RESEARCH ARTICLE

Digital media, activism, and social movements' outcomes in the policy arena. The case of two anti-corruption mobilizations in Brazil

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ABSTRACT:

This article investigates the role of digital media in mechanisms that sustain the achievement of social movement outcomes during key phases of mobilizations that aim to impact policymaking. It does so by comparing two anti-corruption initiatives in Brazil that became legislative bills through popular petition and included the employment of digital media to support them: the *Ficha Limpa* (or Clean State Law) and the Ten Measures Against Corruption (TMAC) campaigns. Based on in-depth interviews with key activists and secondary sources, including an analysis of the campaigns' digital media content, this study evaluates three types of outcomes in the political realm: access, agenda, and policy responsiveness. Although both anti-corruption initiatives elicited public preference and placed their legal inputs in the public agenda of the political system, they were not equally successful in converting their ideas into new legislation. The Ten Measures was a campaign that occurred when the digital affordances for civil society actors were considerably higher, but it did not achieve positive outcomes as the *Ficha Limpa* did. This article suggests that initiatives focusing more on online mobilization strategies without a clear advocacy approach to negotiate with (and pressure) public officials do not seem to be enough to promote policy changes.

KEYWORDS:

Anti-Corruption, Activism, Digital Media, Political Participation, Social Movement Outcomes.

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1. Introduction

This article explores a new line of inquiry on how digital media are incorporated in the mechanisms that lead to social movement impacts in the political realm. We look at how digital media foster the intersections between bottom-up and top-down efforts and project people's demands in policymaking cycles (Schumaker 1975). Within the flourishing literature on social movement outcomes, the focus has been on impacts to political systems, including voting rights (Amenta et al. 2010; Andrews 1997; McAdam 1982), on the emergence of new political actors, among them social movement organizations converted into political parties (Goldstone 2003), and on activists' abilities to influence the policymaking cycle (Schumaker 1975; Gamson 1975). However, we only have superficial knowledge about the role that digital media play in shaping social movement outcomes at the policymaking level.

Despite some exceptions that shed light on various forms of digital activism (Earl 2016; Romanos and Sábada 2016; Richez et al. 2020), we still need to understand how digital media intertwine with the mechanisms that sustain social movement outcomes, how already explored mechanisms might change because of the employment of digital media and, ultimately, which types of impact activists' employment of digital media in the framework of their campaigns can promote in policymaking. Doing this is particularly important because, as literature on media studies also suggests, digital media are ubiquitous today and their presence is deeply entrenched in the tissues of societies (Couldry and Hepp 2017). In this regard, activists make no exception: digital media are important resources that activists employ to increase citizen participation, including in law-making, as they offer feasible civic interaction opportunities. This is particularly true of those with political motivation and access to the Internet in democratic societies (Dahlgren 2005). In fact, there is a wealth of knowledge on how activists' use of digital media supports organizations or protests (Bennett and Segerberg 2013), changes the patterns of visibility for social movements (Uldam 2018), contributes to the formation of collective identities (Kavada 2015), reshapes the repertoire of contention (Earl and Kimport 2011), and supports the diffusion of mobilizations from country to country (Rone 2020).

This article aims to go further by assessing the role of digital media on three types of outcomes in the political realm — access, agenda, and policy responsiveness — and their respective mechanisms. To do so, we investigate two recent anti-corruption initiatives in Brazil: *Ficha Limpa* (or Clean State Law) and the Ten Measures Against Corruption (TMAC), which became bills through popular petition and included the employment of digital media to support the campaigns in all their stages. They had almost opposite results, with the former being considered an example of a successful anti-corruption campaign and the latter being evaluated as an example of a failed anti-corruption campaign from the organizers' perspective.

Anti-corruption campaigns are valuable case studies to explore social movement outcomes since corruption is both an appealing and sensitive topic, often surrounded by different pressures both from those who want and do not want greater social and horizontal accountability mechanisms. While social accountability is understood here as the engagement of citizens in practices aiming at making officials answerable for their actions, horizontal accountability encompasses official checks and balances within intragovernmental agencies (O'Donnell 1998; Bovens 2007; Grimes 2008). Although it is improbable that someone — even the most corrupt politician, for example — will defend the misuse of power for private gains openly, effective anti-corruption reforms often lack the political will of those in power (Rose-Ackerman and Palifka 2016). Moreover, politicians may use anti-corruption policies to legitimize and institutionalize political domination by protecting strategic partners and excluding opponents (Huss 2020).

In this complex scenario, corruption studies consider citizens' demands and engagement to be vital to promote effective reforms (Grimes 2008; Johnston 2012; Mungiu-Pippidi 2015). The more organized civil society groups are, the more likely to translate reformist pressure into tangible outcomes, especially when there

are coalitions and partnerships between civil society organizations and other anti-corruption actors in society (Johnston 2012; Rahman 2017). Furthermore, technology is highly expected to give a stronger "voice and teeth" to citizens (Fox 2015; Peixoto and Fox 2016). By discussing these assumptions in the anti-corruption policymaking field, this study questions the role of digital media in mechanisms that sustain the achievement of social movement outcomes more broadly.

The remainder of this article develops as follows. First, it discusses the overall analytical framework employed to guide the analysis. Second, it presents the comparative research design, its rationale, and the qualitative methods employed to gather and analyze data on the two campaigns under scrutiny. Third, it offers a brief overview of the context in which *Ficha Limpa* and TMAC developed and a more detailed account of their main stages. Fourth, it presents the comparative analysis of the two campaigns, casting light on the mechanisms that sustained them, the digital media used, and forms of communication activists took advantage of. The concluding section of this paper reflects on the key findings and their implication for the literature on social movement outcomes. It indicates that digital media proved to be a flexible resource that is effectively intertwined with different mechanisms of the two anti-corruption campaigns. However, using digital media without a straightforward advocacy approach does not seem to be enough to advance policy reforms.

2. Analytical framework

As our goal in this article is to understand how activists' use of digital media helped (or not) activists to reach their objectives, we adopt a mechanism approach that puts social movement outcomes in a context of relationships among a wide array of factors (Tilly 1999; 2001). Mechanisms are usually understood as "a delimited class of events that alter relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations" (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001, 24). Also, within social movement studies, mechanism-based analyzes stress the importance of comprehending how activists' mobilizations had an impact at the political level. We see it as a powerful tool to open the box and show "the cogs and wheels" (Elster 1989) of the internal machinery of the policymaking cycle. Focusing on mechanisms is also valuable because it allows us to go beyond causal correlations in assessing social movement outcome, hence including relational, environmental, and cognitive mechanisms related to meso-level phenomena as collective action (Tilly 2001). Considering mechanisms is helpful to develop a nuanced understanding of digital media in collective actions and go beyond simplistic generalizations that see digital media as relevant in the support of activists' protests and their outcomes. In our analysis, indeed, we seek to avoid such a simplistic viewpoint on digital media concerning social movement outcomes, producing a fine-grained analysis that explains how digital media supported various mechanisms during different stages of the two campaigns. In this section, we outline the three pillars of our analytical framework: first, a relational perspective able to consider both endogenous and exogenous factors in shaping social movement outcomes; then, the focus on mechanisms as analytical lenses able to sustain a relational understanding of the two campaigns; finally, the understanding of digital media as activists' resources that change their role according to the stage of the mobilization.

