

# MOBILE DEMOCRACY: TEXT MESSAGES, VOTER TURNOUT AND THE 2004 SPANISH GENERAL ELECTION

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*Mobile phones have the potential to foster political mobilisation. Like the Internet, mobile phones facilitate communication and rapid access to information. Compared to the Internet, however, mobile phone diffusion has reached a larger proportion of the population in most countries, and thus the impact of this new medium is conceivably greater. The Spanish general election of 2004 occurred in the wake of an unprecedented terrorist attack, but its outcome reflects the potential that mobile phones have to provide the user with independent information and bring about voter mobilisation. The impression – whether true or not – that the government was withholding information about the attack outraged a small number of voters who, empowered with mobile phones, sent text messages (known as SMS), resulting in unprecedented flash demonstrations on election day eve. Traditional media outlets contributed further to a growing chorus of citizens who felt misled. Those who tend not to vote, young voters and new voters, were galvanised to go to the polls, and they disproportionately favoured the opposition party. While it is too early to determine the political effects of mobile phone diffusion, the events in Spain suggest that mobile technology may come to play an important role in political participation and democracy.*

The purpose of this case study is to illustrate how the use of mobile phones to distribute political information, and their supposed impact on political mobilisation and participation during the 2004 Spanish general election, has the potential of making this new technology a democratic force. The votes that produced the upset victory for the PSOE (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español* or Spanish Socialist Labour Party) came from young voters and former absentee voters who were mobilised by the events of the preceding days. The opposition was galvanised by the belief that the government of José María Aznar was blaming the Basque separatist and terrorist organisation ETA for the 11 March bombs that killed 191 people and hurt 1,500 in an effort to hide the link to the al-Qaida terrorist network. Some people perceived that government officials were trying to manipulate information because an al-Qaida attack could be interpreted as evidence of the wrongness and futility of the policy of Spanish intervention in Iraq, and thus hurt the PP's (*Partido Popular* or Popular Party) chances of re-election. On election day, voters were greeted by the astonishing news that the night before, thousands of protesters had gathered all over Spain demanding that the government disclose the 'truth' about the terrorist attacks. Protesters had been mobilised primarily by text messages transmitted via mobile phones, also known as SMS (short messaging system). On election day eve SMS messages – later magnified by TV and radio reports – set into motion a chain of events that ultimately contributed to the electoral defeat of the Popular Party.

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## Communication Technology and Democracy

With the spread of the Internet in the early 1990s, there was much discussion about the democratising impact of the new information technologies (Norris 2001, 60–1, 100–1; Papacharissi 2002). The argument was made that in democratic polities, where participation in the formal democratic process has been on the decline, the growth of the Internet would be a vehicle for a new kind of political participation. Globally, the Internet has become a mobilising tool providing political information instantly and economically. The extent of transnational mobilisation in protests against the World Trade Organisation meetings in Seattle, Washington (1999), the IMF and World Bank meetings in Prague (2000) and the G8 summit in Genoa (2001) has been attributed to the Internet (Va Aelst and Walgrave 2002; Norris 2002). The Internet has also become an important tool of domestic political mobilisation and participation. Many individuals routinely use the Internet to contact public officials, search government sites, register to vote, raise campaign funds and coordinate grassroots activities (Best and Krueger 2005; Norris 2002). However, the democratising impact of the Internet has fallen short of expectations and the scholarly literature is split on the issue (Norris 2002; Putnam 2000; Dahlgren 2005). In democracies the patterns of participation that existed prior to the Internet revolution are simply replicated. Access to the web does not help inform a previously apathetic electorate because individuals who search the web for political news are 'well informed to begin with, politically oriented and heavier users of other media' (DiMaggio et al. 2001, 320). The existence of a digital divide means that the political impact of the Internet is uneven. In the United States affluent, urban, white, educated individuals are more likely to own a PC and have Internet access. A similar pattern is evident in Western Europe. For example, in the UK and France only 23 and 11 per cent of the lowest income brackets, respectively, report using the Internet (DiMaggio et al. 2001; Carveth and Kretchmer 2002; US Department of Commerce n.d.). Thus, the groups with the lowest levels of political participation are less likely to be mobilised politically by the Internet simply because they are less likely to use the Internet or have Internet skills (Best and Krueger 2005).

