

Kurskod: SKOK11/SKDK11
Termin: Spring term 2018
Handledare: Nils Holmberg
Examinator: Nils Gustafsson

Personalisation on Instagram

A quantitative content analysis of prominent Swedish politicians' Instagram posts

ANGELICA CÖSTER & VICTOR DAHLBERG

Lund University
The Department of Strategic Communication
Bachelor's thesis



Abstract

Personalisation on Instagram

Personalisation is a concept which is based on the idea that focus is increasingly directed at the individual politician and his or her personal characteristics. Social media, such as Instagram, has revived the concept since the possibilities for personalised political communication have increased. This study aimed to examine if personalised communication among prominent Swedish politicians on Instagram has increased during the current parliamentary term (2014-2018), if personalised communication gains more traction than other types of content on Instagram and, finally, if politicians incorporate private aspects when conveying political messages on Instagram. To achieve this aim a quantitative content analysis of prominent Swedish politicians' Instagram posts (n=1641) was conducted. The findings show that the proportion of personalised posts was large but it had not increased during the current parliamentary term. Furthermore, personalised content was associated with higher levels of popularity and engagement but the study could not provide evidence for this being statistically significant for all politicians at all times. Moreover, the study found that Swedish politicians increasingly are incorporating private aspects when conveying political messages and that these *hybrids*, as we have named them, are receiving more popularity than political messages that are strictly political.

Number of characters: 106 568

Keywords: Digital political communication, strategic communication, personalisation, media logic, social media logics, quantitative content analysis, Instagram, social media, hybrids, swedish politics, swedish politicians

Sammanfattning

Personalisering på Instagram

Konceptet personalisering innebär att fokus allt oftare riktas mot individuella politiker och deras personliga egenskaper. Sociala medier, så som Instagram, har gjort konceptet än mer aktuellt då möjligheterna att politiskt kommunicera personligt har ökat genom dessa. Studien ämnade att undersöka om personaliserad kommunikation av framstående svenska politiker på Instagram har ökat under den senaste mandatperioden, om personaliserat innehåll är mer attraktivt än andra innehållstyper på Instagram, samt om framstående svenska politiker inkorporerar privata aspekter när de kommunicerar politiska budskap. För att uppnå detta syfte utfördes en kvantitativ innehållsanalys av svenska politikernas instagraminlägg (n=1641). Resultatet visar att andelen personligt innehåll på Instagram var stor men fann ingen ökning under den senaste mandatperioden. Personaliserat innehåll var associerat med högre nivåer av popularitet och engagemang men studien kunde inte statistiskt säkerställa att detta skulle gälla alla studerade politiker vid alla tillfällen. Slutligen visade studien att svenska politiker alltmer använder privata aspekter när de kommunicerar politiska meddelanden på Instagram och att dessa *hybrider*, som vi har valt att namnge dem, genererar mer popularitet än politiska meddelanden som är strikt politiska.

Antal tecken: 106 568

Nyckelord: Digital politisk kommunikation, strategisk kommunikation, personalisering, medielogiker, sociala medie-logiker, kvantitativ innehållsanalys, Instagram, sociala medier, hybrider, svensk politik, svenska politiker

A Big Thank You

To Lund University and the Department of Strategic Communication

To our supervisor Nils Holmberg for supporting and guiding us
through this turbulent time of the Bachelor's thesis.

To our families who have been incredible pillars of support,
partly in reading and giving advice but also through
providing emotional support whenever it was needed.

We would like to emphasise that both authors have contributed equally to
the dissertation and we hope that you will have a pleasant time reading it.

Angelica Cöster & Victor Dahlberg

Lund - 24 May 2018

Table of content

1. Introduction	1
1.1. Background	1
1.2 Problem area.....	3
1.3. The aim of the study.....	5
1.4. Delimitations	6
1.5. Outline of thesis.....	6
1.6 Setting.....	7
1.6.1 The platform Instagram.....	7
1.6.2 Internet use and Instagram use in Sweden	7
1.6.3 Brief background on the Swedish political system	8
2. Previous research	9
2.1 The Personalisation Hypothesis – RQ1.....	9
2.2 Personalisation and popularity – RQ2.....	12
2.3 Previous research related to RQ3	13
3. Theoretical framework	15
3.1 Personalisation.....	15
3.2 Mass media logic and Social media logics.....	18
4. Method.....	22
4.1 Choice of method	22
4.2 Sample	23
4.2.1 Sampling of politicians.....	23
4.2.2 Sampling of posts	24
4.3 Coding scheme and procedure	26
4.3.1 Coding scheme and variables.....	26
4.3.2 Coding procedure: training, coding manual and implementation.....	28
4.4 Quality criteria: intercoder reliability and validity.....	29
4.5 Data analysis.....	30
4.5.1 Data analysis for H1	30
4.5.1 Data analysis for H2.....	31
4.5.1 Data analysis for RQ3	33
4.6 Method reflection	33

5. Results and Analyses	35
5.1 Introduction to results and analyses	35
5.2 Descriptive overview of the data.....	35
5.3 Results and Analysis related to H1 and RQ1	36
5.3.1 Results related to H1	36
5.3.2 Analysis related to the Personalisation Thesis - RQ1	37
5.4 Results and Analysis related to H2 and RQ2	39
5.4.1 Results related to H2	39
5.4.2 Analysis related to Personalisation and Popularity - RQ2	45
5.5 Results and Analysis related to RQ3.....	47
5.5.1 Results related to RQ3.....	47
5.5.2 Analysis related to hybrids - RQ3	49
6. Conclusions and discussion	51
6.1 Conclusions	51
6.2 Discussion	52
6.3 Research contribution and suggestions for further research	54
References	56
Appendices	62
Appendix 1 - Sampling of posts	62
Appendix 2 – Coding manual.....	66
Appendix 3 – Coding scheme	68

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Social media has become an increasingly important component in political communication and political mobilisation. It has opened up new ways for politicians to interact with their party members and the public about their opinions, policy initiatives and daily lives, but social media has also enabled politicians to control their image in new ways (Kruikemeier, van Noort, Vliengenthart & de Vreese, 2013). More and more individual politicians are using social media platforms to communicate with potential voters and their party members which makes the recurring thesis in political communication - *personalisation* - even more relevant (Enli & Skogerbø, 2013).

Personalisation of politics is considered a central development in modern industrial democracies (Van Aelst, Sheafer & Stanyer, 2011). The personalisation thesis is based on the idea that the focus is increasingly directed at the individual politician and his or her personal traits at the sacrifice of parties, issues and institutions. This development is considered a result of two intertwined factors: firstly, the process of party dealignment which means that the traditional bond between the parties and voters is weakened; and, secondly, changes in the media landscape which has led to a development of a media logic where personal aspects are favoured in the news evaluation in order to attract a mass audience (Van Aelst, et al., 2011; Kriesi, 2011; Karvonen, 2009). It can be argued that the tendency to direct attention to the individual candidate or politician instead of the party has further increased with the emergence of social media since these platforms are constructed in a way where personal content that engages the audience is favoured. Politicians are hence provided with a platform where they increasingly can undertake personalised campaigns and construct an image of themselves where their personal characteristics and qualities are emphasized (Ekman & Widholm, 2017; Larsson, 2017b; Kruikemeier et al, 2013; Enli & Skogerbø, 2013).

Personalisation can be studied and understood from three perspectives - the voters, the media and the political actors. In more detail this means that, voters may increasingly vote based on personal traits of the politician; the media may increasingly focus on the individual politician and its activities at the expense of coverage of the parties and institutions, and finally; the political actors may emphasise themselves and their personality traits rather than the party and its ideologies in their strategic communication strategies (Karvonen, 2010; Rahat & Sheaffer, 2007; Van Aelst et al., 2011). In this study, we have chosen to focus on the latter, the political actors, and their strategic use of Instagram during the current parliamentary term. There is a lack of research in this area since most studies of the personalisation thesis in politics previously have focused on the ways in which politicians are presented in the media and not how the politicians present themselves (Hermans & Vergeer, 2012). Furthermore, Russman and Svensson (2017) who is one of few that have studied politicians' communication on Instagram states that "further research should focus on candidate accounts"(p. 61) which this study intends to do. Moreover, previous studies have focused on the election campaign period (Gustafsson, 2015) whereas this study has been based on Blumenthal's (1980) idea that campaigns have become more or less permanent and, therefore, examines a full parliamentary term.

The social media platform Instagram, which is the object of study, is a user-generated image-sharing platform that has grown fast since its launch in 2010. In late 2017, Instagram had 800 million users (Statista, 2018a) which means that the global usage reach was 11 percent. In Sweden, however, this number is considerably higher, 53 percent of all Swedes are active Instagram users (IIS, 2017) which is the highest usage penetration in the world (Statista, 2018b). One would, therefore, assume that Instagram has caught the attention of both politicians who want to reach this massive audience and scholars that study political communication, but this does not seem to be the case. Instagram is still an emerging platform both when it comes to politicians' use of the platform but also when it comes to research. Twitter is a more popular object of study (Russmann & Svensson, 2017) which could be explained by the relative ease of data collection but also because it is, in the Nordic region, considered as an elite medium used mostly by politicians, PR-consultants and the media (Larsson, 2017a).

Instagram differs from other social media platforms as it is centred around visual communication rather than textual communication. Differently put, the platform is used to upload pictures with an optional caption whereas other social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter work the opposite way (Russmann & Svensson, 2017). Images are not a new phenomenon in political communication, political campaigns have included tv-advertising, posters, and televised debates for a long time (Russman & Svensson, 2017) and the importance of visuals in an image-building process of a political actor is well-known (Filimonov, Russman & Svensson, 2016). Visuals can, according to Barthes (1977), be helpful in order to communicate the intended meaning and are also easier to remember and pay attention to compared to text (Filimonov, et al., 2016). Despite its centrality, “[t]he visual aspects of political communication remain one of the least studied and the least understood areas and research focusing on visual symbols in political communication is severely lacking ” (Schill, 2012, p. 119). Ekman and Widholm (2017) also argue for the lack of research in visual political communication comparing it with textual political communication and Twitter which a lot of scholarly work has been devoted to. Visual communication is, however, now an emerging field of research in political communication (Schill, 2012).