2.1. A relational perspective on social movement outcomes

This article starts from an understanding of activists' campaigning as a chain of interactions between social movement actors and the other political actors surrounding them in a scenario where connected endogenous and exogenous factors need to be reckoned in the pathway towards outcomes. Both endogenous and exogenous factors are considered by the literature on social movement outcomes as relevant for determining social

movement outcomes. Endogenous factors are related to the features of movement organizations, including the strength of movement organizations, the extent and intensity of their protests, and the strategic choices that activists make when they mobilize (Kolb 2007). Exogenous factors, instead, are related to the broader environment in which movement organizations operate, including the presence of elites' conflict and instability of political alignments, the strength of counter-mobilization, and the favor of public opinion (Kolb 2007).

Instead of focusing solely on one set of factors, scholars increasingly attempt to consider the connection between exogenous and endogenous elements to explain how social movements achieve their goals. For instance, in a well-known piece of research on the outcomes of organizations for homeless, Daniel Cress and David Snow (2000) argue that the viability of social movement organizations, the presence of disruptive actions, sympathetic allies, local institutions' support, and well thought diagnostic and prognostic framing combined differently and hence led to various patterns towards the achievement of their objectives. Similarly, Lorenzo Bosi (2016) considers the connection of two main mechanisms — incorporation and democratization — to understand the gradual institutionalization of the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland from a relational and long-term perspective. Holly McCammon and her co-authors (2001), in turn, suggest that women suffrage movements in the United States were able to obtain their goals both due to the presence of favorable political and gendered opportunity structures coupled with specific activists' strategies. Among others, these three studies stress a current trend in the literature on social movement outcomes that situates endogenous and exogenous factors in a complex network of relations between social movement actors, their constituencies, supporters, bystanders, and protest targets. Such literature also considers the concurrent presence of several factors that combine across time while mobilizations develop, modify their pitch, and accelerate their pace.

Drawing on these insights, we apply a relational perspective to assess the role of both exogenous and endogenous factors as well as their interplay during the various stages of mobilizations. We argue that even to understand one specific type of policy outcome — the introduction of new legislation within a given policy — it must be taken into consideration different factors that combine over the course of the same mobilization.

2.2 Mechanisms as analytical lenses

Consistently with what was outlined above, the articles' analysis consists of splitting the two campaigns into more specific mechanisms separated into key phases of the policy cycle, and then looking at how digital media combine with each mechanism. In policy cycles, mechanisms support multiple and sequenced outcomes in the path from protest-group demands to policy responsiveness (Schumaker 1975). There are three main types of outcomes that correspond to access, agenda, and policy responsiveness, respectively (Ibid 1975). They usually play a relevant role in the obtainment of broader policy change on specific issues, especially in the legislative sphere. First, the access to the legislative process through the proposal of a bill due to the popular initiative of civil society actors and experts in the field. Second, the inclusion in the elected MPs' agenda that had to discuss the proposed bill in the parliament. Third, the approval of the proposed bill to be enforced to produce a change in the policy realm. Our conceptual framework considers three main mechanisms related to each of these three outcomes, whose relevance is also assessed in the extant literature on social movement outcomes: the legal inputs mechanism, the public preference mechanism, and the political access mechanism (Kolb 2007; Burstein 1999, 2020).

Although not explored in depth by the literature, the legal inputs mechanism can be seen as a mechanism through which activists, movements, and networks can achieve domestic change by elaborating new legislation and/or public policy proposals. This mechanism can be activated more easily in countries that allow for a popular initiative and is more likely to result in political change if it addresses specific issues with clear and single messages. The legal input is a relevant mechanism for gaining political access and setting out the agenda.

Simultaneously, though, it is also a key mechanism for enhancing opportunities to enact such legislation and ensure its enforcement. It has, therefore, indirect effects on broader policy outcomes as it can be a way to ensure that public policy proposals correspond to citizens' preferences. Then, the public preference mechanism tells us that congruence between majority preferences and movement goals helps social moments to move towards their desired outcomes. Finally, the political access mechanism states that the more activists are integrated and occupy institutional positions, the greater their political influence and power to reach positive responses and achieve the expected impacts (Kolb 2007, 93). The literature suggests that no single mechanism can explain the political impacts of social movements (Andrews 1997; Kolb 2007; Burstein and Linton 2002; Burstein 2020). This is true also in the case of the two campaigns under investigation, where we can see that the interplay of the three mechanisms at different stages of mobilizations was relevant. In the framework of this article, therefore, the connection of these mechanisms to each one of the three outcomes is used to guide the reconstruction of the two anti-corruption campaigns and to look at how digital media intervene in them.

2.3 Digital media as flexible activists' resources

In this article, we consider digital media as a diverse array of resources that activists might use to sustain their campaigns and their communication repertoire (Mattoni 2012). Digital media might vary greatly one from the other: the technological affordances that they grant to activists are different (Comunello et al. 2016). Hence, we can fully understand them only when considered in the specific context in which people use digital media (Costa 2018). Social media platforms, for instance, favor the engagement of otherwise disconnected individuals around the same campaign, hence supporting activists' efforts to increase the number of people they can recruit for their mobilizations. The employment of instant messaging apps may increase the organizational capacity of social movement organizations, allowing for the immediate circulation of relevant information among activists.

Technology can also help bridge the space between the demands (from citizens, communities, civil society organizations) and the supply made available by governments, law, and policymakers (Gigler and Baijur 2014). This is so because technology can lower the costs and barriers to people's engagement and participation (Earl and Kimport 2011; Bennett and Segerberg 2013; Gigler and Baijur 2014; Fox 2015). In line with this, scholars studying anti-corruption movements also began to address digital media's potential to counter corruption from the grassroots (Johnston 2012; Mungiu-Pippidi 2015; Rotberg 2017). Kossow and Kukutschka (2017) argue that social media, open data, and other types of digital media empower citizens, allowing them to organize and mobilize against corruption and, therefore, render them able to effectively contribute to anti-corruption. Less optimistic views state that these types of tools tend to work where governments are already willing to hear citizens (Peixoto and Fox 2016) and, thus, many online initiatives end up disappearing or go dormant.

Due to these differences, it is difficult to make grand claims about the relevance of digital media to support anti-corruption efforts from the grassroots. On the contrary, we need to acknowledge that the employment of digital media produces multi-faceted mobilizations in which both collective and individual actors are relevant and combined according to different patterns (Bennett and Segerberg 2013). At the same time, one type of digital media might be vital during the first stage of a social movement' campaign and less so during its final stage: in other words, it is not possible to claim that digital media are relevant for mobilization without considering the stage of the campaign when activists are using them (della Porta and Mattoni 2015). These aspects are crucial when investigating social movements' outcomes and, more specifically, how digital media are entangled with the various mechanisms that make activists able to achieve (or not) the initial scopes of their initiatives.

3. Research Design and Methods

This article is based on a comparative research that contrasts two case studies that have many traits in common when it comes to their key features, although they differ regarding their outcomes. Both campaigns against corruption rested on widespread non-violent collective actions, were supported by large social movements' coalitions, had resources including, but not limited to, financial support and knowledge, and dealt with the same contentious issue in the same country. Furthermore, both initiatives employed various digital media to support their campaigns and, as such, they are emblematic examples of one specific type of Internet activism: online facilitation of offline activism (Earl 2016). They successfully collected the required number of wet ink signatures to propose their respective bills, but only one of them transformed the petition signed by two million people into a new anti-corruption law. While the *Ficha Limpa* (or Clean State Law) was rapidly approved with few changes in 2010, the Ten Measures Against Corruption (TMAC) has been under discussion since 2016 and has faced backlash and there have been substantial changes to its original proposal.