By contrast with the attention paid to the Internet, the political impact of mobile communication technology has received scant regard. A key similarity between the two media lies in the fact that they enable the user to exercise discretion to access information and engage in exchanges with others. In addition, governments find it more difficult to censor free expression on the Internet or through the telephone than on television (Havick 2000). However, communication via mobile phones is more personal and direct than with traditional phones. As Ling explains,

with a traditional telephone, we call to a home or other location and then must often request a conversation with a particular individual. When we send a text message to a certain telephone number, we expect that it will reach a specific person regardless of where the person is at the moment (Ling 2004, 151).

Mobile phones are also easier to use than the Internet, which is typically accessed via a personal computer from a fixed location: 'One does not need to deal with assembling various components and software. At the level of the user interface, the mobile telephone operates in much the same way as the traditional telephone: that is, you dial a number and the call is put through' (Ling 2004, 16; see also Best and Krueger 2005). Thus, unlike the

Internet and traditional phones, mobile phone users are directly accessible at all times and locations (Fortunati 2002).

Another important difference between the Internet and mobile phones is that the latter have diffused to a larger proportion of the world population. Statistics compiled by the International Telecommunication Union as of the end of 2003, i.e. just before Spain's general election, indicate that for every Internet user worldwide there are two mobile phone users (see Table 1). There are regional differences, however. The mobile phone is a relatively more important means of communication in Europe than in other regions of the world. For every European Internet user there are 2.4 mobile phone users. In Spain the discrepancy is even more extreme: for every Internet user there are 3.8 mobile phone users, surpassed only by Portugal with 4.6. By contrast, in the United States the ratio is exactly 1.0. Over 90 per cent of the Spanish population is a mobile phone user, compared to just 24 per cent who access the Internet regularly.

The capability to send text messages to multiple recipients simultaneously is yet another distinction between mobile phones and traditional phones. But it is this capability to facilitate access to a large number of people within a short period of time and without situational constraints that makes this new technology exceptionally suited to mobilising flash protests and demonstrations. The growth of SMS worldwide has been an unintended consequence of the growth in mobile telecommunications. In 1995 there were about 91 million mobile phone subscribers worldwide and 689 million fixed telephone lines. By the late 1990s the number of mobile phone subscribers had surpassed the number of telephone lines in operation in Austria, Finland, Italy and Portugal. Today, the number of mobile subscribers worldwide exceeds the number of fixed telephone lines (see Table 1). SMS was initially conceived as a paging system that alerted the mobile phone owner of

**TABLE 1**

Telephone and internet use, selected countries, end of 2003

	Per 100 people:			Ratio of:	
	Fixed lines	Mobile lines	Internet users	Mobile to fixed	Mobile to internet
World	18.7	22.9	11.3	1.2	2.0
United States	62.4	54.6	55.6	0.9	1.0
China	20.9	21.5	6.3	1.0	3.4
India	4.6	2.5	1.8	0.5	1.4
Japan	47.2	67.9	48.3	1.4	1.4
South Korea	53.8	70.1	61.0	1.3	1.1
Philippines	4.1	27.0	4.4	6.6	6.1
Europe	41.2	59.2	24.2	1.4	2.4
Finland	49.2	91.0	53.4	1.8	1.7
France	56.6	69.6	36.6	1.2	1.9
Germany	65.7	78.5	47.3	1.2	1.7
Italy	48.4	48.4	33.7	1.0	1.4
Poland	31.9	45.1	23.2	1.4	1.9
Portugal	41.1	89.9	19.4	2.2	4.6
<b>Spain</b>	<b>42.9</b>	<b>91.6</b>	<b>23.9</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>3.8</b>
Sweden	73.6	98.1	57.3	1.3	1.7
United Kingdom	59.1	91.2	42.3	1.5	2.2

Source: International Telecommunication Union, <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/statistics/>

voicemail messages. Prepaid phone services (as opposed to contract services) took off in the mid-1990s, and was a success with the teenage market because it kept costs under control. In time, teenagers discovered that SMS messages were cheaper than the cost of a mobile phone call or voice messages. (Initially they were free because the original billing systems were designed to charge for voice minutes rather than text messages.) Teenagers began using text messages as the main way to communicate via a mobile phone and in the process created a new language (CMT 2002; ITU 2001; Deutsche Bank 2004; Nokia Networks 2003). In Europe, Asia and Australia, SMS has become more popular than in the US. More importantly, some reports suggest that men and women use it independently of their educational background. If levels of education do not affect SMS use, then its democratising impact can be potentially greater than that of the Internet, use of which is mainly driven by socioeconomic status and education (Smoreda and Thomas n.d.; Guillén and Suárez 2001).

