

Research in Brief

Campaign-Specific Information and Media Effects

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ABSTRACT

Background This article aims to revisit the role of digital media in acquiring campaign-specific information.

Analysis We use datasets from the Making Electoral Democracy Work project that include campaign-specific questions to analyze six regions in three democracies (Canada, Spain, and France).

Conclusion and implications Results demonstrate that voters have a moderate level of campaign-specific knowledge and that traditional media are, at first glance, more useful to acquire political information. Nevertheless, when in interaction with partisanship, traditional media display a surprisingly greater selection bias effect and appear less useful to acquire information. We thus argue that digital media are in fact not more vulnerable to potential echo chambers that would lead to a homogenous information environment.

Keywords Traditional media; Digital media; Political information; Echo chambers

RÉSUMÉ

Contexte Cet article cherche revoir le rôle numériques des medias dans l'acquisition d'information de campagne.

Analyse Nous utilisons les données du projet Making Electoral Democracy Work qui inclut des question d'information politique spécifiques de campagnes électorales pour analyser six regions dans trois démocraties (Canada, Espagne et France).

Conclusion et implications Les résultats démontrent que les électeurs ont un niveau modéré d'information politique de campagnes électorales et que les medias traditionnels sont, à première vue, plus utiles pour en faire l'acquisition. Néanmoins, en interaction avec les individus partisans, ces médias traditionnels sont l'objet d'un biais de sélection plus important et apparaissent donc moins utiles. Nous soutenons donc que les médias numériques ne sont pas plus vulnérable aux de chambre d'écho qui mènerait à un environnement d'information homogène.

Mots clés Médias traditionnels; Médias numériques; Information politique; Chambre d'écho

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Introduction

Research has indicated that voters are risk averse and are loath to support unknown candidates (Alvarez & Franklin, 1994), although political information appears to be a precious commodity for citizens. Thus, there is an argument to be made for the importance of political information about the parties and candidates during electoral campaigns rather than general political information. While many scholars have studied the latter, the former has mostly been analyzed accidentally when surveys included items of political information related to specific parties and/or candidates. We believe that this type of knowledge deserves further study. Additionally, it is important to assess which type of media is the most useful to acquire this information.

To do so, this article attempts to answer two main questions: As we know that voters are uninformed about general political systems (Carpini & Ketter, 1996; Page & Shapiro, 1992; Williams & Carpini, 2011; Zaller, 1992), does the same conclusion apply to the level of political information related to parties and candidates during electoral campaigns? What type of media is/are most useful to get this specific information and why? We thus seek to contribute to the literature on political information, but even more importantly, to propose an (alternative) analysis of digital media's impact on the acquisition of information.

First, the article turns to the question of political information to see how politically knowledgeable citizens generally are. Regardless of the fact that this is a well-documented topic (Bartels, 2005, 1996; Blais, Gidengil, Fournier, & Neville, 2009; Keeter & Delli Carpini, 1996; Prior, 2007), it is necessary to compare general political knowledge to specific campaign information. Second, the article addresses the literature on "traditional versus digital media" to investigate which type of media contribute the most to the acquisition of campaign information and how they do so (Dimitrova, Shehata, Strömbäck, & Nord, 2014; Graber, 2001; Norris, 2000). Third, it focuses on explaining the mechanism that accounts for the results of the traditional versus digital media fight.

Integrating context in the study of political information

An important component of a healthy democracy is the level of political information of the electorate. Markus Prior (2007) defines political information as "knowledge of specific political facts and concepts as well as knowledge of recent noteworthy political events" (p. 28). This encapsulates both the definition of political knowledge in general and in regards to campaign information. Additionally, according to Scott Keeter and Michael Delli Carpini (1996), there are three types of political knowledge: the rules of the game, the substance of politics, and the people and players. However, many scholars (Bartels, 2005; Blais et al., 2009; Gidengil & Bastedo, 2014; Lau, Patel, Fahmy, & Kaufman, 2014; Luskin, Fishkin, & Jowell, 2002) believe citizens are poorly informed, either by lack of motivation, accessibility to information, or by institutional problems.

Furthermore, although we are interested in general political information our study focuses on campaign-specific information, as studies show that electoral campaigns can provide a great deal of information (Nadeau, Nevitte, Gidengil, & Blais, 2008). As will be explained in greater length in the methodology, campaign-specific information

pertains to information solely available during an electoral campaign, such as party pledges and party slogans.