We acknowledge there is a temporal gap between the two initiatives — the *Ficha Limpa* became law in 2010, and the TMAC started being developed in 2014 — and this difference can be considered crucial in terms of technological advances and the consequent activists' employment of digital media to support the two campaigns. However, the two campaigns already have tangible outcomes, and the fact that the older initiative is the successful one allows us to treat the technological time gap as an exogenous variable. One could argue that in 2010 activists' use of digital media was something newer and more disruptive than in 2012-2016 when people were already more used to digital pressure and, therefore, there was no need to apply more radical or innovative methods to get attention. However, we have reason to believe the novelty effect tends to have a greater impact on outcomes where policymakers are more likely to be susceptible to new types of massive pressure they have not experienced before — this is particularly the case in countries like Brazil where political corruption is systemic and societal accountability is still being developed. Therefore, just repeating the same formula of, for example, generating buzz on social media and/or email overload may not be enough to be heard and implement sensitive policy such as anti-corruption legislation.

We focus on reconstructing the sequence of events to understand the processes and how they may differ regarding the use of digital media in the three key phases of both popular initiatives: drafting the bill, signature collection, and pressure over MPs to approve the anti-corruption legislation. Accordingly, we assess the different online and offline strategies implemented and explore whether there were significant technological changes in the repertoire and performances through time that entangle with the mechanisms at work in the three stages of the campaigns and, ultimately, with the activists' desired outcomes.

The article draws on two different datasets, each related to the two case studies. The first includes several types of documents related to the two campaigns, such as content available in both initiatives' official websites and their respective social media accounts, on Facebook and Twitter. To retrieve the data, we used search tools such as Twitter Advanced Search and Wayback Machine. The latter allows users to see how the two campaign websites looked in the past and navigate them. In addition, data was collected from the Brazilian Senate and Lower Chamber website, which allowed us to have access to official documents such as reports and drafts of the bills and to recover statements made by the MPs, to ascertain the successive stages of both anti-corruption mobilizations. The second dataset includes semi-structured interviews and one informal conversation with 13 key actors who had decision-making power and/or actively participated in *Ficha Limpa* (seven individuals) and TMAC (six individuals). Participants were those involved in designing the bills, collecting signatures, negotiating with MPs, and/or engaged with both initiatives' online strategies. They were all anonymized with their names converted into numerical strings.

A combination of a pre-determined set of questions with open and prompted questions was used. The interviews were conducted in Portuguese using online platforms or by phone, mainly in October and November 2020, totaling 13 hours of recorded material. Interviews were complemented with secondary sources including academic and non-academic writings on the two case studies (i.e., Melchiori 2011; Tanaka 2011; Breuer and Farooq 2012; Beyerle, 2014; Oliveira 2016; Whitaker 2016; Lagunes and Rose-Ackerman 2017; Carmo 2018). The analyzes of the two datasets followed a combination of inductive and deductive strategies. The first dataset was initially analyzed following an inductive coding strategy, looking for the most relevant narratives, repeated topics, and different approaches followed in the two campaigns. This stage of the analysis resulted in the emergence of three key mechanisms that we found at work in the three campaigns. The coding scheme related to the three mechanisms was then employed, in a more deductive fashion, to analyze the semi-structured interviews focusing on the role that various types of digital media had in each of the three mechanisms, also considering the role of each interviewee and which campaign they contributed to.

As Tilly (1999, 255-256) reminds us, "there is no way to trace outcomes of such complex social processes without having robust descriptions and explanations of their operations". Accordingly, this qualitative study's research strategy was influenced by the analytic narrative approach because it pays close attention to stories, accounts, and context (Bates et al. 1998, 2000; Levi and Weingast 2016). This article combines narratives with the description of the context in a textured and sequenced account, as the analytic narrative suggests (Levi and Weingast 2016), to identify the campaign's main actors, their strategic actions, and their key decisions regarding social mobilization and congressional approach. This specific methodological approach also offers the opportunity of developing models and extracting empirically testable and general assumptions from particular cases (Bates et al. 1998). This approach maintains similarities with process tracing due to its emphasis on the sequenced fine-grained description as a means for making inferences (Levi and Weingast 2016). Although process tracing also aims to generate testable implications, it often prioritizes variables and does not focus on key actors and their strategies and exchanges in the same way analytic narrative does (Bates et al. 1998; Levi and Weingast 2016).

4. Anti-corruption efforts and popular initiatives in Brazil: two case studies

The two campaigns under scrutiny emerged in a highly corrupted political context in which, however, accountability institutions, democratic innovations, and civil society initiatives have been vibrant in the past decades. Brazil has been accumulating corruption scandals in all branches at the federal, state, and municipal levels, with low rates of punishment (Power and Taylor 2011). The Brazilian Congress has an overall reputation of being corrupt and unruly (Geddes and Ribeiro 1992; Breuer and Farooq 2012), and its members enjoy a high degree of immunity. Considering the anti-corruption agenda, critical legal loopholes remain, but congressional representatives have not treated them as an absolute priority nor led attempts to promote changes. Even under these circumstances, the Brazilian network of accountability institutions has improved its capacity. The country is inching towards accountability with both top-down, mainly through the work of law enforcement agencies, and bottom-up initiatives (Praça and Taylor 2014; France 2019), under intense pressure not only from civil society but also from international organizations such as the OECD (Odilla 2016).

Brazil has also been investing in democratic innovations (Avritzer 2009; Rossini and Oliveira 2016) and institutions designed to foster citizens' participation in political decision making (Whitaker 2016). The repertoire of social movements and collective actors in the country goes beyond contention when interacting with the state (Carlos, Dowbor and Albuquerque 2017). Lessons from Brazil also tell us that citizen engagement to design anti-corruption bills has strong potential. Since 1988, four bills are recognized as

successful popular initiatives after the demands made in popular public petitions became the basis of new laws (Nichter 2011; Melchiori 2011; Calgaro 2017) — two of them are related to anti-corruption mechanisms and involved the same core group of activists and supporters (the Anti-Vote-Buying Law and the *Ficha Limpa*)[1]. However, all four popular initiatives had to be officially sponsored by one or a group of politicians who presented the bills as their authors due to the lack of capacity of the Congress to check each signature and the fact that digital or electronic signatures are not accepted. It is also important to bear in mind that the legislative process encompasses several steps. Overall, in Brazil, for a popular legislative initiative to succeed fully, it is necessary that the initiative: 1) has the required number of signatures to propose a bill; 2) is approved by the legislature; 3) is sanctioned and later enforced by the executive. Thus, more is needed than citizens' willingness and their signatures.

As Brazilian parties' organization is weak and most of the parties present programmatic incoherence, not only the electoral campaigns but also parliamentary mandates are "highly individualistic" (Samuels 2001a; 2001b). Not surprisingly, Brazil is known for its substantial number of parties with seats in Congress — 22 parties had seats at the beginning of the 2006-2010 legislature in the Lower Chamber and 28 in the 2011-2014 legislature (Câmara dos Deputados nd). Governmental coalitions are not strictly party based but often likely to be stratified by geographic regions or by thematic caucuses (informal issue-specific trans-party groupings of legislators) and operate mainly based on pork-barrel politics (Limongi 2007). Therefore, to analyze the law-making outcomes we focus more on the political elites supporting or reacting to anti-corruption bills rather than on the partisan composition of the Congress. Because we recognize that political elites are not monolithic units, we look at tactics used by activists not only to build up multi-party coalitions with the support of those who embraced the bills but also to pressure the ones who were reluctant or openly against the proposals, particularly within Congress. In the case of congressional members, the degree of opposition tends to vary depending not only on their electorate's preferences, but also on whether they can be personally impacted by a given policy. Hence, if politicians see as high the risk of themselves being punished if anti-corruption bills are passed into law, and also if a significant number of their voters does not see new anti-corruption measures as a priority, no support is expected from them. Opposition to this type of legislation is not often open, although resistance may be mitigated with large-scale pressure or persuasion strategies, especially if they are innovative.