These differences between the telephone and the Internet, and between mobile and fixed telephony, have implications for political behaviour. Research on political mobilisation shows that personal appeals have a strong impact on voter mobilisation, although not on voter preference, and that the closer that contact is made to an election or political event the greater the impact (Green and Gerber 2004; Piven 2002). Because mobile phones free the user from situational constraints they enable individuals, who may or may not know each other, to act in concert on the spur of a moment and without previous planning (Rheingold 2002). There are already a number of studies reporting that mobile phones, together with the Internet, have become an instrument of political pressure and mobilisation. Thus, in 2003 SMS messages disclosed the existence of the flu virus SARS and forced the Chinese government to admit the fact publicly. According to news reports, the text message 'There is a fatal flu in Guangzhou' was sent and re-sent numerous times via mobile phones and over the Internet, informing the population and foreign press long before the government acknowledged the spread of the virus (*Washington Post* 2003). Mobile phones were also used to mobilise protesters against the Bush Administration during the Republican national convention in 2004. These demonstrations, organised via SMS messages, have been referred to as 'smart mobs', a term coined by Rheingold (2002), or 'TXTMobs'. During the Republican convention, TXTMob, an Internet mailing list of mobile phone numbers, distributed instant updates to the demonstrators about 'route changes, street closures and police actions' (Di Justo 2004). What is exceptional about some of these demonstrations, however, is that they were not preceded by any advance planning and seemed to have no identifiable leaders. For example, in May 2001, over one million people prompted by SMS messages gathered in one of Manila's main highways and demanded the resignation of President Estrada amid corruption allegations. SMS messages not only encouraged the mobilisation of Filipinos but, as Rafael explains, 'bypassing the broadcasting media, cell phone users themselves became broadcasters, receiving and transmitting both news and gossip [about the culpability of Estrada], and often confounding the two' (Rafael 2003). More recently, the Chinese used mobile phones, instant messaging and Internet bulletin boards to encourage people to protest against Japanese history textbooks that minimise Japan's military aggression throughout east and south Asia prior and during the Second World War. Some reports indicate that the Chinese government, which was stunned by the scale of the demonstrations, was able to censor protest information on the Internet, but seemed to

have found it more difficult to screen text messages sent via mobile phones (Yardley 2005).

As was the case in the Philippines and China, the protests that preceded the Spanish general election of 2004 seemed to have no identifiable leaders, and new technologies, mobile phones and the Internet, bypassed traditional media as sources of information. In Spain and the Philippines the protests were not planned in advance. Rather, they occurred on the spur of the moment – flash demonstrations that mobile phone technology appears to have brought about more quickly and effectively even than the Internet, given the more widespread use and reach of mobiles.

### **Democratic Protests During the ‘Day of Reflection’<sup>1</sup>**

By the end of 2003, 92 per cent of the Spanish population had a mobile phone; about 74 per cent of households had at least one, and 20 per cent used it as the only means of telecommunication. Between 2000 and 2002 mobile phone traffic in Spain grew by 70 per cent (ITU n.d.; Noriega Sandber and Ariño Ortiz 2004).<sup>2</sup> The basic service allows the user to call almost anywhere in Spain, including the Canary and Balearic Islands. As in the rest of Europe, young people are the heaviest users of SMS, though its growth is permeating all age groups. On 11 March, while calls overwhelmed the three mobile phone operators, SMS messages went through. Messages like the ones sent on the eve of election day, also known as the ‘day of reflection’, could be retransmitted quite simply and efficiently to user-established lists of contacts.

At around 3.00 p.m. on 13 March, a first SMS message was sent. The text was: ‘Aznar de rositas?’<sup>3</sup> They call it Day of Reflection and Urdaci working? Today, March 13, at 18 hours, PP headquarters, Génova Street. No parties. Pass it on!’ Urdaci was at the time the news anchor of the government-owned TV channel (TVE-1) whose coverage, in line with the government’s view, advanced the theory that ETA was responsible for the bombings. The sender of the SMS message reportedly explained that he spent time trying to make sure that the message contained fewer than 160 characters so it could be sent all at once. He expected to meet only some of the people on his contact list, but by the time he arrived at the PP headquarters, located on Madrid’s Génova Street, he was surprised to see hundreds of people. In a clear reference to the perception that the government may have been manipulating the information about the terrorist attacks, other messages read ‘We want to know before we vote’ and ‘The truth now, stop the manipulation, your war, our dead. Pass it on!’ That evening there was an increase in normal SMS traffic by some 20 per cent.<sup>4</sup> Messages were also picked up and sent via the Internet. As a result there were flash protests in over 15 cities across Spain. Eventually, between 3,000 and 4,000 protesters gathered in front of the PP headquarters in Madrid, and 3,000 in Barcelona. The successor to Aznar as leader of the PP, Mariano Rajoy, complained that protests during the day of reflection were ‘illegal’ and ‘anti-democratic’. A judge later ruled that they were neither, but that so many people, driven by SMS messages, came out to protest during the day of reflection appears to have helped mobilise the opposition on election day.