1.2 Problem area

There are mixed perceptions among theorists regarding the consequences of politics becoming more personalised. Some scholars, such as de Vreese (2007), Enli and Skogerbø (2013) and Kruikemeier et al., (2013), argue that personalisation have positive implications for the democracy as it reduces the psychological gap between the politicians and the public, and hence brings the citizens and politicians closer together. The other standpoint which is represented by scholars like Postman (1985), Hart (1992), Habermas (1989; 1996) and Sennet (1976) argue that this, on the contrary, has negative effects for the democracy since it, instead of focusing on substantial political issues, brings attention to personal information which is seen as not being political or necessary. It is argued that this depoliticises the public debate and leaves the public less informed on substantial issues (Van Zoonen, 2005). Hart (1992) further argues that it can create cynicism among the

public since people will get more dissatisfied when politicians break their trust if they are close to them and feel that they know them on a personal level.

Along with the trend of increased personalisation, the trust in the democratic form of government is falling, a trend called democratic deconsolidation (Foa & Mounk, 2017). In addition to this, more and more people across the globe are dissatisfied with, and are showing an increased scepticism towards, established political parties, parliaments and institutions. This is especially evident in the United States and some countries in Europe but Sweden is also showing signs of this trend (Foa, Mounk & Inglehart, 2016; Foa & Mounk, 2017). Approval ratings for the party leaders and parties are low and mistrust in political institutions is growing (Foa et al., 2016; SOM-institutet, 2016). Another sign of democratic deconsolidation is the rising popularity of the far-right populist party, Sweden Democrats, which originally had a clear anti-establishment approach and can, thus, be linked to this trend (Foa et al., 2016). This is not to say that this is the result of an increased focus on politicians at the expense of parties and issues but it can, however, be argued that there is little evidence for personalisation bringing citizens and politicians closer together at this time.

If the trend towards personalisation continues to evolve McAllister (2007) argue that party dealignment might further increase and the party leaders will hold a greater deal of power and have greater autonomy. It might also result in election results being determined by the election campaigns to a higher degree. Election campaigns where the focus will be on the personal image rather than on political issues. Another consequence of an increased personalisation is that it can eventually lead to demands for institutional reconstruction. Since Sweden's current parliamentary system is party-based it might not hold up its legitimacy in a future where voters want to vote for a leader rather than a party (McAllister, 2007).

Even if this study's aim is not to examine to what extent personalisation on Instagram is affecting the democracy and the trust in political institutions it is important to shed light on the negative as well as positive consequences of this trend. Since the number of people who question the liberal democratic system has increased, Russman and Svensson (2017) argue that it has "been seen as increasingly important for political actors to interact with the public about political matters; and here, social media platforms are appealing" (p. 53). With that as a background, we believe that the results from this study will give insights into how

prominent Swedish politicians' have communicated during the current parliamentary term and, in that way, be helpful in order for them to improve their future strategic communication with the consequences for the democracy in mind.

1.3. The aim of the study

The aim of the study is to examine prominent Swedish politicians' Instagram accounts in relation to the concept of personalisation. More specifically, we aim to determine whether or not the proportion of personalised posts has increased during the current parliamentary term and if there is a relationship between personalised content and popularity or engagement (defined as likes and comments). Furthermore, this study aims to uncover if Swedish politicians are incorporating aspects from their private sphere when communicating political messages, and if so, see if this has increased during the current parliamentary term. A longitudinal study was chosen since personalisation "refers to a trend, a process of change over time" (Van Aelst, et al., 2011, p. 205) and therefore aims to examine if personalisation has increased over the last few years.

This will hopefully bring clarity in how Swedish politicians' Instagram use has developed during the present parliamentary term and if personalised content is successful in terms of popularity and engagement. Lastly, we hope to reveal to what extent personal aspects are used to strategically communicate political messages to potential voters. In order to reach this aim, the three following research questions were formulated:

1. Has the proportion of personalised content on prominent Swedish politicians' Instagram accounts increased during the current parliamentary term?
2. Is there a relationship between personalised content on Swedish politicians' Instagram and popularity/engagement?
3. a) Are politicians on Instagram incorporating aspects from their private sphere when communicating political messages?
b) In that case, has the proportion of this communication strategy increased during the current parliamentary term?

- c) Are political messages with a connection to the politician's private sphere more popular than political messages that are strictly political?

1.4. Delimitations

This study has been delimited in several ways. First of all, we have chosen to study personalisation on only one social media platform - Instagram - instead of looking at this trend on a variety of platforms. Secondly, the study is delimited to focus on the personalisation strategies employed by politicians in their own communicative efforts. Thirdly, the sample is delimited to include 16 politicians (2 from each party) and 8 posts per quarter since October 2014 (n=112/politician) but still aims to generalise the results so that it represents these 16 politicians' content overall during the current parliamentary term. Furthermore, this study is delimited to only understand if personalisation among prominent Swedish politicians has increased and to what extent personalisation is successful in terms of popularity and engagement on Instagram and we are, thus, not trying to understand this phenomenon and its consequences on a deeper level. To be able to do that we would have needed to use qualitative methods as well. Moreover, this study can not say anything about to what extent personalised content on Instagram has an effect in terms of voting behaviour or level of trust in a specific politician.

We consider that the empirical data, despite the delimitations, is sufficient in order to be able to answer the research questions. The choices on how to delimit this study have been done as a consequence of the scarcity of time, choice of method, as well as our area of interest - strategic political communication.

1.5. Outline of thesis

This study is disposed as follows. The next chapter will present an overview of previous research on the personalisation thesis, the relationship between personalised content and popularity and lastly the use of personal aspects when conveying political messages. It will be divided in accordance with the research questions and the first two sections will be concluded by proposing a hypothesis. The subsequent chapter is outlining the theoretical framework in which we are trying to intertwine two central theoretical concepts in digital political communication

namely: *personalisation* and *media logics*. The fourth chapter is devoted to the choice of method, quantitative content analysis of Instagram posts (n=1641), and our reflections surrounding this. This is followed by chapter five where the study's result is presented and discussed in relation to the research questions and the theoretical framework. In the study's sixth and final chapter a concluding discussion is presented as well as suggestions for politicians' strategic use of Instagram and future research of political communication on the platform.

1.6 Setting

1.6.1 The platform Instagram

Instagram posts contain a picture or a video with an optional caption in connection with the visual element (Filimonov et al., 2016). Additionally, the textual section of the post complements the visual section with textual content and/or with hashtags. These posts might also receive likes and/or comments from followers and users. The technical course of action is that a user clicks on a digital heart-shaped figure which symbolises that a user likes a poster's post. The likes and comments then become visible for all users to observe (Russman & Svensson, 2017).

1.6.2 Internet use and Instagram use in Sweden

Sweden has a high percentage of Internet penetration and Instagram has, as mentioned above, had an upsurge in usage lately (Filimonov et al., 2016). In fact, 53% of the Swedish population used Instagram on a regular basis in 2017. This can be compared with Twitter which only 25 percent of the Swedish population use regularly. Since the study is examining the years 2014 -2018 it must be emphasized that the overall development of usage on Instagram has increased steadily over the last few years: 2014 - 36 %, 2015 - 40 %, 2016 - 44 %. A larger proportion of females and young people are using Instagram. For example, 81 percent in the age group 16-25 use Instagram on a regular basis. However, the usage is increasing the most among older Internet users where some of the age categories have doubled in a year (IIS, 2017).

Seeing that almost half of the Swedish population use Instagram, political actors have the potential to reach a massive audience when targeting potential voters on Instagram. Furthermore, younger people tend to be less interested in politics (Loader, Vromen & Xenos, 2016) which makes communicating political content through Instagram a great opportunity in order to reach those who normally are not interested in politics. It should also be added that since females, especially young females, are overrepresented on the platform this group can potentially be reached in a way that might be considered impossible on other media platforms.

1.6.3 Brief background on the Swedish political system

Sweden has a multi-party system with proportional representation and the parliamentary terms run for four years. Currently, there are eight different parties represented in the parliament and seven of these are cooperating in two different blocs. The centre-right bloc consists of the Centre Party, Liberals, Moderates and Christian Democrats (Swedish Institute, 2018). The red-green alliance used to consist of the Social Democrats, the Green Party and the Left Party, but this alliance is currently disbanded, however, it still exists in a more informal manner. Besides these seven parties, populist Sweden Democrats is the eighth party in the parliament although not belonging to any collaborating force at present time (Ekman & Widholm, 2015).

2. Previous research

2.1 The Personalisation Hypothesis – RQ1

As mentioned in the introduction (see section 1.1), personalisation can be studied and understood from three perspectives - the voters, the media and the political actors' - and our focus will be on the latter. There is however little research on this area and much more focus has been directed towards the media perspective. We will, thus, present the empirical results from studies in the media perspective and try to connect them with the few studies that have been done concerning personalisation from the political actor perspective on social media in order to present an overview of previous studies related to research question 1. It should be emphasized that this literature overview does not cover all research that has been conducted on the area. In the selection of previous research, we chose to focus mainly on studies concerning the northern European context.

The empirical evidence for the personalisation thesis from the news media perspective is mixed which both Strömbäck (2014) and Rahat and Sheafer (2007) explain might be a result of different researchers defining personalisation in various ways as well as an absence of a uniform approach to the concept. Furthermore, Bjerling (2012) states that few studies have dealt with “the softer side of the concept” (p.75) and instead focused on “the question of whether, over time, there are more individual actors in the coverage” (p.75). Furthermore, previous research has tended to disregard the importance of visuals in the personalisation thesis (Bjerling, 2012).

A few examples of studies that support the thesis are Karvonen (2010), Langer (2006) and Reinemann and Wilke (2007). The empirical result supporting the personalisation thesis presented by Karvonen (2010) concerns campaign advertising. He found that the share of advertisements on the party had decreased steadily while the advertisements on the individual candidate had stayed on a constant level. Langer's (2006) study focused on media coverage of the British prime ministers and she found evidence supporting three aspects of the personalisation thesis:

increased focus on personal traits and characteristics, increased focus on the leadership aspect and finally an increased visibility. Reinemann and Wilke (2007) studied election coverage in the German context and found that there was an “enormous increase in the importance of appearance and the looks of candidates” (p. 103).

