercials and recordings of flash mobs. Here is an example of a flash mob held in Bogota in May: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7xa1SE0Qaw&feature=player_embedded.

It is amazing how citizens who supported Anatanas Mockus came together and basically ran his campaign for him. Lemos (2010) stated this in his article, “In Colombia, An Unmistakable Green Trend.” He states, “There’s little doubt that the Mockus candidacy has caught a spark but one of the more interesting aspects of the campaign is the unbelievable amount of campaign materials being produced by volunteers (Lemos 2010).” As seen above these materials included everything; posters, campaign videos, organization of flash mobs, political rallies, etc. Many people have concluded that Facebook was probably the most important social networking site to Antanas Mockus’ campaign. Lemos (2010) states, “… Facebook has allowed half a million Colombians to connect and run an intense grass roots campaign.” The citizens caught on very easily to the perks of new media and social networks. Lemos (2010) quotes William Delgado, a Facebook user who posted a comment on Antanas Mockus’ page, he wrote, “No one could have imagined that society and the digital economy could have flatten conventional political organization. Thank you Facebook (Lemos 2010)” This is exactly what Mockus’ campaign was doing compared to other candidates. Even though he was not the only one to use new media in the campaign, he was the first to introduce it into Colombian’s presidential campaign.

Results

The way Antanas Mockus used the new media to get citizens involved in the presidential campaign worked extremely well for him. Information spreads fast on the internet and it gets people talking about important issues. His new media campaign helped his popularity as a top runner grow quickly in a short amount of time. Monica Pachon and Gary Hoskin looked at the presidential polls between October 2009- May 2010 in their article, “Colombia 2010: An Analysis of the Legislative and Presidential Elections.” In October the top contenders were Juan Manuel
Santos and Sergio Fajardo, the latter later became Mockus’ running mate as vice president under the Green Party. Soon after Mockus entered the race in January his popularity skyrocketed from around five percent to close to thirty percent approval in just a few months. In Michael Shifter (2010) explains this growth in his article, “President Spandex?” He states, “He [Antanas Mockus] has moved from just 1 percent in the polls in February to nearly 10 percent at the end of March, 20 percent by mid-April, and almost 40 percent today (Shifter 2010).” Mockus’ new media campaign is the reason for this fast paced growth. Francisco Leal (2010) states, “This sudden surge and steady increase in Mockus’ popularity was named ‘La Ola Verde’ - The Green Wave- by the media, as it ignited large citizen mobilization and support, especially from young voters and students in Bogota and other cities in the country (Leal 2010, p.12).” This large citizen mobilization and support Leal talks about was important to Mockus’ campaign and was made easy through social networking.

As stated above Mockus was not the only presidential candidate to use new media. Santos also had a Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube but it just was not as effective. When comparing the numbers of social networking activity, Santos does not come close. Rauline recorded the numbers on May 14th, a couple of weeks before the election. The numbers are as follows, Santos with 141,609 members on Facebook and Mockus with 613,722 members. On Twitter, Santos had 5,424 followers and Mockus had 37,162 followers (Rauline 2010). There is obviously no comparison between the following on Facebook and Twitter. YouTube was a little different, Santos had 406 subscriptions on his YouTube channel and 55 published videos whereas Mockus had 133 subscriptions and 22 published videos. It is clear that Mockus had a command over the new media seeing that he was the first to grasp its importance, but was his new media campaign enough to win the election?

Many polls circulating around Colombia were predicting that the race between Juan Manuel Santos and Antanas Mockus would be extremely close. Lemos (2010) reported some of these results in his article, “The Colombian Presidential Campaign Draws to a Close.” He reported,

“...a poll by CM& News finds that Santos would get 39 percent in the first round compared with 34 percent for Mockus. A larger more comprehensive poll from the Universidad de Medellin released on Friday gives Mockus 37 percent to 33 percent advantage while a poll released Saturday conducted by Napoleon Franco found a slight edge for Santos 34 to 32 percent (Lemos 2010).”

According to the polls there was not a clear prediction of the winner. Also there would have to be a second round of voting according to the polls because neither candidate would reach higher than 51 percent. Along with the poll predictions of a close race officials were also predicting that there would be record high voter turn-out. Colombia is known for having low voter turnout rate. According to officials 16 million citizens will vote out of an eligible 29.8 million which means there will
be a 53.7 percent turnout rate (Lemos 2010). A 53.7 percent turnout rate would be the highest turnout since 1958. Another interesting prediction that Lemos (2010) recorded was that “30 percent of the electorate will be either first time voters or lapsed voters who haven’t voted in recent elections (Lemos 2010).” This is interesting because Mockus seemed to appeal to citizens who were either tired of the government did not believe in the government. He also appealed to the young voters as well. Drost (2010) quoted a young college student, Angela Ortega, on her thoughts about Mockus. The student states, “Youth want a role model they can follow, and we see that in Mockus -- he’s a professor not a presidential type (as cited in Drost 2010).” Drost (2010) quoted another unconventional voter, a 42 year old man who participated by passing out posters, t-shirts, and bracelets. Emmanuel Morales stated, “I have never participated in a presidential campaign before (as cited in Drost 2010).” These predictions show that there will be a very close race between Santos and Mockus which is amazing for Mockus when looking at where he started at.