It is worth mentioning that digital engagement has increased rapidly in Brazil. In 2010, when *Ficha Limpa* was approved, around 36% of the population were online (UOL 2010). Five years later, when the Ten Measures campaign was created, around 48% of Brazilians used the Internet (Sprinklr 2015). In 2020, three out of four Brazilians, or 74%, claimed to have accessed the Internet at least once in a period of three months, and smartphones keep being the main access device (Valente 2020). Even more impressive is the rapid growth of social media — for example, Brazil's Facebook users grew from 2.4 million in 2009 to 8.8 million in 2010 to 35 million in 2011 (G1 2012). In 2019, Brazil was home to 136.63 million Facebook users (Navarro 2020). These figures stress the importance of better understanding the preeminent role digital media may have in activism and social movements' repertoire and outcomes.

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[1] Approved by Congress in 1994, the first one was the *PL-4146/1993* that defines intentional murder as a "heinous crime", and it was proposed after the murder of a famous actress who was the daughter of an equally famous telenovela writer (Calgaro 2017) and passed even before collecting the necessary number of signatures. The *PL-2710/1992*, brought to Congress in 1992 with the necessary 700,000 signatures collected by housing movements (Melchiori 2011), proposed the creation of the National Housing Fund, but it was only approved in 2005 (Calgaro 2017; Whitaker 2016). The *PL 1517/1999* aiming to prevent vote-buying by classifying the practice as an electoral infraction was approved in 1999. The fourth initiative is the *Ficha Limpa* (Melchiori 2011).

In such a context, two campaigns developed in Brazil between 2007 and 2016 that tackled corruption directly from a bottom-up perspective and were selected as our case studies. In the remainder of this section, we present their key features and developments.

4.1 The Ficha Limpa campaign

The *Ficha Limpa* (Clean State Law) bans candidates from running for public office for eight years if their convictions for a list of specific crimes have been confirmed on appeal, or if they had resigned to avoid impeachment, or lost their positions due to corruption charges. The campaign began in late 2007 as a traditional offline collective action and only started using digital media when promoting the final phase of signature collection. It became law in June 2010, nine months after the submission before Congress of a bill signed by 1.6 million people —a noticeably short timeframe for the Brazilian Congress, that on average takes 45 months to approve this type of legislative proposal (Jota 2019). The Movement to Combat Electoral Corruption (MCCE) — a group representing more than 40 organized civil society organizations, non-profits, and religious associations, at the time led by the electoral judge Marlon Reis — coordinated the entire process with the strong support of the Catholic Church through the National Confederation of the Bishops of Brazil (CNBB) and the Justice and Peace Commission (at that time headed by the social activist Francisco Whitaker, one of the founders of the World Social Forum). The law has been successfully preventing candidates with a dirty record from running for office since the 2012 elections. The initiative also had unexpected positive outcomes: it has been used as a requirement for federal select civil servants (Brant 2019) and representatives of many clubs, associations, and condominiums and served as an inspiration for other attempts to promote legislative reforms through popular petitions (Interviewee 6).

4.2 The Ten Measures Against Corruption campaign

The Ten Measures Against Corruption (TMAC) initiative was launched by the Brazilian prosecution service in the wave of the Car Wash Operation (*Lava Jato*) and used digital media as its main driver from the beginning. Prosecutors led by Deltan Dallagnol, the then head of the *Lava Jato* task force, which has been investigating and bringing corruption charges against top-level politicians, senior bureaucrats, and powerful businesspeople, developed a legislative package of 20 bills combined in ten topics to encourage the prosecution of corruption cases and to diminish impunity.[2] Despite having collected around two million wet ink signatures

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[2] TMAC included a package of bills that can be separated in ten key topics (Ayres 2016a; Ayres 2016b), summarized as following: 1) Corruption prevention and whistleblowing protection by, for example, using up to 20% of governmental marketing funds in campaigns against corruption and by allowing investigations to be triggered by anonymous whistleblowers' complaints; 2) Criminalization of illicit enrichment of public officials with 3 to 8 years of incarceration and seizure of assets; 3) Increased sanctions for corruption cases from the current 2 to 12 years to 12 to 25 years of incarceration; 4) Changes to criminal proceedings to speed up the process by executing the sentence even when appeals are pending in the superior courts; 5) Creation of specialized courts for improbity cases; 6) Reform the statute of limitations aiming to reduce impunity; 7) Limiting what is considering illegally obtained evidence to adjust the criminal nullity rules; 8) Criminalizing the use of slush funds and punishing parties that use them to finance campaigns; 9) Pre-trial detention to locate and ensure the return of ill-gotten gains); 10) New mechanisms for recovering goods and profits derived from influence peddling, corruption and misuse of public goods. As can be seen, it was an attempt to promote a robust anti-corruption legal reform at a time when a large number of congressional people were being investigated or prosecuted for corruption, money laundering and illegal campaign finances under the scope of the *Lava Jato* probe.

to submit the bill before Congress in 2016, TMAC was not initially designed to be a citizens' legislative proposal. It started at the end of 2014 as an initiative of a few prosecutors and was later institutionally embraced by the Federal Prosecutor's Service. Civil society was invited to take a more active role in subscribing to the bills when initiators realized their proposal was facing open opposition from different governmental actors, including members of the judiciary and MPs. In September 2021, the bills were still pending congressional approval after being substantially modified from the Task Force's original proposal. There were other unexpected outcomes, such as the approval of a bill criminalizing abuse of authority committed by public agents as a direct reaction against the prosecutors who were simultaneously negotiating the Ten Measures and bringing charges against MPs for corruption in courts (Clavery 2017).

5. Digital media, mechanisms and outcomes in the Ficha Limpa and TMAC campaigns

In this section, we present our analysis related to the two anti-corruption campaigns that we briefly described above. We show that it is not possible to speak about the role of digital media in shaping social movement outcomes in abstract terms. Rather, the analysis of the two campaigns illustrates that different types of digital media were intertwined with different types of mechanisms at various stages of each campaign. When asked to talk about the role and the importance of the digital media in both campaigns, interviewees agreed that, although a strong tool to spread the word and call attention to a cause, they were not able to replace more traditional offline activities, such as the negotiations with MPs that are more effective when carried out face-to-face. Interviewees also pointed out that e-signatures are still not accepted in Brazil. Therefore, the campaigns need to be able to attract supporters and make them sign the forms and, preferably, engage in joint efforts to get more signatures.

The two cases provide evidence that specific types of digital media strategies were used by the two campaigns differently at various stages and, hence, with diverse mechanisms that led to the social movement outcomes. In what follows, we develop our analysis pointing out the main mechanism that characterizes each of the three stages as well as how digital media was involved in any given mechanism. As stated above, the overall aim of this article is to understand how diverse types of digital media had a role not so much in determining the outcomes of *Ficha Limpa* and TMAC, but rather to grasp how they were used in the mechanisms that led to such outcomes. With this aim in mind, each of the three sections below analyzes the two campaigns in a comparative fashion, exploring the three mechanisms in key phases.