Two examples of studies that present mixed evidence on the personalisation thesis are Bjerling (2012) and Johansson (2008). Bjerling (2012) have conducted the most extensive study on personalisation in the Swedish news media context which covers the election campaigns between 1979 and 2010. The study shows that not much has changed regarding how often the party leaders are mentioned in the news media but the party leaders’ personal traits and characteristics are increasingly emphasised. Johansson (2008) examined news coverage of eight Swedish election campaigns since 1982 and found evidence supporting the thesis in some media channels (e.g. tabloids). Three studies that reject the personalisation thesis are Kreisi (2011), Asp and Johansson (1999) and Bennulf and Hedberg (1993). Kreisi (2011) studied coverage of elections in six European countries and found that “there is neither a general trend towards increasing personalisation in media coverage of electoral campaigns, nor a trend towards increasing concentration of the media coverage on a limited set of top political leaders” (p.841). Asp and Johansson (1999) and Bennulf and Hedberg (1993) have found similar results and therefore reject the thesis in the Swedish context.

These studies’ empirical evidence are relevant also in the perspective of the political actors’ strategic communication since personalisation in the media according to Rahat and Sheaffer (2007) “leads to personalization in the behaviour of the politicians“ (p.65). Aylott (2005) shares this approach and suggests that since the media have increased its focus on the individual party leaders, the parties have responded by increasingly placing their candidates in the centre of their communication. Differently put, if there is an increased focus on the individual politician in news coverage it is likely that the politician increasingly will start to behave and communicate as an individual rather than as part of a collective.

Examples of studies that have focused on the political actors’ perspective in an online context are Filimonov et. al. (2016), Lalancette and Raynauld (2014), Enli and Skogerbo (2013) and Ekman and Widholm (2015; 2017). Filimonov et al. (2016) studied Swedish political parties’ Instagram use four weeks during the

national election campaign in 2014 through a quantitative content analysis. They found that the content posted “leaned towards personalization with a strong presence of top candidates” (p.1) but the content did not, however, display the candidates’ personal life to a large extent but instead focused on the professional context. Lalancette and Raynauld (2017) studied the Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s Instagram account through a mixed methods approach. They found that even though the Instagram content was used to shape a positive image of Trudeau, most content focused on him in a professional and political context rather than on his private life. Enli and Skogerbo (2013) examined social media use among Norwegian political communication. They found that the “social media marketing was personalized and involved private exposure and individual initiatives” (p.770) and suggests that social media have “become a new tool for personal politics, but not a fully established part of campaign communication” (p.771).

Lastly, Ekman and Widholm (2015; 2017) have studied political communication on social media in two different studies. In their study *Politicians as Media Producers* (2015), they examine Twitter in relation to the perspective of mediated interdependency between journalists and the politicians. They found that “Twitter unquestionably contributes to the ongoing process of increased personalization of politics, foremost by mediating the personal and private realm of politicians’ lives” (p.87). Furthermore, they state that this increased personalisation on social media contributes to what Wheeler (2013) names “celebrity politics” which means that politicians are displayed as individual brands and that this, in turn, will lead to an increased depoliticisation. The second study conducted by Ekman and Widholm (2017) explored Swedish politicians’ Instagram use in relation the concept of connectivity through a quantitative content analysis. They found that 65 per cent of the content on the platform did not contain any political messages which means that a majority of the content focused on other dimensions than the political. Furthermore, the content analysis showed that “the platform logic of Instagram contributed to the formation of digital lifestyle politics, where symbolic connections between politicians and a variety of actors are staged through new mediated relations” (p. 15).

To sum up, most focus in previous research on the personalisation thesis has been directed to the news media context. In these studies the empirical results have been mixed which at least partly is a result of the lack of consensus regard-

ing the operationalisation of the concept. There is, however, empirical evidence pointing towards social media driving personalisation and the hypothesis has therefore been based on this evidence.

Based on previous research on personalised political content in social media, we formulate the following hypothesis in order to address RQ1:

- *H1: The proportion of personalised posts on Swedish politicians' Instagram accounts has increased during the current parliamentary term.*

2.2 Personalisation and popularity – RQ2

The second research question concerns a possible relationship between personalised content and a high degree of popularity (likes) and engagement (comments) on Swedish politicians' Instagram accounts. Three studies that have researched this area are Larsson (2017b), Kruikemeier et al. (2013) and Ekman and Widholm (2017).

Larsson (2017b) conducted a study in which he explored the most popular posts on Norwegian politicians' and parties' Instagram accounts and analysed them through different aspects of the personalisation thesis. He found that personalised content on individual politicians' Instagram accounts was more popular in terms of gaining popularity (defined as likes and comments) than other types of content. However, when examining the political parties' accounts he found that content with a more formal character focusing on policies attracted more popularity. Moreover, Larsson (2017b) states that the leaders of the parties have started to outperform the parties' accounts on Instagram since individual politicians' Instagram accounts manage to gain more traction than the parties' accounts. He suggests that the reason for this is the much more personalised content being posted on the individual politicians' accounts and that these results should be considered when developing political communication strategies in the future. Furthermore, Larsson (2017b) emphasises that more research should be done in this area and suggests a study based on a quantitative content analysis with a larger sample.

Ekman and Widholm (2017) explore Swedish politicians' Instagram use through a quantitative content analysis (see section 2.1). They come to the conclu-

sion that politicians who to a large extent are providing content that is revolving around their own private sphere attracts more popularity than the ones who adopt a more conventional political approach in their Instagram use. Lastly, Kruikemeier et al. (2013) examined if personalised political communication triggers involvement in politics and found that it did. Their results show that the public is more prone to engage with political content that focuses on individuals rather than on parties. Furthermore, they observed “interactive, personalised online communication has a positive effect on citizens’ feeling of having the opportunity to come into contact with politics, and citizens’ feelings of closeness to politics” (p. 60). It should be noted that Kruikemeier et al. (2013) did not examine engagement on personalised content on social media but instead as an experiment on fabricated political websites. However, this does not necessarily mean that their results are not applicable in a social media context where engagement or involvement can be seen as to the tendency of liking or commenting on a post.

To sum up, the empirical evidence seems to point to the direction that personalised content tends to gain more traction on social media platforms than other types of content - which is why the hypothesis for research question 2 is going to be based on these results.

Based on previous research on the relationship between personalised political content in social media and popularity, we formulate the following hypothesis in order to address RQ2:

• *H2: Personalised content of Swedish politicians’ Instagram accounts are associated with higher levels of popularity and engagement indicators (likes and comments) compared to other types of content.*

2.3 Previous research related to RQ3

The third research question concerns if Swedish politicians are incorporating aspects from their private spheres when communicating political messages on Instagram and if this behaviour has increased during the current parliamentary term. Furthermore, it aims to reveal if this communication strategy is gaining more traction than strictly political messages. In our literature review, we found that only

few studies have touched upon this area before although without conceptualising the phenomenon. These studies will be presented in the following section in order to lay ground for the part of the study which aims to explore the strategy to incorporate private aspects when conveying political messages and we will, henceforth, refer to this type of communication as *hybrids*.

Ekman and Widholm (2015) found in their content analysis of Swedish politicians' Instagram use that "even when political issues are manifested, they come to the fore with an emphasis on the persona or on the achievements of the particular individual" (p.29) which supports the idea that this type of communication is being posted on Swedish politicians' Instagram accounts but it is not being described further and it is, thus, unclear to what extent or in what specific ways this is being communicated. Another study that has examined this area is Šimunjak (2012) who through a content analysis examined presidential candidates' statements in the daily newspapers during the 2009-2010 Croatian election. Šimunjak (2012) aimed to uncover to what extent aspects from the candidates' private spheres were used to communicate about issues in the public discourse and found that "a significant extent of the public discourse was indeed privatized" (p.50). This research was not examining this tendency in an online environment but the result is still relevant since it tells us something about political parties' communication strategies.

With those two studies in mind as well as previous research on the personalisation thesis it seems reasonable to assume that politicians are using private aspects when conveying political messages. It also seems likely that this type of communication has increased during the current parliamentary term because of the same arguments as for hypothesis 1 which dealt with the personalisation thesis. Previous research also suggests that personalised content receives more popularity than other content types and this can be considered applicable even though it is political. This means that it is reasonable to assume that hybrids receive more popularity than political messages that are strictly political. However, since there is no previous research that has examined this specific area a hypothesis can not be proposed. This part of the research will, hence, be devoted to explore the concept of *hybrids*.

3. Theoretical framework

3.1 Personalisation

As mentioned in the introduction, personalisation is considered as a central development in modern industrial democracies and the personalisation thesis is based on the idea that focus is increasingly directed at the individual politician and its personality traits. Even though there is a lack of consensus regarding the thesis it appears that scholars can agree on three things. Firstly; personalisation concerns a development over time which means that the thesis is based on the idea that personalisation is an upward trend; secondly; the politicians' communication strategies and the media logics are both reasons as to why there is an increased personalisation; lastly; personalisation has many dimensions but there is less consensus on how to define the concept and separate dimensions within it (Van Aelst et al. 2011).

Empirical evidence on the personalisation thesis in the context of news coverage is, as pointed out in the literature overview, mixed which Van Aelst et al. (2011) claim is due to a lack of a common conceptualisation and operationalisation. Consequently, Van Aelst et al. (2011) suggest a framework where personalisation is divided into two dimensions - *individualisation* and *privatisation* - in order to unify the mixed perceptions of the concept. Individualisation refers to “a focus on individual politicians as central actors in the political arena, including their ideas, capacities and policies” (Van Aelst et al., 2011, p. 204). This is, however, not to say that the coverage on substantial issues necessarily is in decline but rather an increased focus on the individual politicians at the expense of media coverage on the parties. The second dimension, privatisation, concerns an increased focus on the politicians as private persons rather than simply being portrayed as politicians in official roles. Van Aelst et al. (2011) state “the politician is no longer presented solely as a policy maker or as a spokesperson but rather as a dedicated parent or a passionate music lover” (p. 206). These two dimensions of personalisation are also identified by Kriesi (2011) although referring to them as

“two phenomena” instead of naming them individualisation and privatisation. The first phenomenon can be considered related to individualisation since it refers to an increased emphasis on individual politicians; and the second phenomenon can be considered related to privatisation seeing that it concerns a shift where attention is directed to politicians’ private spheres and favouring matters that are not of a political nature rather than focusing on their professional and public roles. This study will primarily focus on the second dimension or phenomena - privatisation - since it is more relevant in a perspective of political actors’ communication on social media.

Even though social media is often blamed for being the reason why political actors increasingly are communicating personalised with potential voters it is important to bear in mind that this type of communication strategy is not a new phenomenon (Larsson, 2017b). The personalisation of politics can be traced back to the what Blumler and Kavangah (1999) refer to as the second age of political communication. This age, which started in the 1960’s, was characterised by the television becoming the most important channel for political communication as well as a decline in party loyalty (Blumler & Kavangah, 1999). The introduction of televised programs was especially influential when it came to personalisation since it contributed to a “sharper focus on top leaders” (p. 212).