The presidential election occurred on May 30, 2010 and many people were surprised by the outcome. Santos finished first in the race with a 25 percent advantage over Mockus but did not obtain the 50 plus 1 that he needed in order to claim the office. The predictions of a close race were not that accurate Mockus received a much less percentage of votes than expected. Even thought that prediction was off there will still be a second round of elections. The voter turnout was a little lower than expected with only 14,722,186 voters, roughly 2 million voters less than predicted (Lemos 2010). Instead of their being a 53 percent turnout rate there was a 51 percent abstention rate (Lemos 2010). The second round of elections occurred on June 20, 2010. During this time both candidates had about a month to campaign once more.

In the second round of voting Santos finished with a 41.6 percent advantage over Mockus. There was a decrease in voter participation by 1,900,000 votes. Mockus did have a very small increase in votes only with 400,000 more votes than the first round. Mockus was not as successful as people thought; his steady increase in popularity began to plateau towards the end of the election.

**Why Didn’t He Win?**

There are many speculations as to why Antanas Mockus did not win the election. Mockus had so much promise but could not pull through in the second round of elections. Some attribute his unsuccessfulness to corruption during polls and differences between popularity, policy, and campaigning strategies. When the votes were broken down by region, Santos won all of the provincial capitals except two (Lemos 2010). Santos even won the city of Bogota which was where Mockus used to be mayor (Lemos 2010). The two capitals that Mockus won were expected but he failed to succeed on the Pacific coast where he did a majority of his campaigning (Lemos 2010). Santos and the third presidential candidate, Vargas Lleras, were the most successful in districts on the Pacific coast (Lemos 2010). Some peo-
ple believe that vote buying and clientelism had an influence on the way citizens voted, this is not unusual in Colombia. Vote buying and clientelism is when politicians exchange favors with citizens for their vote. Luis Roniger (2004) explains the exchange of favors between the politician and the citizen in his review article, “Political Clientelism, Democracy, and Market Economy.” He states, “It [clientelism] entails votes and support given in exchange for jobs and other benefits (p. 354).” The rural areas of Colombia are where many believe most of the clientelism on behalf of Santos occurred. Pablo Rojas Mejia (2010) gives some examples of the corruption at different poll sites around Colombia in his news article, “Mockus’ Unwinnable Campaign against Corruption.” He explains, “Several witnesses and investigative reporters noted that the police allowed Santos supporters to sport U Party shirts and even park and official campaign truck in front of a polling location in Bogota (Mejia 2010).” Some speculate that the reason for the corruption may be because of the advisers Santos hired to help with campaigning. These advisers were known for running dirty campaigns and felt threatened by Mockus’ anti-corruption campaign (Mejia 2010). The rural areas where most of the clientelism was recorded to have taken place are also poorer areas which mean many people may not have had access to the internet. Jimena Serrano (2011) states this in his article, “The Green Party in Colombia.” He states, “… the Green Party did not give enough attention to its lack of support in rural areas where peasants were not active Internet users (Serrano 2011).” The internet is where Mockus received most of his support and popularity from but it may have not been enough compared to the popularity Santos already had.

Juan Manuel Santos is known for being the Minister of Defense during former President Uribe’s government. He also belongs to the family that owns El Tiempo which is the most influential daily newspaper in Colombia (Pachon and Hoskin 2011, p.17). Santos also ran under a political party that already had an established foundation of support. This was totally different from Antanas Mockus who ran under a political party that originated a year before the 2010 election. The unpopularity of the Green Party was shown in the results of the congressional elections that occurred three months prior to the presidential election where only eight seats were won by the Green Party (Serrano 2011). Although, Mockus did have some popularity from being the former mayor of Bogota he was not popular on the national level like Santos. Pachon and Hoskin (2011) explain the campaign between the two candidates perfectly, they state,

“Thus the campaign revolved around two candidates: a technocrat belonging to a privileged Colombian family, who had inherited the political capital of one of Colombia’s most popular and controversial presidents, and a coalition of independent politicians of the Green Party, whose popularity stemmed from their administrative successes at the local level and an elec-
Santos definitely had the indirect support from the former President Uribe who went on the radio to say that he wanted his policies to still be implemented, “… this amounted to a thinly veiled campaign for Mr. Santos, the candidate of his U Party (The Economist 2010).” It is hard to campaign against an opponent that has an extensive amount of popularity and support since the start of a campaign, but it is remarkable how much support Mockus gained in such a short amount of time.