In 2004, the ‘day of reflection’ was unlike others in the history of Spanish democracy because of the terrorist attacks. At 7.39 a.m. on 11 March, a series of bombs began to explode on the Madrid commuter train network. The instinctive reaction of the Spanish public was that ETA had been the perpetrator of the attack. While ETA had been

considerably weakened during the eight years of Popular Party rule, there was evidence that it was planning more attacks.

The government was adamant that ETA was responsible, but its efforts to prove this in spite of evidence to the contrary seemed unconvincing to many. By that evening, the Interior Minister, Angel Acebes, disclosed that a van containing detonators and a cassette with verses from the Koran had been found at around 12 noon in the town where some of the bombed trains had originated. But while he accepted that 'no possibility had been discarded', he maintained that the 'government had no doubt that ETA was responsible'. Additionally, foreign correspondents contacted by the government were told that ETA was responsible, and Spanish embassies around the world were instructed to say the same.

On Friday 12 March, the Basque TV station Euskal Telebista and the newspaper *Gara* reported that ETA was denying responsibility for the attack. Among the main media outlets, the newspaper *El País* and radio station SER, both partial to the PSOE, as well as some members of the opposition started to suggest that the PP was manipulating the news about the investigation. Others, such as *El Mundo* (generally somewhat partial to the PP), were also cautiously considering the possibility of government manipulation. However, TVE-1, the national channel with the largest audience and the one most viewers watch when following important news events, persisted in its support of the government's ETA theory.<sup>5</sup> Thus, although within a few days all the news media would confirm the responsibility of al-Qaida, in the first 48 hours there was considerable confusion about the authorship of the attacks.

Whether the government truly believed it was ETA or was equivocal with the information it provided to the media, the political consequences of the discovery that the perpetrators were associated with al-Qaida ought to have been as evident to members of the PP as they were to the protesters who gathered in front of the party's headquarters all over Spain on the 'day of reflection'. To some, the terrorist attack was the direct result of the pro-American foreign policy promoted by Aznar since he was elected in 1996.<sup>6</sup> Opposition to Aznar's foreign policies, however, had not translated into electoral losses for the PP, and the party was confident that it would win the March 2004 general election.<sup>7</sup> Most of the opinion polls published prior to the terrorist attacks indicated that, while support for the PSOE was on the rise, the PP would be the winner (Michavila 2005). It is significant to note that voter turnout was predicted to be low (CIS 2004; Díez Nicolás 2004a, 2004b).

### High Voter Turnout and Government Change in Spain

Post-election analyses of voting behaviour suggest that the transfer of power from the PP to the PSOE occurred because there was high voter turnout. This seems to be the norm in Spain where, contrary to other Western European countries, voter turnout can oscillate between eight and ten percentage points in consecutive elections (Anduiza and Méndez 2001, 359–60; see Table 2). In 2004, the PSOE won the election because it received the support of almost three million more votes than in 2000. About half of the three million new PSOE votes came from former absentee voters, who tend to be young (ages 18–29) as well as left-leaning. The remainder came from voters who became eligible to vote for the first time in 2004 (there were 603,711 new eligible voters), former PP supporters who changed their vote and the so-called 'tactical vote' from IU (*Izquierda Unida* or United Left) supporters, the former communists.<sup>8</sup>

**TABLE 2**

Eligible voters, voter turnout, and electoral outcomes in Spain's general elections for the Congress of Deputies, 1982–2004

Election year	PSOE % of votes	PP* % of votes	Change of party in power?	Turnout (% of census)	Registered eligible voters	Increase in eligible voters from previous election (%)
2004	42.6	37.7	Yes	75.7	34,571,831	1.77
2000	34.2	44.5	No	68.7	33,969,640	4.42
1996	37.6	38.8	Yes	77.4	32,531,833	4.84
1993	38.8	34.8	No	76.8	31,030,511	4.82
1989	39.6	25.8	No	69.7	29,604,055	1.67
1986	44.1	26.0	No	70.5	29,117,613	8.46
1982	48.1	26.4	Yes	80.0	26,846,940	0.04

\* In 1982, Alianza Popular/Partido Demócrata Popular; in 1986, Coalición Popular.