Despite the fact that personalisation is a rather old phenomenon it is closely connected with the rise of social media (Svensson, 2012). Enli and Skogerbø (2013) point out that social media platforms like Instagram “fit into long-term ongoing processes where political communication has become increasingly focused on personalities and personal traits of politicians” (p.758). Other scholars seem to agree; Ekman and Widholm (2017) argues that social media steer the focus on to political candidates’ personal characteristics which, in turn, increases personalisation in political communication strategies; Van Santen and Van Zoonen (2010) states that social media platforms are constructed so that politicians can communicate directly with the public which as a consequence puts the politician in the center; Larsson (2017b) claim that social media has intensified the process of personalisation which other media types initiated. Larsson (2017b) further argues that since visuals on the television played such a critical role in the process of personalisation it is likely that a platform like Instagram which focuses on images can be of the similar importance.

Scholars have suggested that there are both positive as well as negative implications of the personalisation process (Larsson, 2017b). Considering positive effects, personalisation makes it easier for citizens to identify with politicians (Kruikemeier et al., 2013) instead of being seen as “distant elite figures” (Maarek, 2014, p. 18). This is, according to Larsson (2017b), diminishing “the psychological distance between the politician and the potential voter” (p.3). Maarek (2014) further argues that for a public with less interest in politics, personalised content is easier to understand than information on substantial issues. This can possibly be beneficial for election turnout and the politicians’ that communicate personalised might be able to get swing- and non-voters to cast their ballot in favour of them (Larsson, 2017b; Maarek, 2014).

As for the negative implications of personalisation it has been argued that it can be “detrimental for the quality of public debate” (Larsson, 2017b, p.4) since many scholars believe that an increased focus on the person also means that there will be a shift in focus from substantial political issues towards trivial information (Larsson, 2017b). This kind of argument can be traced to Habermas and his work on the concept *the public sphere* (Habermas, 1989). Habermas (2006) argues:

Issues of political discourse become assimilated into and absorbed by the modes and contents of entertainment. Besides personalization, the dramatization of events, the simplification of complex matters, and the vivid polarization of conflicts promote civic privatism and a mood of antipolitics (Habermas, 2006, p.422).

Habermas (2006) argues that the growing popularity of the image of candidates can be explained by the increased use of communication efforts where a candidate’s personal characteristics are emphasised. These characteristics of the politics are aimed to appeal to specific groups in order to sway voters. Furthermore, Habermas (2006) argues that the tendency to increasingly vote for issues goes parallel with an increased tendency to vote for a candidate rather than a party. However, the latter is not yet dominating.

In a party-centred political system like Sweden, the tendency for personalisation is less obvious compared to candidate-centred political systems such as the United States. Policies and political messages are mainly constructed and communicated by parties which results in political actors not having to construct as

strong personal images as in candidate-centred systems (Enli & Skogerbø, 2013). However, both Enli and Skogerbø (2013) and Larsson (2017b) argue that although the above fact, party-centred systems seem to increasingly be focused on specific candidates.

Enli and Skogerbø (2013) consider personalisation being “an aspect of the mediatization of politics that characterize most Western societies, and which implies, among other traits, that politicians have to meet demands not only to share their public image but also their personal and private sides” (p.758). They further argue that this process is closely connected to politics becoming popularised and politicians becoming celebrities. This will be elaborated on further in the following section.

3.2 Mass media logic and Social media logics

According to Ekman and Widholm (2015), the political actors and the journalists are equally contributing towards an increased personalisation. Political actors through emphasising their personal characteristics in their communication strategy and journalists by focusing on personal aspects in their news reporting. The reasons for this will be discussed in the following section.

The content in the media is dependent on what type of content that is considered to fit the media’s format, professional norms, organisation and need for attention and this is commonly known as *the media logic* (to differentiate this from the social media logics which will be discussed later, we will henceforth refer to this as *the mass media logic*). *The mass media logic* refers to the media’s tendency to report on news that fits the format of the media and the production conditions rather than news that objectively would be considered as newsworthy and capture the reality. News are reshaped in order to meet the media's need to reduce information, catch the public's attention and making the content easy to grasp. One of the concrete expressions for the mass media logic is, thus, to create narrative techniques which make the content easier to understand and personalisation is one example of this (Strömbäck, 2014).

Another part of the concept of the mass media logic has to do with how other actors in society are affected by this. Since media have become such a central component in modern societies actors who want to reach and communicate with

the public need to adjust to fit the media logic (Strömbäck, 2014). In a political context this means “political actors need to adapt their strategies so that they fit the *modus operandi* of the mass media, notably the narrative conventions, professional expectations and technological and distributional features” (Ekman & Widholm, 2017, p. 17).

During the last few years, the mass media logic has slowly been infiltrated by logics created by social media platforms (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013). These new logics is influencing the ways in which one selects, consumes, distributes and produces information (Kalsnes, 2016) and is referred to as *social media logic* by Van Djick and Poell (2013), *platform logic* by Bucher (2012), and *network media logic* by Klinger and Svensson (2014). Van Djick and Poell (2013) describes social media logic as “the processes, principles, and practices through which these platforms process information, news, and communication, and more generally, how they channel social traffics” (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013, p.5) and it is their definition and framework the following part of this section will be based on. Van Dijck and Poell (2013) have developed a framework in which they suggest that social media logic is centred on four characteristics: datafication, connectivity, popularity and programmability. However, only two of these are relevant when discussing this in relation to the research questions - *popularity* and *programmability*.

Programmability refers to the ways the platforms’ infrastructure is constructed to influence how the users interact on, and use, the platforms. This is done through algorithms that for example decide what type of content that is favoured in the feed or in the “explore” function on Instagram. In the old mass media logic, this is referred to as the editorial selection of certain content which is visible for anyone by looking at for example a TV schedule but in the case of social media this is not possible. The codes behind the algorithms on social media platforms such as Instagram are kept a secret and are constantly being altered in order to “enhance” the user experience as well as to improve the business of selling advertisements (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013). In other words, with mass media it is easy to analyse what type of content that is being favoured but with social media it is, at the time being, impossible to analyse this since the codes behind the algorithms are not up for display to the public.

The other characteristic of social media logic in Van Dijck and Poell's (2013) framework - popularity - refers to the need to be popular in order to ensure visibility on the platform. Popularity, on Instagram being defined as likes and comments, is, in other words, necessary in order to be favoured in the feed (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013). Van Dijck and Poell (2013) state "each platform has its distinct mechanisms for boosting popularity of people, things, or ideas, which is measured mostly in quantified terms" (p.7) and "each corporation actively seeks to promote their popularity and ranking mechanisms in order to enhance the value of its platforms and its users" (p.7).

The implication of these characteristics is that algorithms not only decide what content that is being favoured but the visibility is also influenced by the users' interaction, i.e. to what extent a post is liked or commented on (Kalsnes, 2016). This gives, according to Klinger and Svensson (2015), incentives for posting content that is more personalised and maximises the attention instead of content that without the logics of programmability and popularity would be considered more worthy to post. Furthermore, Ekman and Widholm (2017) argue that since Instagram "exhorts a strong form of individualism, Instagram users have also proved to be highly performative in their self-display, staging their personalities for immediate public consumption in the continuous race for likes and comment" (p.18).

To sum up, the mass media logic has during most of the 20th century been dominating the ways in which actors in society have to act and communicate in order to reach the public. In the digital era, the mass media logic is not the only logic that reigns but rather works side by side with social media logics which means that there are several logics and that the media system is interconnected in many ways. This reasoning of a media system that is intertwined in so many different ways was brought to light foremost through Chadwick's (2013) work on *the hybrid media system* which he describes as the following:

The hybrid media system is built upon interactions among older and newer media logics ... in the reflexively connected fields of media and politics. Actors in this system are articulated by complex and ever-evolving relationships based upon adaptation and interdependence and simultaneous concentrations and diffusions of power. Actors create, tap, or steer information flows in ways that suit their goals and in ways that modify, en-

able, or disable the agency of others, across and between a range of older and newer media settings (Chadwick, 2013, p.4).

The hybrid media system is, thus, creating new communicative possibilities for all actors in society and the mass media logic is no longer the only logic actors need to adapt to in order to reach the public. Today, actors also have to consider factors such as if the algorithm will favour the content and if the content will engage (Ekblom & Widholm, 2017; Van Dijck & Poell, 2013). It is possible that the implication of this is a communication increasingly focusing on personal aspects since this tends to be favoured both by the older mass media logic and newer social media logics.

4. Method

4.1 Choice of method

The aim of this study is to examine if personalised content is increasing on prominent Swedish politicians' Instagram accounts and whether personalised posts attract more popularity (likes) and engagement (comments) than other types of content. Furthermore, it aims to reveal to what extent prominent Swedish politicians incorporate aspects of their private sphere in order to convey political messages and whether or not this behaviour has increased during the current parliamentary term.

To be able to answer these questions, we chose to conduct a quantitative content analysis on Instagram. This type of method could help us measure key categories within the politicians' Instagram content as well as, because of the longitudinal nature of this study, help us measure development over time. According to Neuendorf (2017), the aim of any quantitative content analysis should be to “produce counts of key categories, and measurements of the amounts of other variables” (p.21) which is what we are trying to achieve.

When talking about the unit of analysis, we refer to an Instagram post including both the visual and textual material, and also counting comments and likes. If a unit contained a video it has been watched and analysed, yet, we have not accounted for the slides (i.e. when an Instagram post contains several photos in a slideshow) and instead only analysed the first picture in the slide.

Since Instagram is a platform that makes the collection of metadata problematic, software that is designed specifically for this purpose often stops working because of frequent patch changes in Instagram's application program interface (API). However, we managed to download and handle the data in a program called Instabro (Instabro, n.d.). This program helped us to collect and manage the large quantities of data and was at the time, at least to our knowledge, the most appropriate mode of administration. The choice of using a software to manage the data was made mainly based on the fact that we aimed to get a systematic random-

ised sample which this software made possible. The software also made it easier to gather the large amounts of data needed in order to make the sample representative.