5.1 Digital media in the three phases and the related mechanisms

The phase of drafting the bill and the legal input mechanism

The MCCE (Movement to Combat Electoral Corruption) was launched in 2002 to "keep mobilizing the energy" (Interviewee 1) of the so-called "9840 committees" that were operating on a voluntary and informal — mainly offline — basis to oversee the enforcement of the already mentioned Anti-Vote-Buying Law, or Law 9840. With both MCCE, officially registered as an NGO in 2007, and the Law 9840 well established, a new anti-corruption popular initiative emerged. A bishop from Rio suggested the CNBB should take action after a politician was allowed to run for office in 2006 while being prosecuted for several crimes, among them tax evasion, fraud, and aggravated assault (Melchiori 2011). It was only in 2007, after a face-to-face meeting with the Brazilian Bar Association (OAB), that MCCE started to create a new anti-corruption bill. The drafting

of the bill was begun collectively, with the help of pundits with a legal background, and was polished in debates with other members of the MCCE. Their goal and message were straightforward: obtain popular support and handwritten signatures to pass a bill that forbids those with criminal backgrounds from running for office at all levels of government. The role of digital media in this phase was very limited and linked to internal communications that, at that time, circulated information mainly through phone calls but also through emails.

Interviewee 1 summarizes the legal input mechanism during this phase:

"The Clean Slate Bill started with a very offline campaign. In 2007 the idea came up, presented by the bishop Dom Dimas Lara Barbosa, then the general secretary of CNBB, who thought there should be a stricter electoral law. We started discussing the bill in June and in December 2007 we approved the idea" (Interviewee1).

In the case of TMAC, the drafting phase was restricted to a small group of prosecutors. In late 2014, six prosecutors who were part of the Car Wash Operation (*Lava Jato*) task force started crafting a legal reform in an attempt to have better tools to fight corruption. Led by Deltan Dallagnol, around 20 prosecutors across the country were mobilized to help to finalize the legislative package of bills to encourage the prosecution of corruption cases and to diminish impunity. The Federal Police officers linked to the *Lava Jato* probe were invited to design the anti-corruption package but declined. The group used mainly email and messaging apps such WhatsApp as the space to exchange versions of the texts and to discuss the bills. Despite the emergence of new digital platforms and software, the interaction with digital media during this phase was also largely linked to internal communications, as was the case with *Ficha Limpa*. No other social movement actors or organizations were involved because it could "delay the process" (Interviewee 13). The small group of prosecutors were in a rush to, according to the interviewees, avoid a backlash against the investigation.

Interviewee 13, who was involved in all phases of TMAC, explains their rationale:

"The mindset was: at any moment the *Lava Jato* investigation could be stopped or declared null. (…) It was evident that the corruption scandal would reach Congress, and what we were doing was offering an opportunity to the MPs to turn over a new page and change reality. (…) Today, looking back, it was absolutely naïve. It was our rationale though, based on our lack of experience of how the system works" (Interviewee 13).

Unlike *Ficha Limpa*, TMAC was initially developed without a clear strategy. First, Dallagnol thought about introducing TMAC as part of the work of the *Lava Jato* task force. He was persuaded by some peers to separate the proposed reform from the investigative work and managed to get institutional support from the General Office of the Prosecution Service (PGR). TMAC faced internal resistance once prosecutors and civil servants realized the prosecution service's role is not a policymaking one, and that the initiative could create issues regarding the separation of powers, according to Interviewees 4, 7, 11. And yet TMAC was officially launched as an institutional initiative at a press conference in Brasília in March 2015, when it was announced that the draft bills would be sent directly to Congress and the material made available on the prosecution service's official website[3]. Although the launch was covered by the mainstream media, Interviewee 13 said that TMAC rapidly stopped attracting public attention. This was when Dallagnol decided to cross the country to participate in face to face talks promoted on social media but organized by a broad array of actors in churches, universities, and professional associations to talk about the *Lava Jato* probe and promote TMAC.

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[3] Initially the content was made available on www.combateacorrupcao.mpf.mp.br

The phase of collecting signatures and the public preference mechanism

Due to the earlier more conventional experience of those who were leading the mobilization process, *Ficha Limpa* started collecting signatures by strongly relying on local networks, especially parishes and the "9840 committees", printed material, and on word of mouth to coordinate face-to-face activities. The MCCE's website was created only in June 2008, mainly to offer news, standard flyers and supporting forms to be signed and printed. Communication at that time was done mainly by phone and email. However, the campaigners introduced novel tactical usages of digital media, although only in a quasi-experimental way when the mobilization was already in an advanced phase. Only two campaign leaders were using their personal social media accounts on Facebook and Orkut to officially promote the bill during the final phase of signature collections in 2009. The MCCE official page on Facebook was launched only in 2010 when the bill was already in Congress.

Interviewees 1, 6, and 8, who were involved in the communication strategy of *Ficha Limpa*, highlight how social media was, initially, used intuitively, based on "improvisation" with no clear online strategy:

"I was doing research at the University of Cologne when I told a professor there in Germany that we were doing the campaign and she asked if we were using Facebook to mobilize people. I said that I was not a Facebook user, I had heard about it, but few people used Facebook in Brazil. Then I told her that the largest social media network at that time was Orkut, which she had never heard of. Then she told me ... she insisted: look, if I were you, I would create a group on Facebook, this will help. In fact, when I came back to Brazil I did it and it really helped a lot" (Interviewee 1).

"I remember that we had only two social network accounts. I was responsible for one and another person was responsible for the other, and we started making contacts, posting messages, and encouraging people. This ended up gaining strength in a very organic way. It was the Orkut where I was active. And honestly, I don't even remember what the other one was. I don't know if it was already Facebook" (Interviewee 6).

"Today, looking back … It was 2010 but it looked like the 1990s. Really, we were very behind the times. Orkut was going under; I don't think we had a Twitter account. It was basically Facebook and a precarious website" (Interviewee 8).

Still, the MCCE managed to build an online community of roughly three million members (Breuer and Farooq 2012, 8). The *Ficha Limpa* campaign spread rapidly on the Internet, even where there were no organizers: #fichalimpa was the most used hashtag of the week on Twitter Brazil on several occasions. The campaign also arrived on YouTube, and Ning, a commercial platform used to tailor campaigns on social networks through supporters (Breuer and Farooq 2012, p. 8; Tanaka 2011). In August 2009, the movement already had one million signatures and it intensified its digital media use with an event streamed live to launch the campaign "300,000 in 30 days" to gather the missing signatures — the website crashed due to its lack of capacity to host so much traffic. By the end of September 2009, the MCCE had collected the necessary number of physical signatures and they were submitted together with the *Ficha Limpa* bill before Congress. In parallel, the organizers also had the support of over 30 MPs from different parties with whom they had regular breakfasts at the bishop's headquarters. This group of MPs presented the bill as their own to move it faster.

In the case of TMAC, the online communication strategy came before the decision to encourage people to subscribe to the package of bills. Since the beginning of 2015, the prosecution service's press office had

overseen designing and implementing a professional communication campaign. The idea to transform the anti-corruption legal package into a popular petition came from a person in the audience during one of Dallagnol's talks in mid-2015 and it was inspired by the *Ficha Limpa*, according to Interviewee 13. This was when the communication team launched a new website (MPF 2020) — initially created by Dallagnol himself and later redesigned by professionals, says Interviewee 11 — and profiles on Twitter, Facebook, and later on Instagram were created to promote the campaign, and to mobilize people and organize collective actions during the signature collection phase. The prosecution service also mobilized its own staff to collect signatures.