Another difference between the two candidates that could have influenced the election results are policy differences. Mockus ran on an anti-corruption campaign and Santos’ policies were mostly adopted by the former President Uribe. Mockus’ campaign may have been very popular with the public but many people believe that his downfall was his inexperience in televised debates. Santos is a seasoned politician compared to Mockus; he is more experienced to answering controversial questions and appearing on television. Serrano (2011) states, “Mockus was unable to skillfully answer controversial questions, likely stemming from both lack of experience in Congress and his academic background, which did not train him to deal with these politically delicate issues (Serrano 2011).” Serrano is specifically talking about the most controversial questions about extraditing former President Uribe and his feelings towards Venezuelan president, Hugo Chavez. This was reported in the journal, The Economist, it states, “He [Mockus] said he would support the extradition of both Mr. Uribe and Mr. Santos to Ecuador if the courts there persisted with charges against them over the bombing of a FARC camp just across the border in 2008 (The Economist 2010).” The FARC was a guerrilla group that was responsible for murders occurring in Colombia at the time. This is why Mockus’ first answer did not resonate well with some citizens. An important factor in 2010 presidential election was the campaigning after the first round of elections. In the second round of campaigning Mockus was offered a chance to form an alliance with some of the presidential candidates that lost but politely denied. He believed that “any negotiated coalitions would not be optimal for his campaign (Pachon and Hoskin 2011, p.18).” Santos did the opposite of Mockus; he looked for allies and formed the National Unity Government (Pachon and Hoskin 2011, p.18). Santos also picked up the new media strategy from Mockus. He hired the same person that helped out in Barack Obama’s campaign, Ravi Singh. The goal of Singh’s team was to catch up with Mockus dominance on the internet. Luis G. Lopez, Ravi Singh and Dr. Dennis Anderson (2010) explain this in their article, “Colombia ups the ante in Latin American E-Democracy.” They state that the goal of Singh involved, “… recovering 6-12 months of lost time in digital initiatives, and catch up to Mockus’ leadership on the Web, in less than 50 days (Lopez et. al. 2010, p. 32).” The 50 day mark was June 20th, the day of the second round election. Even though Mockus did not win the election there were many odds stacked against him and to get as far as he did through just the use of new media is something to be noted.
Conclusion
Similarities and Differences

The Arab Spring. The “Arab Spring” refers to several uprisings that occurred in the Middle East and North Africa against the government by its citizens. The uprisings originated in Tunisia and Egypt and spread like wildfire to different countries. After the protests in Tunisia the leader of 20 years, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was driven into exile. In Egypt the leader of 30 years, Hosni Mubarak was overthrown because of the protests that occurred in 2011. One of the reasons for this fast paced spread and the success of these protests is the use of social networks. Similar to Antanas Mockus’ presidential campaign networks such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube were used for mobilization and providing information. On the Social Capitol Blog it reported, “The ‘Arab Spring’ in Tunisia and Egypt relied on the Internet, social media and technologies like Twitter, TwitPic, Facebook, and YouTube in the early stages to accelerate social protest (Social Capital 2012).” The most successful cases in the “Arab Spring” would probably be Tunisia and Egypt.

Tunisia started the idea of protests with a Facebook campaign by the group “April 6 Movement”. This movement gained much success including “tens of thousands of positive responses to call to rally against government policies (Stepanova 2011).” In Egypt protests began after Ben Ali was overthrown in Tunisia and lasted for 18 days. The largest demonstration happened on January 25, 2011 at the Tahrir Square in Egypt. This protest was advertised on Facebook where more than 90,000 people signed up to take a stand against torture, poverty, corruption, and unemployment (Social Capital 2012). Another Facebook page arose after the brutal killing of Khaled Said by police officers. This page ignited a flame in the people of Egypt. The owner of the page, Wael Ghonim named the Facebook page “We Are All Khaled Said” and posted images of Said’s dead body on the page. Michael Teague (2012) explained the importance of this particular page in his article, “New Media and Arab Spring.” He states, “It became a forum for sharing all manner of visual evidence of the petty and violent corruption that ordinary Egyptians had been tolerating for far too many years, and that never seemed to find its way into state controlled television and newspapers (Teague 2012).” The following link is the link to the “We Are All Khaled Said,” https://www.facebook.com/#!/elshaheeed.co.uk. On the page users can find pictures, videos, and updates on protests. Twitter was also used in Tunisia and Egypt to escape police officers. On Twitter protesters would update their statuses to inform other protesters where police officers were located.