4.2 Sample

4.2.1 Sampling of politicians

The content analysis was based on the content of 16 active Swedish politician's Instagram accounts and these were chosen with a purposive sampling method. Two politicians from each party were selected in order to be able to present a result where all parties in the parliament were represented. The sampling of politicians in the content analysis was based on the following criteria: first, the Instagram account had to be public (i.e. accessible to anyone without having to get accepted); second, the account had to be started before the last quarter in 2015 (so that it would not be missing too much data for the longitudinal analysis); third, the politicians had to be active on a national or international level; fourth, the politicians selected were the ones with the highest number of followers in their respective party. The choice of the last criterion was made since these accounts most likely have a larger impact and are more central in the network. This type of sampling process goes in line with other studies which have examined political communication on Instagram, see for example Ekman and Widholm (2017) and Filimonov et al. (2016).

This sampling process resulted in a sample of four ministers in the current government, one member of the European Parliament (MEP), one member of a national board of a party, three party leaders (one of which is a minister), and eight members of parliament. Sweden's Prime Minister Stefan Löfven (20k followers) was one of the politicians that did not fit the criteria, despite his relatively high number of followers, since he lacked too many quarters in order for his account to sufficiently contribute with information to the longitudinal analysis.

4.2.2 Sampling of posts

We were interested in seeing a development over time but because of the timeframe we were unable to analyse the full population of posts (N=17 734). Thus, we chose to sample eight posts from each quarter starting in the last quarter of 2014. The choice of sampling eight posts was made since we wanted our sample to represent 9 % of the total population of posts, and, the reason for starting at the end of 2014 was because we wanted to capture the development during one parliamentary term where social media use among politicians have grown immensely (especially on Instagram).

In order to receive equal amounts of posts from each quarter, a *stratified sampling method* was applied (Neuendorf, 2017). In other words, the full sample was segmented into quarters to ensure that the sample distribution was not disproportional over the period of time. Seeing that the sample consists of 112 posts per politician, the stratified sampling made it possible to distribute these 112 posts proportionally over the years using quarters as stratas. The sampling frame was divided into 14 stratas for each politician which was defined by which quarter the post was uploaded in and then eight posts were sampled according to the principles below.

In order to achieve a random sample within each quarter, we chose to use what Neuendorf (2017) calls *systematic random sampling*, which basically generates a random sample, only with systematisation of the sampling. When applying this type of sampling a skip interval has to be calculated which means that every Xth unit is chosen. In order to calculate the skip interval a desired sample must be determined which, for this study, was set to be 8 posts per quarter and politician (to achieve a sample that represents 9% of the total population of posts). Neuendorf's (2017) suggested calculation on the skip interval was applied on all 16 politicians and the quarters connected to them:

$$\frac{(\text{population } N)}{(\text{sample } n)} = \frac{N (\text{posts in quarter})}{8} = \textit{Skip interval}$$

To exemplify, if the number of posts in one quarter on one politician's Instagram account is 80, then $80(N)/ 8(n) = 10$, i.e. every 10th post was chosen. This

has been done for each quarter and for every politician which means that the skip interval has varied throughout the data collection.

Another consideration when conducting a systematic random sample concerns the sampling frame. Neuendorf (2017) states that “If there is periodicity in the frame or in the flow of occurrence of units that matches up with the skip interval, then the representativeness of the sample is threatened” (p. 86) and the sampling, hence, need to start on random number every time. However, we came to the conclusion that there is no periodicity in our sample frame which allowed us to start at post 1 in every quarter.

Some of the politicians have not been active on Instagram since the starting point of the data collection and some have not uploaded enough posts every quarter which means that there is some data missing. 46 posts within quarters and 13 quarters ($13 \times 8 = 104$) are missing which makes the total amount of missing data (md) 150 posts. The final sample (n), thereby, consists of 1641 posts ($1791 - 150 = 1641$) which represent 9,3 per cent of the total population of posts on the chosen politicians’ accounts ($N = 17734$).

Politicians	Party	Followers	Posts b/w Q4'14-Q1'18	Missing posts	Missing quarters	Sample Size	Percental Sample Size
Alice Bah Kuhnke	Green Party	44 000	989	0	$2 \times 8 = 16$	112-16 (md)=96	9,7%
Gustav Fridolin	Green Party	10 800	463	0	0	112	24,2%
Margot Wallström	Social Democratic Party	10 300	252	0	$4 \times 8 = 32$	112-32 (md)=80	31,7%
Anders Ygeman	Social Democratic Party	5760	592	0	0	112	18,9%
Rossana Dinamarca	Left Party	10 400	755	0	0	112	14,8%
Daniel Riazat	Left Party	1622	146	7	0	112-7 (md)=105	71,9%
Anna Kinberg Batra	Moderate Party	23 800	1662	0	$3 \times 8 = 24$	112-24 (md)=88	5,3%
Hanif Bali	Moderate Party	8755	185	34	0	112-34 (md)=78	42,2%
Birgitta Ohlsson	Liberals	9781	4487	0	0	112	2,5%
Fredrik Malm	Liberals	1713	455	0	0	112	24,6%

Ebba Busch Thor	Christian Democrats	22 800	509	0	0	112	22%
Sara Skytte-dal	Christian Democrats	4556	1339	0	0	112	8,4%
Annie Lööf	Center Party	35 100	1344	0	4x8= 32	112-32 (md)=80	6%
Fredrik Federley	Center Party	5774	3657	0	0	112	3,1%
Paula Bieler	Sweden Democrats	1513	686	0	0	112	16,3%
Hanna Wigh	Sweden Democrats	1453	213	5	0	112-5 (md)=107	50,2%
Total			17734	46	104	1641	9,26%

Table 1 illustrates the politicians studied, their total amount of posts during the period of study, the number of followers, how many posts missing from quarters and how many quarters that were missing, the sample size in the final sample when missing data is excluded and finally a percental sample size per politician.

4.3 Coding scheme and procedure

4.3.1 Coding scheme and variables

In this section we will present our coding scheme and explain how the variables were measured and used in order to answer the research questions. This will partly be explained in text but an explanation of how each research question was defined in terms of measurement is illustrated in table 2.

Each unit of analysis (i.e. post) was labelled with formal criteria which consisted of a post identification number and the publishing date. In addition to the formal criteria, the first section of the coding scheme consisted of: the *amount of likes and comments*, *what type of content it is* (distinguishing between *everyday life private* - i.e. post not containing anything of political or professional nature, *everyday life professional* - i.e. post relating to the professional realm of the politician without containing a political message, and *political message* - i.e. every post that includes a political message in some way or demonstrating the politician's standpoint in a matter). When having identified the type of content, the coder got transferred to a coding scheme with sections uniquely connected to the type of content chosen in order to determine subcategories.

In the everyday life professional category, we coded for *presence or absence of a connection the politician's private sphere*. In the content type political mes-

sage, the coder had to code for a *presence* or *absence of a connection to the politician's private sphere*. This has been done in order to answer the third research question in which we seek evidence for politicians communicating political messages incorporating private aspects. Drawing upon on Larsson's (2017b) claim that "not only should we understand personalisation along the lines of personal matter being offered up for public display - topics, matters and themes that were previously construed as of a public nature will now be presented as inspired by and fashioned according to the characteristics of politicians" (p. 4) we argue that this is a reasonable way of operationalising the third research question. See Appendix 1 and 2 for more details.

	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable
H1	Type of content ->Everyday private Everyday life professional -> Connection to private sphere Political Message -> Connection to private sphere = Personalised content	Time
H2	Likes/ Comments	Type of content ->Everyday private Everyday life professional -> Connection to private sphere Political Message -> Connection to private sphere = Personalised content
RQ3a	Frequency	Political Message -> Connection to private sphere
RQ3b	Political Message -> Connection to private sphere	Time
RQ3c	Likes	Political Message -> Connection to private sphere

Table 2. Operationalisation of the concept personalisation, see description below.

To answer the first research question, three variables that in different ways consider a post being personal was created. First, everyday life private in the type of content part; second, connection to private sphere in the professional everyday life section; and third, connection to private sphere in the political message section. In order to answer the second research question, we created one variable that measured popularity defined by likes and one variable that measured engagement defined by comments. To see if there was a relationship between personalised content and popularity/engagement we used the same variables as in the first research question. Our third research question was operationalised through the variable connection to private sphere within the political message section. Moreover, we created a temporal variable which was relevant for the longitudinal aspect of both research question one and three.

4.3.2 Coding procedure: training, coding manual and implementation

We have followed Neuendorf's (2017) suggestions when code training as well as when drafting and revising the coding manual. The coding manual describes the variables and the coding instructions in the smallest detail; and during the training period, the coding manual was revised regularly. Both these actions were taken in order to make the variables as unambiguous as possible. Thereafter, a pilot coding was conducted in which we both coded the same units to eliminate discrepancies and, thus, ensured a reliable and viable coding scheme.

The final coding was done individually through Google Forms since it was the most convenient way to manage, arrange and export the coded units. Google Forms is normally a tool for collecting survey data but it works just as well for coding purposes as it allows the coder to click on the different coding options instead of manually remembering and writing down numbers. We made sure that the coding process did not involve discussion or consensus building by coding separately. This was, however, not an issue since we through the coding training had calibrated how to categorise the content which resulted in a standardised procedure. For more details regarding the coding manual see Appendix 2.

4.4 Quality criteria: intercoder reliability and validity

The quality criteria reliability and validity need to be considered when conducting a quantitative content analysis. Reliability concerns the repeatability of the results which in a quantitative content analysis carried out by humans means intercoder reliability, or “level of agreement among two or more coders” (Neuendorf, 2017, p. 19). In order to ensure that our coding results had a high intercoder reliability, meaning coding consistency independently of the human coder, we employed a third external individual in order to test the intercoder reliability. Percent agreement (or “crude agreement”) was employed when testing the intercoder reliability which was calculated in the following way:

$$\frac{A \text{ (Number of Agreements)}}{n \text{ (total number of cases)}} = PAo \text{ (Proportion Agreement observed)}$$

This resulted in a rather high level of correspondence percentage (93,5%). Our key variables had a high level of reliability (type of content= 96,25%), but some variables did not reach the same proportion of agreement, although these were still relatively high. The variable that measured if there was a connection to the politician’s private sphere within the political messages category (hybrids) received the lowest correspondence percentage (80%) and the variable that measured if there was a connection to the politician’s private sphere within the professional everyday life category achieved 90 in percent agreement. For more details regarding the intercoder reliability testing see appendix 3.