The popularity of the *Lava Jato* investigation and the active presence of prosecutors on both social and more traditional media helped the campaign to use interpersonal, group, and mass communication simultaneously (Oliveira 2016). Although only one person was looking after the official social media accounts in the prosecution service, the online mobilization went viral thanks to the sharable content. TMAC's social media page offered illustrated cards, and also showed people signing the forms and invited people to go to signature collection points. Images of *Lava Jato*'s task force members giving speeches or meeting supporters were also published, along with pictures of artists supporting the campaign on social media. TMAC's official website offered resources to reinforce the campaign's visibility and message, such as T-shirts, stickers, and even billboards, along with the form to be printed and signed to support the bill. An advertisement agency was hired to produce material to be circulated in the mainstream media outlets.

During the signature collection phase, around 1,000 institutions were mobilized to help persuade people to subscribe to TMAC, including religious groups, universities, associations, shopping malls, companies, and non-governmental organizations that had formally joined forces to support the campaign by collecting the wet ink signatures (MPF 2017). In March 2016, seven months after starting the campaign for subscriptions, the mobilization had enough signatures to submit the popular anti-corruption initiative to Congress (Oliveira 2016; Lagunes and Ackerman 2017).

The phase of negotiating with powerholders and the political access mechanism

Although the *Ficha Limpa* bill was endorsed by 1.6 million voters, the MCCE's leaders knew that without keeping and increasing social mobilization MPs would never approve it (Beyerle 2014). Avaaz.org, a US organization established to promote global activism, was invited to join forces to make participants and supporters more informed and connected. Avaaz helped to pressure politicians when they were voting for the bill in Congress, inaugurating a new online strategy for *Ficha Limpa* that included e-petitions, newsletters and calls for action that encompassed, but was not limited to, spreading posts on social media and uploading hashtags, directly phoning MPs' offices and/or flooding the legislators' email inboxes every time the bill was being discussed in the special committees and on the main floor. Interviewees 5, 6 and 10 remembered that politicians started to complain about the number of emails and phone calls they received.

In a couple of months, Avaaz's online petition was signed by 400,000 citizens (Breuer and Farooq 2012). The advocacy group also benefited from *Ficha Limpa*: at the outset of the campaign, in February 2010, Avaaz had around 130,000 members in Brazil and by April that year, this number had grown to 600,000 (Tanaka 2011; Beyerle 2014). Interviewees 1, 6, 9 and 10 stress the importance of articulating online and offline strategies to keep people mobilized both on social media and demonstrations on the streets for the bill, a clear advocacy approach in the Congress and a massive coverage and open support of the mainstream media, though that came only at the end.

Interviewee 9 summarizes the efforts during the negotiation with powerholders phase:

"We knew it would be very difficult to pass the bill because over half of the Lower Chamber and the Senate were allegedly accused of corruption (…) We launched the online petition a bit before the signatures were submitted before Congress and we helped with social pressure during all the legislative process. (…) We developed a combination of online and social pressure along with efficient advocacy efforts (…) There was this novelty in our online mobilization that was especially important. It was the first campaign of this type that was viral in Brazil. That got hundreds of thousands of people taking part and applying real political pressure" (Interviewee 9).

According to the interviewees, they lobbied hard inside and outside Congress. Even before the bill's submission, MCCE representatives kept having periodic meetings in person with MPs from different parties, primarily with those who were supportive of the bill, and contacting powerholders and also active long-time activists such as grassroots movements linked to the Catholic Church, unions, and professional organizations. The goal was to approach mainly party leaders and thematic caucus key figures to help them to convince politicians who were hesitant in passing the bill. Activists contacted politicians not only in Brasília but also in their constituencies to persuade them to vote for the bill. Previous experience made *Ficha Limpa* creators also leave extra room for face to face negotiation that involved changing specific items from the original proposal. For example, instead of having a conviction ruled by the first instance of the judiciary, it became necessary to be sentenced by more than one judge for someone to be barred from public office for eight years (Melchiori 2011; Whitaker 2016) — the bill attracted a lot of controversy in this regard due to the fundamental principle of presumption of innocence.

When the bill had arrived in Congress, in September 2009, the organizers brought 27 children who were around 10 years old — as a reference to the 10th anniversary of the Anti-Vote-Buying Law — carrying flags from each of the 27 states of Brazil. A group of 33 MPs from ten parties from both opposition and coalition agreed to sign and present the bill to avoid the signature checking and speed up the process. Still, activists heard from a congressional representative that "it is easier for a cow to fly than for this initiative to get approved in Brazil" (Beyerle 2014; Whitaker 2016). Face-to-face advocacy and the tactical use of digital media were then intensified, and protests and even more theatrical demonstrations were organized, such as supporters washing the front door of the Brazilian parliament with pails of water and brooms to "clean" it. The use of different forms of collective action and the parallel deployment of multiple forms of activist communication, was crucial to reduce the initial resistance among many legislators, many of them members of the support coalition of President Lula and some of them also defendants in a criminal procedure at the Supreme Court, and to overcome the many attempts to delay and thwart the bill's passage and even to subvert the original proposal (Beyerle 2014; Melchiori 2011).

When the Lower Chamber approved *Ficha Limpa*, 390 (76%) out of 513 MPs were present and only one voted against it. In the Senate, 76 representatives out of 81 were present, and they all voted for its approval. In June 2010 — four months before the general elections — the legislation was enacted by President Lula who, ironically, was kept off the ballot eight years later due to the *Ficha Limpa* law. Since then, the legislation has been applied to banning hundreds of candidates from each election. Interviewees believe that the bill passed because many congressional representatives thought the new law would never be enforced against them due to the low level of sanctions against politicians who enjoy privileged jurisdiction (*foro privilegiado*) in Brazil[4]. However, as Interviewees 5 and 6 note, they must never lower their guard because politicians can change the

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[4] Congressional representatives enjoy the right to be investigated and stand trial in criminal proceedings only by the Supreme Court, where conviction rates are 0.74%. See https://oglobo.globo.com/brasil/estudo-mostra-que-68-de-acoes-penais-de-quem-tem-foro-privilegiado-prescrevem-ou-caem-para-instancia-inferior-20933954. Accessed on August 5, 2021.

legislation and, therefore, it is important to be aware and be able to rapidly mobilize people against any attempt to subvert the rules they fought to see approved.

Despite the opposite outcome, some of the strategies used by TMAC in this phase bear certain similarities to *Ficha Limpa*. Although it was endorsed by almost two million signatures, TMAC was initially supported by a group of congressional members because the Lower Chamber did not have any mechanism to check and confirm each signature (Oliveira 2016). The MPs were part of the anti-corruption caucus and decided to author TMAC. Intentionally, the most famous prosecutors avoided going to Congress to submit the signatures, in an attempt to not connect the initiative to the prosecution service, according to the interviewees. But the picture of Dallagnol on a massive banner was in the same room with civil society representatives.