Political knowledge acquisition

TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Traditional media may be perceived as being in decline as a result of the emergence of digital media technologies, but it seems that their overall positive effect on the electorate's level of political information still stands. Richard Fox and Jennifer Ramos (2012) find that the use of traditional media, such as television, radio, and newspapers, is correlated with a greater level of general political information. First, newspapers have the potential of providing a good amount of political information (Druckman, 2005), especially among more educated citizens, since information is presented in a more sophisticated manner than it is through television. Second, the integration of television in the intimacy of the home has great promise for political information. For one, the political coverage can provide a wide range of information that is easier to understand than print news (Eveland & Scheufele, 2000; Graber, 2001). Being a less cognitively demanding media, television functions as a "knowledge leveller" (Neuman, 1976, p. 122), even if it might create a "knowledge gap" (Prior, 2005). Furthermore, this media exposes citizens to televised election coverage and it is argued that "infotainment" television shows provide information to specific groups that would not normally be exposed to it (Baum, 2003; Moy, Xenos, & Hess, 2005). As for radio, it has invited listeners, as of the 1990s, to participate in many radio shows that could increase the level of political information (Tolchin, 1996). However, Sidney Kraus and Dennis Davis (1976) have found that radio news may not be an effective source of political information since the emergence of television.

DIGITAL MEDIA

Although Pippa Norris (2000) finds a positive relationship between traditional media and political information in Europe and the United States, she also finds this type of relationship with internet consumption. Other authors have found similar results in European contexts (Dimitrova et al., 2014; Hendriks, Hageman, & van Snippenburg, 2004). However, there are two diverging points of view on the potential of digital media as democratic sources of political information. Cyber optimists believe the internet has a positive effect on information as it offers many opportunities for political participation and political engagement (Quintelier & Vissers, 2008), provides access to information (Bimber, 2003), reduces participation costs, and offers an interactive space for citizens and political leaders alike (Dimitrova et al., 2014). Indeed, digital media can be seen as an umbrella term that encompasses the Web 2.0 and its social media platforms, such as Twitter, which have the potential of providing a public sphere for political debate. Political blogs have also been of great interest to researchers of late, as they can provide information about a campaign and provide an accessible platform for politically involved citizens (Giasson, Reynauld, & Darisse, 2011). Furthermore, many political parties, namely at the federal level in Canada, have incorporated social media into their communication strategy (Cross, Mallow, Small, & Stephenson, 2015). Hence, it is argued that digital media will have positive and potentially strong effects

on political participation and knowledge (Jarvis, 2010; Norris, 2001). Indeed, it provides an easier access to multiple news sources digitally (Dimitrova et al., 2014) and a digital public sphere (Dalhgren, 2005).

On the other hand, while acknowledging the potential benefits of digital media, cyber pessimists have a more prudent point of view. They are somewhat sceptical about digital media technologies, believing that traditional media are central and that digital media are (at best) only complementary. They also believe conversations may not be more informed and pertinent, as they may be similar to real-life discussions (Chadwick, 2006). Additionally, Zoe Oxley (2012) has found that greater access to and diversity of sources does not necessarily mean a more informed electorate, whereas Prior (2005) advances that the efficiency of the effects of media depends on the personal preferences (which act as moderating variables) of citizens in regard to news and entertainment television shows. Additionally, researchers such as Alex Marland, Thierry Giasson, and Tamara Small (2014) have also studied the degree to which political elites use digital opinion research to curate their communication strategy.

The importance of political information and the trap of building up an echo chamber

Regardless of the prevalence of politics in most societies, there is considerable literature on the fact that the electorate is politically uninformed. According to Larry Bartels (1996), lack of information can lead to decisions that are contradictory with one's values, interests, and opinions. Political information is very precious to citizens, but there are considerable gaps in the level of political knowledge of the citizenry, which may be explained by many factors, such as motivation, partisanship, and media consumption to name but a few. With a greater access to information provided by digital media, these motivated electors may browse a vast array of news and political content. However, they may also curate the content they are exposed to according to their party identification (Keeter & Delli Carpini, 2003). Citizens thus have the possibility of reinforcing previous biases by seeking news sources that support pre-existing attitudes (Nie, Miller, Golde, Butler, & Winneg, 2010), political beliefs (Garrett, 2009), and preferences (Prior, 2005). This shows a fragmentation of citizens into politically like-minded groups (Sunstein, 2001). This can be a result of selective exposure (Feldman & Price, 2008; Mutz, 2006) and can create echo chambers, in which like-minded users share similar views and opinions, which can in turn limit the acquisition of political information. According to Leon Festinger (1957), citizens who wish to curate their informational environment can be explained by the theory of cognitive dissonance. Following this theory, the electorate may enjoy consuming information that confirms their decision. Furthermore, these echo chambers, where preconceived opinions and partisan beliefs are reinforced, can also generate a homophilic user base. In this sense, a homophilic user base is generally limited in its attitudes, information, and interactions (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001).