Reliability also concerns the objectivity of the measures of the variables. The study’s variables include both latent and manifest content. Manifest content is self-evident and indisputable whereas latent content is more subtle which “cannot be measured directly but can be represented or measured by one or more ... indicators” (Hair, Black, Babin & Andersson, 2010, p.614). Latent content can be a problem for the reliability of the study and especially if the variables are “highly latent” meaning that they can not easily be identified by certain indicators. Neuendorf (2017) argues that if the content is latent the need for coding training is higher. We do not consider the latent content being a problem for the reliability of

the study because, first; the content is not “highly latent”, and second; the extensive code training and revising of the coding manual, and third; the rather high level of interrater reliability.

External validity is to what extent the study can be generalised beyond the research context and because of our sampling process of the politicians, we are not arguing for this study to be generalisable. We do, however, claim that the sampling process and sample size (9,3 %) of units have made it possible to generalise the sample to the total population of units (N= 17734) and the result is, thus, valid for making claims of generalisability for these sixteen politicians but not beyond. Ekman and Widholm (2017) who employed a similar method on Instagram presented a sample size of 6.6 per cent of the total population of units which has been used to legitimise our sample size and its possibilities for generalisability.

The internal validity refers to what extent the method is measuring the intended which in a content analysis to a large degree is determined by how well the operationalisation (creating variables and a coding scheme) fits the conceptual definition (Neuendorf, 2017). Since this study is examining personalisation in an online context from a political actor perspective we decided to base our operationalisation on previous content analyses that have examined a similar area namely: Ekman and Widholm (2017), Filimonov et al. (2016), Larsson (2017). These studies have also defined the concept personalisation similar to us which makes the operationalisation of the variables valid in relation to the concept.

4.5 Data analysis

The statistical analysis of the data was performed with Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) version 24.0 (IBM Software Statistics® 2009, US) and the following section will describe our data analysis for the respective hypothesis and research question.

4.5.1 Data analysis for H1

For hypothesis 1 the total amount of personalised posts (everyday life private, everyday life professional with a connection to the private sphere, hybrids) per quarter was calculated. In order to deal with the missing data in some quarters, the

proportion of personalised posts was calculated so that it would be representative for a quarter with a full sample. This was calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Sum of personalised posts in quarter}}{\text{total posts in quarter (128 - MD)}} = X$$
$$X \times 100 = \text{proportion of personalised posts in per cent (\%)}$$

These percentages were thereafter inserted in a *multiple line diagram* in order to illustrate the development over time.

In order to be able to analyse the development for hypothesis 1 statistically, we conducted a *mixed effect logistic regression analysis*. A mixed effect logistic regression is used to analyse longitudinal binary data which has differences within, and between, the subjects (Speelman, Heylen, & Geeraerts, 2018; Ten Have, Kunselman, Pulkstenis, Landis, 1998). It does so by taking both fixed and random effects into account (Van Dongen, Olofsen, Dinges, Maislin, 2004). Fixed effects are “model components used to define systematic relationships such as overall changes over time” (Van Dongen et al., 2004, p. 11) and random effects “account for variability among subjects around the systematic relationships captured by the fixed effects” (Van Dongen et al., 2004, p. 11). This is suitable for our data since the random effects can account for the missing data some politicians have in some quarters. The mixed effect logistic regression analysis calculates a coefficient that tells us the possible increase or decrease of personalised content over the period of study. It also reveals whether or not the development is significant.

4.5.1 Data analysis for H2

Hypothesis 2 was analysed in four different ways. The first way hypothesis 2 was measured was by sorting the units in accordance with the highest number of likes and comments. The 50 most popular and engaging units were then analysed through a frequency table and illustrated in a simple pie chart in order to see which content type the most popular and engaging posts were. No statistical test was employed for the first analysis of research question 2. This way of measuring was based on the way in which Larsson (2017b) examined the relationship between popularity and personalised content in the Norwegian context (see section 2.2).

The second way hypothesis 2 was analysed was by comparing the means and standard deviation between personalised and non-personalised content. Since the data is not normally distributed a non-parametric equivalent to the t-test, namely Mann Whitney U, was employed in order to see if there was a significant difference ($p = <.05$) between types of content and popularity (likes) and engagement (comments). Moreover, the differences in means were illustrated in a simple bar chart with confidence intervals of 95%.

The third way of testing hypothesis 2 was similar to the second way, the only difference was that three categories of content (personalised content, everyday life professional content, political messages) was compared instead of two. Since likes and comments were not, as mentioned above, normally distributed a non-parametric test needed to be employed (Lantz, 2011). We used the Kruskal-Wallis test which is a non-parametric alternative for one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) (Wahlgren, 2008) in order to see if there was a significant difference between types of content and popularity or engagement. If Kruskal-Wallis showed significance ($p = <.05$) a multiple comparisons correction named Bonferroni correction needed to be employed in order to distinguish if there was significance also between the groups within the variable (i.e. if personalised content is significantly more popular than both everyday life professional content and political message content separately or if it is only one content type that shows a difference). The Bonferroni correction is a post hoc test which can be applied on data that is not normally distributed and it, therefore, fits well after a Kruskal-Wallis test (Armstrong, 2014). The Bonferroni correction gives adjusted significance levels and the groups which get an adjusted p value of under .05 is considered as significantly higher than the other groups in the variable.

In the fourth way of measuring hypothesis 2, we looked at each politician individually in order to see if personalised posts received significantly higher levels of popularity (likes) and engagement (comments) compared to other types of content. The dataset was, thus, divided into 16 different parts (one per politician) and the mean of likes and comments for the different content types were calculated. Just as for the other way of measuring hypothesis 2 the distribution curves of the likes and comments needed to be analysed in order to decide what type of tests to employ. This showed that none of the data was normally distributed which meant that the significance had to be tested through non-parametric tests (Lantz, 2011).

Kruskal-Wallis test was once again employed and if it showed significance ($p = <.05$) we conducted a multiple comparisons correction (Bonferroni correction) in order to distinguish if there was significance also between the groups within the variable.

4.5.1 Data analysis for RQ3

Since research question 3 contains three sub-questions different data analysis methods were employed for each of them. For research question 3a we simply compared the per cent of political messages and the per cent of hybrids and illustrated this in a simple bar chart. For research question 3b, a similar method as for hypothesis 1 was employed: the percentages of hybrids for each quarter was calculated and in order to deal with the missing data. These percentages were thereafter inserted in a simple line diagram in order to illustrate the development over time. Research question 3c was analysed by comparing the mean of likes for hybrids as well as political messages. In order to see if hybrids received a significantly higher amount of likes a *Mann-Whitney U test* was employed since the data was not normally distributed.

4.6 Method reflection

The following section will be devoted to a reflection of the weaknesses we have identified in the choice of method. Firstly, the percental sample size of politicians with a large number of posts is low (Ohlsson = 2,5%; Federley = 3,1%) and differs a lot from politicians with a low posting frequency (Riazat = 71,9%; Wigh = 50,2%). This suggests that it possibly would have been more reasonable to decide on a percental sample size of each politician's full sample of units in order to receive a higher level of generalisability. However, due to the scarcity of time and resources this was seen as impossible knowing that some of the populations contained a very high number of posts. Secondly, some of the accounts that were analysed were not professionalised and used more as strictly private accounts. This was especially evident when looking at Sweden Democrats' representatives' accounts. It can, therefore, be argued that these accounts did not contribute with any relevant information when examining the politicians' communication strategies and, thus, should have been removed from the results. However, since the aim was

to examine the Instagram accounts of representatives from all parties we chose to not exclude these accounts.

A third reflection on a weakness in the choice of method concerns the missing data. It could be argued that it would have been more beneficial to choose politicians who had a full sample size during the whole period of study since this would have erased the missing data problems. However, some of the politicians that were missing the initial quarters (for example Lööf, Bah Kuhnke, Kinberg Batra) were considered important to include anyway since they had many followers and, hence, a central position in the network.

5. Results and Analyses

5.1 Introduction to results and analyses

This section will be devoted to the study's results and the analyses of these. First, we will give a brief descriptive overview of the data and the distribution of it. Subsequently, the results will be presented both graphically and in text in accordance with the research questions' chronological order. Each section will also present if the hypotheses can be supported by the data or not. The analyses will be connected to the study's theoretical framework in order to provide a depth and not only present the results descriptively and statistically.

5.2 Descriptive overview of the data

The total sample size is $n=1641$ and about one fifth, 20,2%, of all units included a political message which means that nearly 80% of the content does not relate directly to the ideological aspect of politics. These 80 % is almost equally divided between the categories *life professional* (40,4%) and *everyday life private* (39,5%). Furthermore, in the *everyday life professional*, 6 % of the posts have a connection to the politician's private sphere and *political messages* included 43,4% hybrids. This means that when the variables were merged in order to create the personalised content category (see section 4.3.1) the distribution appears as follows: personalised content (50,3%), everyday life professional (38,2%), political messages (11,5%).

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Everyday professional	627	38,2	38,2	38,2
	Political message	188	11,5	11,5	49,7
	Personalised post	826	50,3	50,3	100,0
	Total	1641	100,0	100,0	

Table 3. Distribution of posts between content types

5.3 Results and Analysis related to H1 and RQ1

5.3.1 Results related to H1

H1: The proportion of personalised posts on Swedish politicians' Instagram accounts has increased during the current parliamentary term.