In fact, TMAC was not only inspired by, but also tried to replicate some of the strategies used at the *Ficha Limpa,* such as having children submit the signatures, celebrities supporting the campaign and trying to call for online action when the bills were about to be voted on. TMAC supporters often called for *tuitaços*, i.e., the collective upload of hashtags on Twitter.[5] This initially worked and pushed the then Speaker of the Lower Chamber to create a special committee to evaluate the proposals, says Interviewee 13. There were also some street demonstrations for the *Lava Jato* investigations asking for the approval of TMAC (Lima 2016). Although it met with public support and collected thousands of signatures, interviewees agree that TMAC has always been seen as an initiative that was created and led by the prosecutors directly involved in the *Lava Jato* probe. In addition, although it had a professional team carrying out the digital campaign, it was not as innovative as the *Ficha Limpa* in terms of how activists used digital media, particularly during the phase in which public preference needed to be translated into intense pressure over politicians.

The prosecutors leading the campaign also faced a great deal of resistance among jurists and MPs. Congressional members were ready to react against both the *Lava Jato* probe and TMAC as the investigation was rapidly advancing against powerful politicians, among them congressional members, including the bill's rapporteur. At the time, TMAC's rapporteur — who had also received slush electoral funding — stated his peers were concerned only about their personal interests and they voted driven by revenge (Sambrana 2016). Interviewee 7 summarizes the negotiation phase:

"It was as if we wanted to negotiate peace without ceasing fire, dropping a bomb over the enemy's head. Then it (TMAC) becomes a life and death battle. (…) In this context, there was no negotiator who could handle it. The moment was very adverse. (...) The scenario was very adverse, very hostile." (Interviewee 7)

Interviewees also recognized prosecutors did not have the expertise, although they kept having face-to-face meetings with MPs, many of whom were under investigation or already being prosecuted and reluctant to legislate against their own or their peers' interests. Interviewees 13 and 2 mention that the presence of better organized civil society groups in Congress would have helped. In fact, they recognize that collective action was fragile due to the lack of more institutionalized organizations leading the negotiation phase. Despite being endorsed by over two million people, TMAC faced backlash and open opposition from different actors, including from members of the judiciary, and were stymied by Congress. In November 2016, of the original Ten Measures designed by the prosecutors, only one was fully approved on the Lower Chamber's floor: the increase of sanctions for corruption cases from the current 2 to 12 years to 12 to 25 years of incarceration. [6]

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[5] See https://twitter.com/MPF_PGR/status/800798091431460892. Accessed on December 15, 2020.

[6] On November 30, 2016, the by then already modified and extended to "12 measures" against corruption were voted on late at night by the Lower Chamber, which partially approved only six of them. Apart from rejecting original TMAC proposals such

After that, the TMAC official website and its social media accounts stopped being updated. The changed bills were sent to the Senate and were still to be voted on a second time in the Lower Chamber in March 2021.

Due to all this, interviewees' answers on TMAC's outcomes vary significantly, from a "catastrophic" failure (Interviewee 12) to "frustration with some learning" (Interviewee 4) to having the "great virtue to mobilize, to galvanize this anti-corruption agenda in the Brazilian middle class" (Interviewee 7). In the case of *Ficha Limpa,* instead, outcomes exceeded expectations in a positive way. Not only has the bill been actively banning politicians from running for office, but also the idea of having public officials and other types of representatives with clean records has been expanded. However, politicians with any obstacle embraced by the *Ficha Limpa* have been constantly trying to change the legislation and to circumvent it by appointing their spouses, relatives, or people with whom the voter could associate as substitutes (Marques 2020).

6. Discussion and conclusion

In the previous section, we presented the main findings related to our analysis, which cast light on the role that various types of digital media played regarding the three main mechanisms that characterized the key phases of the two popular initiatives in Brazil. While adopting a mechanism approach to look at the policymaking process, we provided a dense description of how different types of factors interplayed in the two anti-corruption campaigns to develop a fine-grained understanding of how they achieved (or not) their initial aims. Below, Table 1 summarizes the research findings. It underlines how activists used different types of digital media in the two initiatives to sustain a change in the policy agenda and bring their law proposals to Congress; to gain visibility as well as incorporate and mobilize members; to attract favorable public opinion and media coverage; to wage contentious strategies and tactics, and, finally, to pressure powerholders, negotiate and convert preferences into votes for their respective bills.

Table 1 – Mechanisms, type of media, communication and activities to which they apply

Phase	Mechanisms	Type of Media	Type of Communication
1. Bill drafting	**Legal Inputs** (elaborating new legislation and/or public policies proposals)	*Ficha Limpa*: email, telephone.	*Ficha Limpa*: mainly offline with face-to-face meetings (people with legal knowledge representing their professional associations in co-operation with religious movements and other SCOs, part of the MCCE). *TMAC*: online, with extensive exchange of online messages

as punishing parties that use slush funds, criminalizing illicit enrichment of public officials, and new mechanisms for recovering goods, the package was amended to create criminal liability for investigators and judges who abuse their power by acting based on political-party motivations or for recklessly prosecuting public agents for administrative improbity. The changes were so substantial that the *Lava Jato* task force threatened to resign. At the time, TMAC's rapporteur stated that his peers were concerned only about their personal interests and voted driven by revenge (Sambrana, 2016).

		TMAC: group messaging apps such as WhatsApp and Telegram, and email	(restricted to a small group of federal prosecutors).
2.Signatures Collection	**Public Preference** (making public opinion to shape public policy and law-making through rational anticipation by policymakers and through electoral turnover)	*Ficha Limpa*: mainstream media, email, and later social media (Orkut and Facebook) and website.	*Ficha Limpa*: started offline (with printed material, face to face group meetings, positive coverage of mainstream media), and in the final phase introduced online tools (social media).
		TMAC: mainstream media, digital media (social media, website, group messaging apps) and website.	*TMAC:* combined online (circulating official content on social media and the campaign website) and offline (organizers' talks, meetings with local leaderships, interviews with mainstream and alternative media, and low-key demonstrations).
3.Negotiating with powerholders (Advocacy)	**Political Access** (becoming more integrated into the policymaking process)	*Ficha Limpa*: e-petition by Avaaz, mailing lists, social media (Orkut, Facebook, YouTube, Ning, Twitter) phone calls, mainstream media	*Ficha Limpa*: hybrid strategy combining offline (demonstrations, lobby on the floor in Congress and in the MPs' constituencies, interviews/press conferences to mainstream and alternative outlets) and online advocacy tactics (calling for action to flood MPs' mailboxes, call their offices, upload hashtags). The same joint strategy was used to guarantee its enactment by the president and to pressure the Supreme Court to uphold its constitutionality.
		TMAC: social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram,	TMAC: online tactics (more slacktivist practices such as

		YouTube), group messaging apps such as WhatsApp and Telegram, and mainstream media.	uploading hashtags) but also offline strategies (talks and meetings with MPs, hearings in the Congress, demonstrations, interviews/press conferences).

Source: Authors, based on Kolb (2007) and Burstein (1999, 2020)

The type of media and communication strategies varied between the two cases, particularly regarding the legal input mechanism. The main reason, in this case, is the lack of technological resources available for *Ficha Limpa* activists such as WhatsApp and Telegram and the lower level of engagement on social media at that time. Overall, the digital media proved helpful in what Burstein and Linton (2002) called the "pre-policy part" of the policy process. Although serving more as an internal communication tool in the phase of designing the proposal, the use of digital media amplified efforts and created new types of strategies to guarantee the initial entry onto the legislative agenda. Both initiatives, however, used hybrid tactics in all phases of the policymaking cycle, although TMAC did so in a less innovative way than *Ficha Limpa*.