Source: Spanish Interior Ministry, available online at [www.elecciones.mir.es](http://www.elecciones.mir.es)

Turnout, however, was not the only factor on election day. According to news reports, there were 40 per cent more SMS messages than on an average day.<sup>9</sup> Information about the investigation and the protests was reportedly the major single topic of conversation among SMS users. There was also widespread press coverage of the demonstrations, but the role of traditional media (radio and TV) had been to report on the events of the previous day, rather than to contribute to them. Only CNN+, a cable channel partly owned by PRISA (which also owns *El País* and the SER radio network), had transmitted live images of the protests. When comparing the impact of traditional media with mobile phones and the Internet, it is important to note that the information transmitted via new technologies was the catalyst for the protests. Prior to the 'day of reflection', PRISA-owned media outlets had suggested that the PP government was lying about the terrorists attack, and even the more sympathetic newspaper *El Mundo* had suggested as much; but these reports alone, while providing motivation for the protests, did not result in any. The political mobilisation of voters during the 'day of reflection' occurred when doubts about the credibility of the PP along with calls to demonstrate in protest were transmitted via mobile phones. Limited traditional media coverage of the protest, especially by the government-owned TVE-1, suggests as well that mobile communications had a snowball effect of reproducing the protests all over Spain.

Young voters use mobile phones for personal communication with family and friends. But research shows that personal appeals also have a strong impact on voter mobilisation, although not on voter preference (Green and Gerber 2004). In Spain, the communication and distribution of information to and from protesters and friends was facilitated by mobile phones. Mobile phone users had address books on their phones that allowed them to contact as many people as they wished. The recipients were, in turn, encouraged to contact their friends with the information.<sup>10</sup> Many people reported receiving their own message back two or three times as well as messages from all over Spain. By election day, voters knew that there had been unprecedented 'illegal' demonstrations around the country stemming from the belief that the government was hiding information from the voters until after the Sunday elections. This seems to have further contributed to the mobilisation of young voters. The terrorist attacks, mobile

phone communication, flash demonstrations and the reporting of traditional media outlets did not change the voting preferences of a large number of citizens. Estimates suggest that only 4 per cent of the electorate who had planned to vote for the PP changed their minds after the terrorist attacks and the flash demonstrations, and 2 per cent decided to support the PP instead of the PSOE (Díez Nicolás 2004c; Michavila 2005). Rather, a small but critical segment of the electorate chose voting over abstaining.

## Conclusion

In this paper I have argued that the diffusion of mobile phone use appears to have important consequences for participation and democracy. Mobile phones and SMS messages enable users to maintain immediate, uninterrupted and unmediated communication with people in their social network. It is this type of personal communication that research shows has the greatest impact on political mobilisation. Computer-mediated Internet use is more difficult, and hence less widespread, than mobile phone use. Still, both media have been used successfully to stage demonstrations and protests in various countries around the world. Mobile phone technology, however, is more conducive to unplanned, flash demonstrations because, as was the case in Spain (or in China and the Philippines), text messages circulate very quickly within and across overlapping social networks of contacts, and the mobilisation can be synchronised in real time.

The Spanish general election of 2004 was a unique event occurring in the wake of an unprecedented terrorist attack. Thus one needs to be careful about generalisation. Still, it clearly represents a case study in the impact of new information technology on political participation and electoral outcomes. The impression, though not necessarily the reality, that the PP government was withholding information or presenting it in a self-serving way outraged a relatively small number of voters who, empowered with mobile telephones, organised flash demonstrations in front of the ruling party's headquarters during reflection day. In addition to mobile phones, traditional media such as TV, radio and newspapers further contributed to the creation of a growing chorus of citizens who felt misled. Those who usually tend to abstain from voting, i.e. young and newly registered voters, had one more reason to go to the polls, and they disproportionately favoured the opposition party. The bombings and subsequent demonstrations did not change the political preferences of Spanish voters so much as encourage them to the voting booths to express their views.