Hypotheses

As we are unable to know the extent to which citizens are knowledgeable about campaign-specific information, we focus on traditional and digital media. Going against

conventional wisdom that traditional media are in decline and offer a broader spectrum of political information in comparison to digital media (Dizard, 1997; Webster & Phalen, 1997), we argue that traditional media are more useful to learn this kind of information. The rationale is that digital media is more prone to a self-selection bias than traditional media. Hence, our hypotheses go as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Traditional media are more useful than digital media to acquire political information concerning the campaign. Furthermore, the literature reviewed leads us to believe that self-selection bias could affect one's informational environment and one's level of political knowledge.

Hypothesis 2: The greater the self-selection bias, the less useful a media will be in acquiring political information.

Method and indicators

We use datasets from the Making Electoral Democracy Work project (Blais, 2010). This international collaboration studies elections in five different countries. We excluded Switzerland and Germany because indicators used were not the same in these countries and thus do not enable comparison. This left us with Canada, France, and Spain for a total of six elections in two different regions for each country. In Canada, we studied two regional elections, namely the Ontario (2011) and Québec (2012) elections. Provence-à-Côte-d'Azur and Ile-de-France are the regions analyzed in France during the legislative election of 2012, and finally, the regions of Madrid and Catalonia in Spain during the national election in 2012.

The selected cases offer a range of several elections functioning under different rules during electoral campaigns. Most importantly, the selected cases present different media systems. Following Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini (2004), France and Spain are in a "Mediterranean" or "Polarized Pluralist" media system and Canada is a "Liberal" model. The major features differentiating these systems are the level of political parallelism and reporters' professionalization. In France and Spain, the level of political parallelism—the link between political actors and the media—is quite important, while it is very low in a Liberal system. Furthermore, the reporters are less professionalized in the Polarized Pluralist model and, consequently with the political parallelism, instrumentalization for political purposes is not rare. On the contrary, there is a strong professionalization and non-institutionalized self-regulation in the Liberal model. Moreover, there are some interesting regional differences in Spain and Canada, as they both have a region with a strong attachment to regional identity. Hence, regional elections in Catalonia and Québec are considered more important than other regional elections.

Another methodological feature concerns the period studied. It is limited to 2011 and 2012. Since then social media has become more prominent in electoral campaigns, as the user base has grown. For example, Twitter had 100 million users in 2011 whereas there were more than 320 million users in 2016. Furthermore, political parties have also adopted other types of social media platforms, such as Instagram and Snapchat, which was not the case during the period studied. Hence, further research should be conducted in order to test if our results stand several years later.

The survey design is always the same. Surveys were quota-based internet questionnaires that ensure the diversity of the sample in terms of socioeconomic back-

ground. A first wave was conducted during the two weeks preceding election day, and a second wave was conducted a week later. The pre-electoral wave reached about 1,000 respondents while the post-electoral wave reached around 750 voters, for an average 75 percent follow-up response rate. To correct the attrition rate between the two waves, and other potential biases, we weight our sample according to age, gender, education, region, mother tongue, and turnout.

Operationalization

Our main variables are campaign-specific information and media consumption regarding the campaign.¹ Campaign information is measured by specific pledges that parties made during the campaign, as well as the party slogan. For every election, respondents were asked to associate three promises to the correct party. Each pledge and slogan is coded 1 if the respondent associates it correctly with the party and 0 if not. Respondents were asked to associate three pledges to the correct party, as well as three slogans. This measure is rescaled in a continuous way from 0 to 1. For the media consumption regarding the campaign, the questions are straightforward and they directly ask in the post-electoral wave: "Using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means 'no attention at all' and 10 'a lot of attention,' how much attention did you pay to news about the election [on television/in the newspaper/on the radio/on the internet/on Twitter]." These measures are also rescaled from 0 to 1.