One valid question is to what extent the success of *Ficha Limpa* had impacted the outcomes of TMAC. In particular, interviewees directly involved in the Ten Measures state that the former inspired the latter. In many ways, as mentioned, they replicated strategies and activities used in the first initiative. However, the Anti-Vote Buying Law campaign and its offspring community, particularly the one linked to the Catholic Church, have played a crucial role in the *Ficha Limpa* mobilization wave. Simultaneously, the Ten Measures' restricted group of creators did not count on the full support of these relationships. TMAC attracted other groups with very limited or no experience in advocacy and public policy actions. One possible explanation for the TMAC failure could be the "glass cliff" metaphor, in this case, non-traditional activists with little advocacy knowledge trying to act in the political realm. There is yet another more counterintuitive explanation. *Ficha Limpa*'s remarkable strike against the political class with a dirty background created a kind of "threshold effect" among powerholders. In other words, it may have increased the level of effort needed to break political resistance and enact any other popular anti-corruption initiative in Brazil, although data collected in this study does not indicate this. However, further research with MPs may be necessary to draw such a conclusion. Besides, anti-corruption proposals are usually very likely to attract attention and popular support but have low political interest, especially where officeholders perceive this type of legislation as detrimental.

Overall, the results suggest that to increase the chances of succeeding in the policy arena it is necessary to select communicative goals and the types of digital media that interplay with the three mechanisms in an effective way:

1.   Creating a solid communicative space for the interaction of different types of individual and collective actors so as to foster a law proposal that is collectively constructed and exhaustively discussed with key civil society organizations before submitting it to the legislature;

2.   Having an appealing proposal with a simple and clear message that can be spread on multiple digital media at the same time to increase the likelihood of attracting the attention of the broad public;

3.   Having the capacity to develop clear online and offline joint strategies for social mobilization and advocacy, mainly in the negotiation phase with MPs to successfully pass the legislation, and later with other powerholders to guarantee its enforcement.

The two cases analyzed here also tell us that these three major features increase the chances of attracting favorable public opinion and support from powerful political allies, which is crucial for a popular

initiative that needs a minimum number of signatures to be submitted and depends on the political system to be enacted. Although these findings are tremendously valuable for the nascent field of anti-corruption studies, they allow reflections that go beyond this area of investigation. Lessons learnt here suggest that legal input mechanisms combined with online and offline tactics are likely to increase the odds of citizens and civil society organizations who advocate for policies to effectively persuade powerholders to fully support their public policy preferences — even the ones made to be enforced against public officials' own interests, as is the case with anti-corruption legislation that can be used to punish the very politicians who are enacting it.

Although the political domain of social movement outcomes has been far more frequently studied than cultural and biographical effects (Bosi and Uba 2009), this article aimed to contribute to this debate by assessing the role of digital media in social participation through law-making in all stages of the policy process and by bringing collective actions against corruption to the scene. Both are still largely unexplored topics. Even though there has been little theoretical disagreement that advocacy works because of its connection to election outcomes (Burstein 2020, 5) — and we also considered that electoral politics is relevant — the mechanisms under analysis here indicated that SMOs and interest groups can convert collective interests into policy proposals, insert their claims in the political agenda and, eventually, get what they want not only when politicians sympathetic to their views win office.

As this study suggests, the chances of achieving policy change are significantly enhanced with an appealing proposal with a bold message that has been collectively discussed and drafted before being submitted, along with clear strategies of negotiation (and political pressure) that combine online and offline tactics. Digital media can easily amplify the effect of strategies in all phases of the policymaking process, particularly when creating awareness and when public support is needed. From this perspective, digital media is a flexible resource that might effectively be combined with other mechanisms at various stages of the same mobilization. However, we need to notice that digital media alone may be not enough to promote outcomes, especially if the movement's organizations do not combine digital media with other types of media and do not adopt offline strategies to negotiate. From this viewpoint, our findings also have a broader methodological implication for the literature on social movement outcomes. Indeed, the analytical reconstruction of the entanglement between mechanisms, types of digital media, and forms of communication showed that digital media are, of course, relevant, but face-to-face communication and more traditional media are equally important. This is in line with studies suggesting looking at media and social movements from an encompassing viewpoint, going beyond the focus on just one type of media at a time and rather considering the whole "repertoire of communication" (Mattoni 2012) that activists deploy when mobilizing.

In short, this article illustrated how highly digitalized campaigns include other communication forms that do not necessarily rely only on digital media. A more comprehensive understanding of how the mechanisms that lead to social movement outcomes unfold during mobilizations, waves of mobilizations, and cycles of contention cannot be separated from an appreciation of the broader communication strategies that activists decide to employ, without focusing solely on the newest digital media that activists use in their campaigns. In this regard, it is striking to notice how TMAC was a campaign that occurred when the digital affordances for civil society actors were considerably higher than those that activists could count on during the *Ficha Limpa* campaign. This also means that similarly to what happens in the case of political opportunities (Goodwin and Jasper 2004), it is not enough to have digital media available in societies for activists deciding to use them and do so effectively. As we showed, collectively constructed bills, along with leaders with both prestige and expertise to negotiate with congressional members, are as important as the rise of calls for urgent progress obtained through activists' engagement with digital media.

We also need to acknowledge that these resources may be less relevant in negotiating with political elites in adverse contexts. For example, TMAC's offline strategies of negotiation were combined with the extensive

use of digital media but were unsuccessful not only because of the lack of expertise in advocacy and building civil society coalitions but also due to the generally adverse political conditions, and the fact that potential targets of the new legal reform were many MPs appreciating the proposals and their close allies. This points to the fact that there is a partial interaction between media, context, and targets. Although the literature already links endogenous and exogenous factors to explain how social movements reach their aims, the two cases point to the importance of the existence of interaction between mobilization strength, lobby capacity and alliance building, a high level of political interest often boosted by temporal proximity to an electoral period, and politicians experiencing new forms of pressure to increase their interest in passing popular initiatives.

Such findings also speak to the (anti-)corruption literature which is closely interested in understanding how to enhance various types of accountability mechanisms in societies. More specifically, we illustrated that civil society actors and social movement processes are indeed relevant in the creation of horizontal accountability mechanisms. This connects with what the literature has said about more structured civil society organizations being more likely to achieve better outcomes and the importance of joint efforts between civil society organizations and other anti-corruption actors (Johnston 2012). Consistent with what the literature on anti-corruption studies stresses about combining bottom-up and top-down approaches, a possibility for citizens to effectively redress corruption may start from the legal input mechanism but is not limited to it.

Despite drawing on two specific case studies situated in the Brazilian context, we believe that this paper might offer relevant insights to understand other types of anti-corruption efforts from the grassroots across the world, especially when it comes to the interplay between activists' collective actions and digital media in impacting anti-corruption norms. Indeed, like Carlos, Dowbor and Albuquerque (2017) noted, research carried out in Brazil brought a new perspective on collective action's institutionalization beyond the specific country context. Institutions and key actors of the political system have been incorporated by scholars into their analyzes to better explore different dynamics and interactions between movements and the state that is by far not limited to the repertoire of contention in Brazil. Furthermore, we have strong reasons to believe that our findings on the role of digital media in mechanisms that sustain the outcomes of anti-corruption mobilizations are not limited to campaigns that deal with this social problem. However, to develop a solid generalization about the intricate relationship between digital media, collective action mechanisms, and social movements outcomes, our findings need to be tested with activists' campaigns, both successful and unsuccessful in obtaining policy change, with regard to other contentious issues than corruption, other countries then Brazil, and other periods than the one between 2007 and 2017.

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