A democratic polity needs to allow and facilitate the formation and expression of the popular will, which presumably translates into electoral and policy outcomes. But in the case of new technologies, especially the Internet, there is an inequality in people's ability to access and distribute information. This is not the case with mobile phones because of their greater diffusion compared to the Internet. Moreover, mobile phones are a favourite means of communication among the young (the age group most likely to abstain from voting), and their use is equally widespread across socio-economic and educational strata.

The question remains, however, as to whether new technologies are good for democracy or not. It has been argued that 'if we assume that one of the essential characteristics of democracy is deliberation' as opposed to rushed decisions, then new technologies are not likely to contribute to democracy because what they provide us with is 'speed' (Barber 2000/2001, 4). But it is possible that our vision of deliberative democracy needs rethinking in an era when more and more people are being offered the opportunity (or are being empowered) to participate in the political process via new information

technologies (Dahlgren 2005). In the Spanish general election of 2004, mobile technology contributed to the quality of democratic practices in the sense that SMS messages helped provide citizens with more information about the rapidly unfolding events related to the terrorist attacks, including the reaction by the government and the opposition party as well as the investigation and the protests during the 'day of reflection'. It is also possible that they contributed to higher voter turnout, a most welcome outcome in countries in which an increasing proportion of citizens feel alienated from political life and tend to withdraw from the political process. While mobile telecommunications had largely positive effects in Spain, it is possible that in other circumstances the same kind of political mobilisation may not enhance the quality of the democratic experience. Peaceful flash demonstrations have the potential of turning violent, and hence change voter preferences in ways that have little to do with the actual pluses and minuses of the voting alternatives available, or even discourage citizens from exercising their right to vote in the midst of political turmoil.

Like any technology, mobile telecommunication can have a wide variety of effects on political behaviour and practices, and the fact that it has been around for a short period of time makes it impossible to reach general conclusions about its ultimate impact. The case of the Spanish general election of 2004 illustrates that, whether for good or for bad, mobile phones have the potential to change certain aspects of political behaviour, including people's desire to participate in the political process.

## NOTES

1. Unless otherwise noted the sources used for this section are the national newspapers *El País* and *El Mundo*, which are respectively first and second in terms of circulation in Spain. While newspapers in Spain are known for their political leanings (*El País* readers are more likely to vote for the PSOE and *El Mundo* readers are more likely to vote for the PP), both agree on the basic chronology of what transpired during the days immediately following the terrorist attacks. They disagree on whether the PP government deliberately lied to the Spanish people. There have also been accusations by the PP and other newspapers that the PRISA media conglomerate, part-owner of the newspaper *El País*, the cable channel CANAL+ and the SER radio network were promoting the idea that the Aznar government was hiding information from the public. For more on the structure and ownership of Spanish media see Trenzado and Núñez (2001).
2. Largely because of western Europe's adoption of the Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) standard, the US and Japan no longer are world leaders in mobile phone penetration.
3. *Aznar de rositas* is slang for 'departing unscathed'.
4. 'Paz: un clic puede hacer la diferencia'. Interpress Service News Agency, available online at [www.ipsnoticias.net/interna.asp?idnews=27462](http://www.ipsnoticias.net/interna.asp?idnews=27462), accessed 22 March 2004.
5. 'Telediarios en retroceso'. *El País*, 12 April 2004.
6. Aznar had faced considerable opposition to some of his legislative programmes, but it was his support for the Iraq war and for Spain's participation in it that resulted in unprecedented mass opposition. Approximately 90 per cent of Spanish people were against Aznar's Iraqi policy. Other members of the coalition that supported the war also faced opposition at home, but none to the degree of Spain, where opposition never

wavered (Pew 2003, 24). For more on Aznar's foreign policy see Aznar (2004) and del Arenal (2003).

7. The only exception was Catalonia, where a coalition of the sister PSOE party in the region and left-wing nationalist parties took control of the government.
8. Oficina del Censo Electoral, Instituto Nacional de Estadística, available online at [www.ine.es](http://www.ine.es), accessed May 2004. According to an analysis provided by *El Mundo* and the polling firm Sigma Dos, out of the 3 million new PSOE votes, 1.5 million came from former absentee voters, over 500,000 from new voters, almost 700,000 from the PP and about 303,000 from the IU. See 'Dos millones de nuevos votantes apoyaro a ZP', *EL Mundo*, 19 March 2004. See also Michavila (2005).
9. 'Un clic puede hacer la diferencia'.
10. 'SMS, páginas web y correo electrónico', available online at [www.junjan.org/weblog/archives/2004\\_03](http://www.junjan.org/weblog/archives/2004_03), accessed May 2004.

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