In regards to digital media, the frontier between each type of media is blurred. However, we believe that the only problematic confusion is between internet and newspapers. For example, if a respondent listens to the radio online, we consider this to be a traditional media. The same rationale applies to a respondent who watches a television show online. Hence, there is only one very specific unclear situation, which is between internet and newspapers, as some may wonder what to think of a respondent who reads the *Globe & Mail* or *La Presse* online, rather than the traditional printed format. We believe this is not too problematic for three reasons. First, it concerns only one situation between two media. Second, even in this case, it does not concern all individuals who use both types of media. Some will read the printed newspaper, but also read articles online and the distinction will not be blurred. Third, the descriptive statistics on the media consumption does not appear as exaggerating either one media or the other.

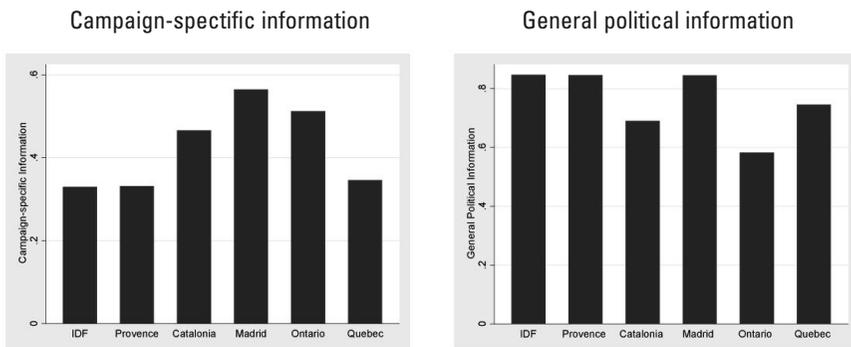
Another concern about this indicator is related to respondents' capacity to recall sources of information and their possible overestimation due to social desirability. We believe it is not impossible, without being overwhelming. Furthermore, when one looks at the media consumption distribution, the scores are not that high. This is probably due to the fact that the question specifies that it is about media consumption for political purposes. The distribution of media consumption allows us to be rather confident that this potential problem does not affect the results.

For the vote choice, we took the reported vote from the respondents. Finally, we included several controls such as age, gender, education (coded 1 if the respondent did some postsecondary education or more and 0 if not), and general political information, which is measured by associating the promises and slogans with the correct political party (the same way that people associated slogans and pledges).²

Results

We first assess if voters are as uninformed in terms of campaign-specific information as they are in terms of general politics as reviewed in the literature. Figure 1 suggests that voters are more knowledgeable about general information than campaign-specific facts. Voters can recognize leaders with much more accuracy than party pledges and slogans. The overall mean of campaign-specific information is 0.44, compared to 0.76 for general political information. In other words, citizens managed to access information about the campaign and correctly match about 45 percent of the slogans and promises asked. While scholars already know that citizens pay much more attention to politics during elections, these prove to be mixed. Since about 45 percent of the survey respondents answered our campaign-specific items correctly, the interpretation of this result is a question of seeing the glass half empty or half full. Our interpretation is that despite the fact that these results are not the best way to depict citizen's political competences, it displays a more nuanced picture of the conventional wisdom, which depicts a politically uninformed citizen. What is much clearer is that citizens are doing much better when it comes to general political information.

Figure 1: Campaign-specific information versus general political information



Note: Bars display mean of campaign's political information. $N = 3376$

For example, Keeter and Delli Carpini (1996) often refer to the fact that only 30 percent of American citizens—which represents the ignorant median voter—can name either senators of their state. Furthermore, the level of basic knowledge of governmental institutions and how they work is very low, as exemplified by the fact that very few can identify the party in control of Congress (Neuman, 1986). We argue that questions tapping general political information are much easier than asking respondents to associate slogans and pledges to the correct party, thus reinforcing our generous interpretation of these results.

We now analyze the impact of five different types of media: newspaper, television, radio, internet, and Twitter. Media consumption for these different media is shown in Table 1. Three main patterns emerge concerning their relative consumption: first, television is always the most consumed media, second, there is almost no difference between the consumption of newspaper, radio, and internet, and third, Twitter is by far the least popular media used by citizens during electoral campaigns. It is worth noting

some regional differences. However, the three patterns noted above stand in each region. As expected, regions characterized by a strong identity consume more political media content. For example, respondents from Québec score higher for every media. More specifically regarding digital media, Québec citizens have a mean of 0.40 versus 0.29 for Ontarians. Furthermore, Twitter has a mean of 0.09 for Québeckers and .05 for Ontarians.