The Social Capital Blog (2012) reported that the social media was helpful in three different ways: “a.) mobilizing protesters rapidly; b.) undermining a regime’s legitimacy; or c.) increasing national and international exposure to a regime’s atrocities (Social Capital 2012).” In comparison with the Mockus campaign, the “Arab Spring” used the internet to bring citizens on issues that they felt are important. Information and support spread quickly throughout the country even to other countries in the “Arab Spring”. The “Arab Spring” is obviously different from the Mockus
presidential campaign because it involved the upheaval of an autocratic government. The government shutting down the internet became a problem for the citizens in the Middle East and North Africa. They were still able to come together through mobile phones but this could be a precursor for other autocratic countries that fear a government upheaval. Mockus did not have to worry about the internet being shut down during his campaign because of the type of government Colombia has. As of today Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Ivory Coast and Yemen have overthrown the government due to the spread of uprisings. This is a small overview of how the new media was used in a different political area.

Barack Obama’s 2008 Campaign. Antanas Mockus was not the first to use new media in a presidential campaign. United States President, Barack Obama also used the new media while campaigning for the presidential election in 2008. He also used social networking sites including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. The Obama administration sent out e-mails to supporters keeping them updated on what was going on in his campaign. Obama’s campaign team wanted to use the internet as efficiently as possible by not only starting grassroot/local campaigns and raising money but also by actually getting people out to vote. Obama dominated the internet compared to his running John McCain. At the time of the presidential campaign Obama had 13 million people on his email list, 5 million friends on 15 different social networks which included 3 million friends on Facebook, 8.5 million monthly visitors on his website MyBarackObama.com, about 2,000 official YouTube videos and 442,000 videos posted on YouTube by users (Lutz 2009, p.5).

Similar to Mockus, Obama used the internet to help out with his campaign but turned out to be a success for Obama. Obama won the 2008 election in a landslide; he received 8.5 million votes and 200 electoral votes (Lutz 2009, p.1). This is about 5 million votes more than Mockus. Some of the reasons for Obama’s overwhelming success compared to Mockus could be that Obama ran under a two-party system where as Mockus ran under a multiparty system. It is harder to get more votes from when the votes have to be split between more than three political parties instead of just two. Also Mockus was running for a position that was previously taken by a president who left office with 70 percent approval ratings (Lemos 2010). Not to mention that Mockus ran under a new political party, so citizens were not familiar with the Green Party and did not know what to expect. Obama ran under the Democratic Party which is very popular in the United States. Although it may seem that Obama had it pretty easy he did not he also had to earn some popularity in the beginning since he was fighting Chelsea Clinton for Democratic votes. This is similar to Mockus and his fight for popularity. In both cases the new media could have given them the boost that they needed to beat out opponents to become a top contender. David Carr (2008) quotes Ranjit Mathoda on Obama’s unpopularity in his article, “How Obama Tapped Into Social Networks’ Power.” Mathoda states, “Other than his speech in 2004 at the convention and his two books, Mr. Obama had very little in terms of brand to begin with, and he was up against Senator Clin-
ton, who had all the traditional sources of power, and then Senator McCain (as cited in Carr 2008).” The results from both the Mockus and Obama campaign shows how helpful the internet can be while running for president of a country.

What Does This Say About the Future?

Based on the different situations that were discussed throughout this paper, the new media can be used to invoke political change. One element the Mockus presidential campaign, the “Arab Spring”, and Obama’s presidential campaign had in common was change. Mockus wanted to bring about change in Colombia by introducing the citizens to a new political party and by increasing political morale. In the “Arab Spring” the main focus was to overthrow autocratic governments that have been around for 20-30 years. In Obama’s campaign there would be a shift from a Republican president to a Democratic president as well as being the first African American to become president if he were elected. In order for change to occur a large number of citizens have to want change and have to be willing to work hard to invoke change among other citizens as well. The new media is a tool that makes it easier for citizens to come together and take a stand. It also makes it easier for potential presidential candidates that may be fairly new to the political sphere to gain support from the masses. In the future there could be a surge in the political participation of the younger generation if presidential candidates begin to utilize the new media. In all three the younger adults were the ones that used the internet to produce information and provide support. This is especially true for the “Arab Spring” where mostly 20 and 30 year olds participated in rallies. Organizing protests and demonstrations may be easier to do as far as spreading the word to a wide variety of people through the internet. The new media may also become another avenue to expose the wrong doings of the government or a government official. This will different from the mass media where there might be some political influence because online people will say what they want and will not have to suffer any consequences. This brings up the idea of laws regulating what people can put on the internet. Technology is growing swiftly and there is no doubt that tools such as social networks will become more and more popular when it comes to generating support in politics.
References