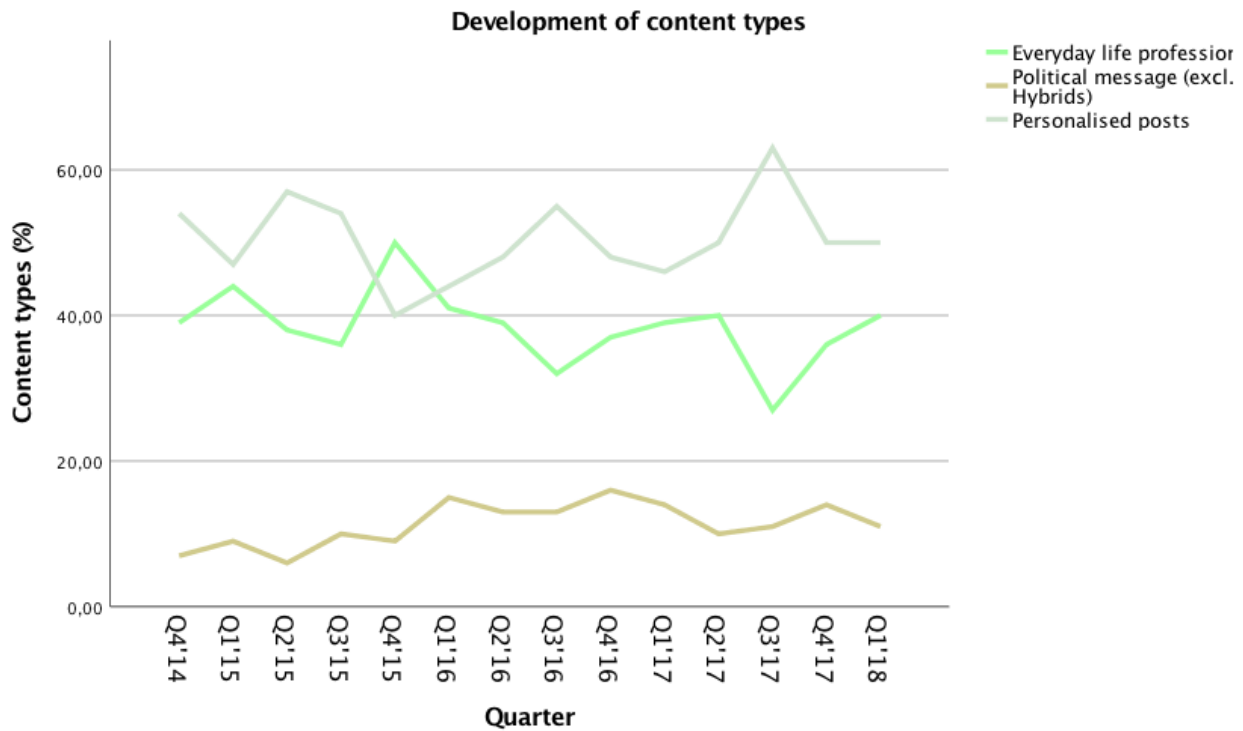


Figure 1. Development of content types in percentage over time.

Even though the data clearly show that personalised posts are the most frequent type of content (50, 3%) it does not seem to have increased since the starting point of our longitudinal study. In fact, the per cent of personalised content is lower in 2018 than in 2014 although the difference is rather small. At the starting point of the study (Q4'14), 55 per cent of the content was personalised. The lowest per cent of personalised content (40%) was observed in the fourth quarter of 2015 and the highest per cent of personalised content (62,5%) was observed in the third quarter of 2017. At the study's longitudinal ending point (Q1'18) the per cent of personalised content was 50.

An interesting observation of the data which the graph illustrates is that an increased amount of personalised content does not seem to affect the number of political messages posted. The per cent of political messages has instead had a small increase during the period of study. However, it seems like personalised content

and professional everyday life develops mutually - when there is an increase in personalised content the everyday life professional content decreases and vice versa.

Model Term	Coefficient	Std. Error	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
Intercept	0.028	0.129	0.220	0.829	-0.252	0.309
Quarter	-0.006	0.016	-0.373	0.715	-0.042	0.029

Probability distribution: Binomial
Link function: Logit

Table 4. Fixed Coefficients in mixed effect logistic regression analysis. Target: Personalised vs Non-personalised content, Reference category: Personalised content

The result of the mixed effect logistic regression analysis was, unsurprisingly, that personalised content had not increased significantly ($p=.715$) during the study's observed time frame. Personalised content had instead, according to the regression coefficient (-0.006), decreased although slightly. It can, therefore, be stated that our *data do not support Hypothesis 1* statistically since personalised content has not increased.

5.3.2 Analysis related to the Personalisation Thesis - RQ1

Even though the first hypothesis was not supported by the data, the results can still be analysed using the theoretical framework. The personalisation thesis is, as mentioned previously, based on the idea that focus increasingly is directed towards the individual politicians and their personal characteristics. However, what the results imply is that personalised content represents a majority of the content but this upward trend does not exist and it, thus, seems like the proportion of personalised post has, among prominent Swedish politicians, already reached its culmination on the platform. Previous studies have, as elaborated on in section 2.1, had mixed results due to a lack of consensus regarding conceptualisation and operationalisation. Hypothesis 1 was formulated based on previous research that

examined the personalisation thesis from a media perspective as well studies that looked at the degree of personalisation on social media. No previous studies have examined a possible increase of personalisation in a social media context from a political actors perspective which makes the results not entirely surprising. The results suggest that the personalisation thesis, in this context, might not be an upward trend but rather a constant. Van Aelst et al. (2011) implies that there is a consensus among scholars regarding personalisation referring to a positive development over time but with this study's results in mind, the concept seems to be in need for a re-conceptualisation. Knowing that most previous studies have focused on the media perspective it seems fair to assume that the conceptualisation is mainly based on findings from this perspective. It is possible that the personalisation thesis needs different conceptualisations depending on which context it is studied within.

Blumler and Kavangah (1999) point towards the emergence of televised debates as one of the main reasons behind the start of the personalisation trend. They argue that this contributed to a "sharper focus on top leaders" (Blumler & Kavangah, 1999, p.212) and one can observe similar tendencies with the emergence of social media. Larsson (2017b) claims that social media has intensified the process of personalisation which other media types initiated and argues that especially Instagram, with its focus on visuals, can be of similar importance as the TV. There is, when looking at the data, no doubt that the content on Instagram has a large focus on the personal aspects of the politicians but since the study's result demonstrates that there has not been an increase it seems like the process has come to a standstill, at least on the platform. The study's result can, however, not show whether or not the high degree of personalised content on Instagram influences the degree of personalisation in other political contexts.

The other interesting observation with regards to research question 1 was the fact that the proportion of political messages were not affected by an increase or a decrease in the proportion of personalised content. If personalised content increased it only affected the proportion of life professional content which goes in line with what Van Aelst et al. (2011) point out regarding personalisation not necessarily having any effect on to what extent substantial issues and policies are being communicated. Habermas (2006) is of another opinion and argues that personalisation leads to depoliticisation by shifting focus from substantial political is-

sues towards non-political trivial information. There is both in media in general but also in this particular study a large focus on the candidates' personas which might make the public debate more trivial and it is, therefore, hard to reject Habermas ideas completely but with these results it can still be argued that it might not be that detrimental as Habermas suggests.

5.4 Results and Analysis related to H2 and RQ2

5.4.1 Results related to H2

H2: Personalised content on Swedish politicians' Instagram accounts are associated with higher levels of popularity and engagement indicators (likes and comments) compared to other types of content.

The first way we measured the relationship between personalised content and popularity/ engagement was, as mentioned more extensively in the data analysis section, by examining the 50 most popular and engaging posts. The results show that personalised posts represent a clear majority of both the 50 most popular posts and the 50 most engaging posts.

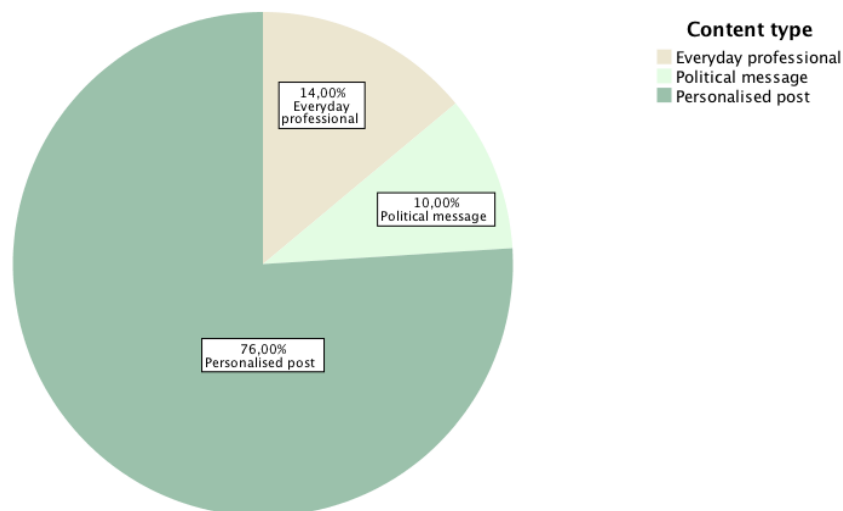


Figure 2. Top 50 most popular posts

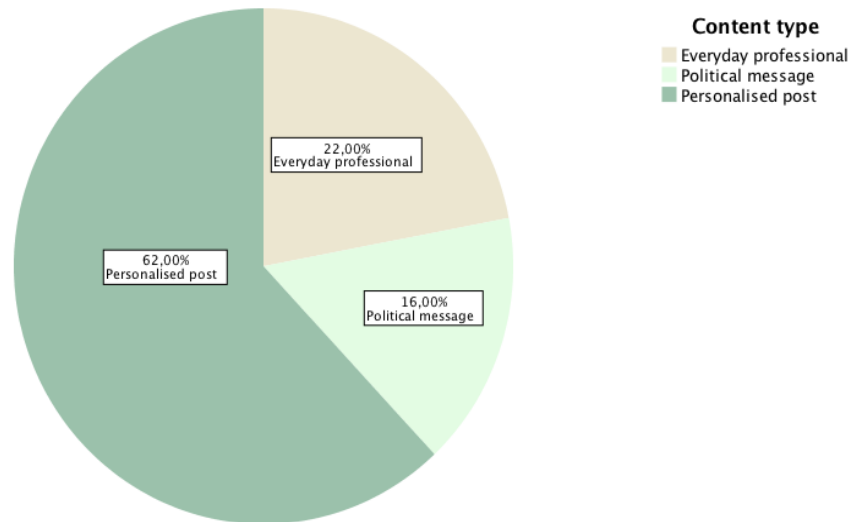


Figure 3. Top 50 most engaging posts

Of the 50 most popular posts (1365-4322 likes) 76% is represented by personalised posts (see fig. 2). Looking at engagement (41-329 comments), the percentage of the top 50 posts (see fig. 3) is 62%.

The second way hypothesis 2 was measured was by comparing the mean of likes/ comments between personalised content and non-personalised content.