Table 1: Media consumption

	Newspaper	Television	Radio	Internet	Twitter
Media consumption	.39 (.34)	.60 (.31)	.33 (.33)	.39 (.35)	.10 (.22)

Note: mean of media consumption; standard errors in parentheses.

As the surveys were conducted online, it is probable that political internet consumption will be overestimated. However, we believe this should not be a problem as the data realistically shows that the internet is not a clear outlier of the distribution. In fact, it is simply not the case as its consumption is close to that of other media. We now turn to the analysis of media effects in the learning process. To do so, we regress these media types, including control variables to isolate their independent effect on campaign's political information. Results are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: Different media, different impact on political information

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Age	0.001*** (0.00)	0.001*** (0.00)	0.001*** (0.00)	0.001*** (0.00)	0.002*** (0.00)	0.002*** (0.00)	0.001*** (0.00)
Female	-0.061*** (0.01)	-0.060*** (0.01)	-0.061*** (0.01)	-0.061*** (0.01)	-0.061*** (0.01)	-0.059*** (0.01)	-0.056*** (0.01)
Education	0.039*** (0.01)	0.032*** (0.01)	0.030*** (0.01)	0.036*** (0.01)	0.034*** (0.01)	0.036*** (0.01)	0.021** (0.01)
Interest	0.016*** (0.00)	0.012*** (0.00)	0.015*** (0.00)	0.015*** (0.00)	0.014*** (0.00)	0.015*** (0.00)	0.012*** (0.00)
Partisanship	0.020* (0.01)	0.018* (0.01)	0.022** (0.01)	0.021** (0.01)	0.020* (0.01)	0.022** (0.01)	0.019* (0.01)
General political information	0.305*** (0.02)	0.298*** (0.02)	0.292*** (0.02)	0.307*** (0.02)	0.299*** (0.02)	0.309*** (0.02)	0.292*** (0.02)
Newspaper		0.083*** (0.02)					0.065*** (0.02)
TV			0.039** (0.02)				0.014 (0.02)
Radio				0.030* (0.02)			-0.013 (0.02)

Table 2: (continued)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Internet					0.058*** (0.02)		0.040** (0.02)
Twitter						0.014 (0.02)	-0.026 (0.02)
Constant	-0.131*** (0.03)	-0.121*** (0.03)	-0.128*** (0.03)	-0.134*** (0.03)	-0.141*** (0.03)	-0.138*** (0.03)	-0.135*** (0.03)
R ²	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33
N	3471	3454	3356	3451	3454	3387	3272

Notes: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$; standard errors in parentheses. A fixed effect for every election is included (not shown) in the regression.

First, there is nothing new here concerning the socio-demographic variables: young voters as well as women are less knowledgeable (Keeter & Delli Carpini, 1996), while more educated citizens possess more campaign-specific information. Furthermore, partisanship matters in the sense that people who feel close to a party are more knowledgeable than non-partisans. Media consumption variables are displayed in bold. Overall, newspapers and internet have the greatest (significant) impact on the acquisition of campaign-specific information. Every type of media in models 2–6 express a positive relation (as expected), meaning that a greater consumption of a media, irrespective of if it is a traditional or a new one, increases significantly. To a lesser extent, television and radio, both traditional media, also have a positive impact. We can thus conclude that both traditional and digital media are useful to learn political information related to a campaign.

When combined in the last model, some changes appear: radio and television lose their significance while Twitter becomes negative. The rationale for the changes observed for Twitter and internet is intriguing. Our intuition was that a negative relationship might be explained by a self-selection exposure. Taking into account that Twitter is an ideal platform for partisans to build a selective network and thus be exposed to homogeneous information, we believe that most Twitter users build their own digital echo chambers, which could explain our results.

To test this rationale, which was formalized by our second hypothesis, we tested two different models in Table 2. Models 1 and 2 include the very same variables, but the former focuses on non-partisans while the later focuses exclusively on partisans. The results produced are quite surprising. The media's coefficients on non-partisans are positive as expected, with the exception of radio, which can be explained by Susan Tolchin (1976). Also noteworthy is the fact that only newspapers are a significant predictor of the political knowledge. It is surprising that television does not have the expected significant positive impact (Baum, 2003; Chafee, Zhao, & Leshner, 1994) and that Twitter, often considered a breeding ground for echo chambers, displays a positive coefficient. This gives us a hint that non-partisans might not be build-

ing an echo chamber, but we will need to compare them with partisans, which the second model does.

The second model also provides a great deal of surprises. With the exception of the internet, the consumption of every type of media becomes *less* useful to acquire political information comparatively to Model 1. Newspapers are still positive and significant, although the magnitude of the effect is less important. Television and radio display negative coefficients (i.e., for a partisan, the more she consumes television, the less she acquires political knowledge related to the campaign). More importantly for our echo chamber rationale is the result for Twitter. While we can postulate that non-partisans are less subject to the construction of an echo chamber on this media, our results confirm that the reverse is also true: partisans build their homogeneous network and reinforce their knowledge without exiting their isolated inner circle. Model 1 displays a positive coefficient for non-partisans, while partisans using Twitter are more subject to a negative impact. It is thus useful to differentiate this specific media versus internet in general. We find support for our second hypotheses that highlights the build up of an echo chamber as the mechanism that partially explains media's impact on political information.

This leads us to believe that partisanship not only hinders one's ability to learn new campaign-specific information but it also affects traditional media, which are generally believed to be a source of varied and rather objective information. At least, they should be more so than digital media.

Having a different measure to separate Twitter from the rest of internet is very useful as we can test whether this platform, with the most potential of a self-selection bias, has a negative impact once it interacts with partisanship. As expected, partisans on Twitter learn less information than non-partisans. In sum, we can say that, *ceteris paribus*, traditional media are more useful to acquire information as predicted by our first hypotheses, but not because they are—contrary to our second hypotheses—less susceptible of creating an echo chamber. We find evidence of a self-selective mechanism concerning

Table 3: Media consumption and political information on partisans and non-partisans

	Model 1	Model 2
	On non-partisan	On partisan
Age	0.001*** (0.00)	0.001*** (0.00)
Female	-0.047*** (0.01)	-0.069*** (0.01)
Education	0.028* (0.01)	0.014 (0.02)
Interest	0.011*** (0.00)	0.015*** (0.00)
General political information	0.308*** (0.03)	0.241*** (0.04)
Newspaper	0.076*** (0.03)	0.049* (0.03)
TV	0.040 (0.02)	-0.026 (0.03)
Radio	-0.013 (0.02)	-0.018 (0.02)
Internet	0.016 (0.02)	0.071*** (0.02)
Twitter	0.030 (0.03)	-0.088*** (0.03)
Constant	-0.153*** (0.04)	0.224*** (0.05)
R ²	0.33	0.35
N	1786	1486

Notes: * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01; standard errors in parentheses. A fixed effect for every election is included (not shown) in the regression.

a particular social media platform (Twitter), but as a whole, internet appears to be less affected by this mechanism that reduces political learning. The predicted probabilities shown in Table 3 sum up the rationale.

Conclusion

This research fills two gaps in the literature. We first aimed to answer the general question “Do people know more about electoral campaigns than they do about general politics?”. Our results suggest that, in general, citizens are not more informed about electoral campaigns than they are about politics. However, our results also suggest that the political knowledge landscape may not be as bleak as is shown in the literature. For example, respondents were able to correctly associate about 45 percent of campaign-specific information items. We also examined different types of media and their impact on campaign-specific information acquisition and found that traditional media can in fact prove to be more useful to acquire information, with newspapers having the largest impact. These results support our first hypothesis. However, upon examining media effects on partisan versus non-partisan respondents, differences generated by the creation of an echo chamber appear. In this sense, Twitter can be vulnerable to a self-selection bias in the consumption of information and hence be less helpful for partisans, even though the internet in general persists to have a positive (and significant) impact, even on partisans. In fact, this impact is larger for partisans than non-partisans. Surprisingly, traditional media are less useful when we focus on partisans and hints that they are not less vulnerable to a self-selection information environment that would affect the level of political information. Additionally, results hold under robustness controls and apply in six regions within three democracies.

Notes

1. For more information about the datasets and the exact question wording, see Making Electoral Democracy Work (n.d.).
2. Contrary to campaign-specific items, the identity of leaders is known in the years leading to the election and thus can be used as a good proxy for a general political information indicator.

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