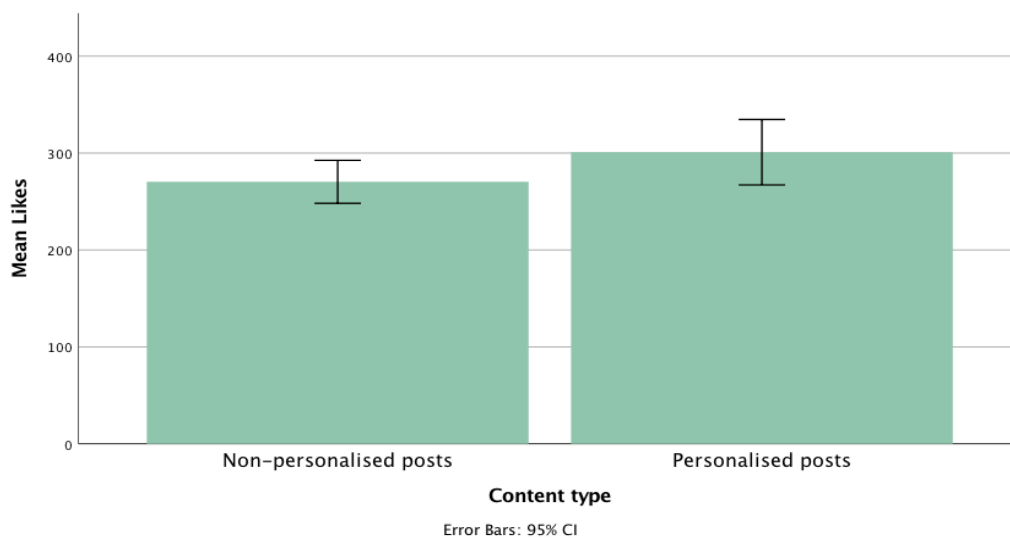


Figure 4. Mean of likes for personalised vs non-personalised content

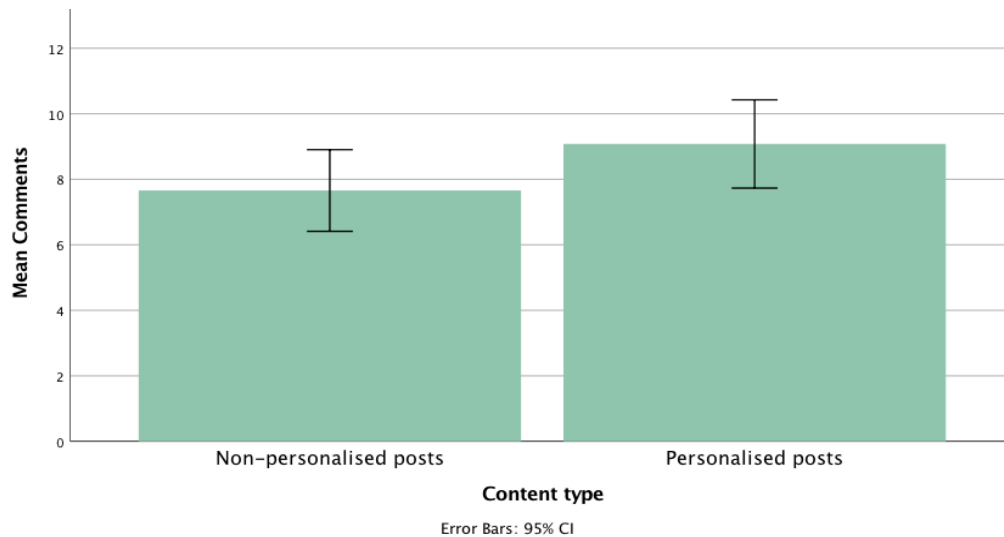


Figure 5. Mean of comments for personalised vs non-personalised content

The findings suggest that personalised content receives (M: 300.91, SD: 494.61) a significantly higher number of likes ($p=.000$) compared with non-personalised content (M: 270.31, SD: 322.82). Personalised content (M: 9.08, SD: 19.73) do not, however, receive a significantly higher number of comments ($p=.288$) compared to non-personalised content (M: 7.66, SD: 18.12).

The third way hypothesis 2 was measured was similar to the second way, only with the comparison of three content categories instead of two.

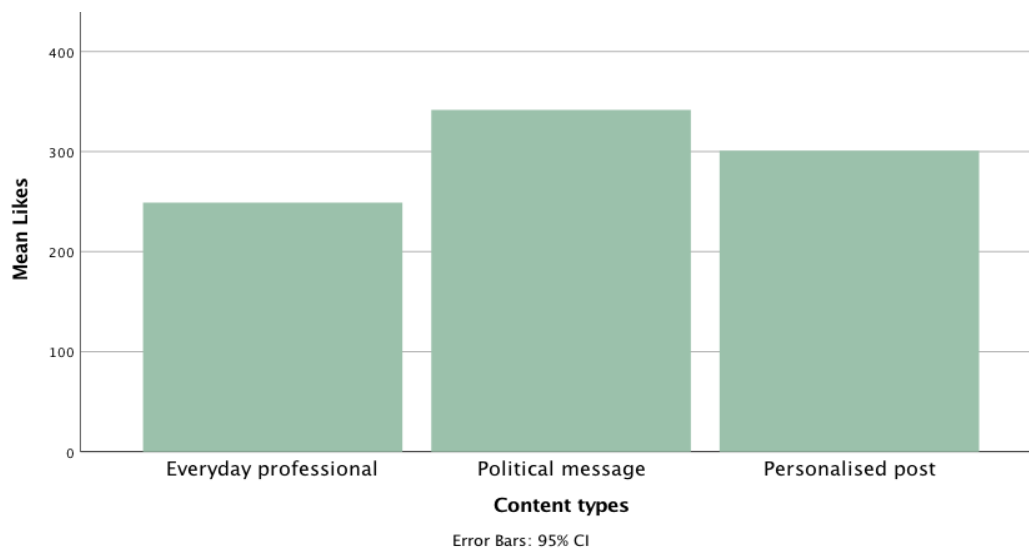


Figure 6. Mean of likes between different content types

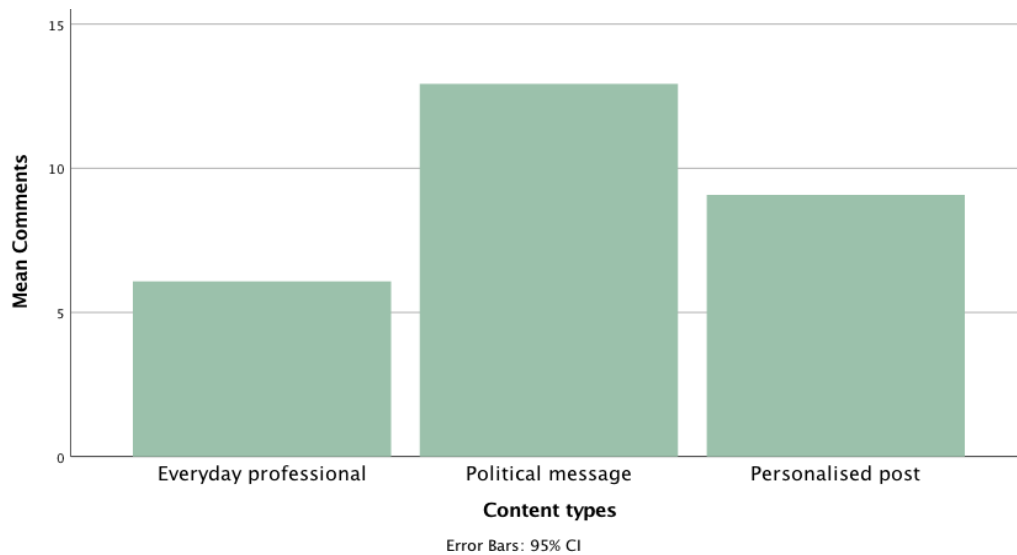


Figure 7. Mean of comments between different content types

The results, when measuring hypothesis 2 in the third way, show through a Kruskal Wallis test that there are significant differences between the content types ($p=.000$). Since this test shows significance a Bonferroni correction was conducted which reveals that political messages receive a significantly higher number of likes (M:341.65, SD: 312.35) compared to both personalised content (M: 300.91, SD: 418.36, adj.p=.000) and everyday life professional content (M: 248.92, SD: 323.09, adj.p=.000). Concerning comments, Kruskal Wallis shows that there are significant differences between the content types ($p=.000$). The multiple comparison correction (Bonferroni) show that political messages (M:12.93, SD: 31.35, $p=.000$) also receives a significantly higher number of comments than both personalised content (M:9.08, SD: 19.73, adj.p=.000) and everyday life professional content (M:6.08, SD: 11.06, adj.p=.000). Moreover, personalised content receives a significantly higher number of comments compared to everyday life professional (adj.p=.003).

However, these results are rather misleading seeing that the conditions to receive likes and comments differ a lot throughout the range of politicians as well as some content types being posted more frequently. To exemplify, a politician like Hanna Wigh who has few followers and hence receives few likes per post and moreover almost exclusively posts personalised content (89%) will lower the mean for this content type immensely. It can, therefore, be argued that political messages do not necessarily receive more likes and comments than the other con-

tent types if taking the conditions of the politician and the context into consideration. This realisation led to a fourth way of measuring hypothesis 2 and it can be argued that this way might reflect the reality in a better way.

The results, when examining every politician's likes and comments individually, show a significantly higher number of likes on personalised content on 4 of the 16 politicians and a significantly higher number of comments on personalised content on 3 of the 16 politicians. The politicians who have a significantly higher number of likes on personalised content compared to other types of content are: Kinberg Batra, Lööf, Federley and Wallström.

Popularity	Personalised content			Everyday life professional			Political Message			Sig.
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	p-value
Alice Bah Kuhnke	42	794.62	761.17	42	548.88	616.57	11	768.27	454.48	0.072
Gustav Fridolin	28	378.75	188.58	59	387.8	325.05	25	347.52	196.56	0.568
Margot Wallström	6	605	166.15	67	288.87	196.61	7	351.43	243.04	0.001**
Anders Ygeman	50	150.98	105.94	48	167.15	164.70	14	141.36	94.43	0.953
Rossana Dinamarca	62	410.85	386.47	37	386	255.29	13	610	552.62	0.279
Daniel Riazat	45	117.53	60.61	52	102.71	48.46	8	96.50	64.25	0.352
Anna Kinberg Batra	28	1012.36	759.61	29	437.76	601.32	31	268.00	96.37	0.000**
Hanif Bali	73	291.18	282.49	4	206.25	77.94	1	752.00	-	0.325
Birgitta Ohlsson	57	138.04	104.09	33	112.42	77.26	22	157.23	120.92	0.217
Fredrik Malm	64	41.05	28.16	46	45.09	28.75	2	47.50	36.06	0.588
Ebba Busch Thor	53	653.09	481.93	37	464.86	362.58	22	519.82	294.39	0.136
Sara Skyttedal	53	108.36	79.28	52	126.88	141.77	7	117.71	88.11	0.832
Annie Lööf	38	1238.42	1081.34	24	593.13	258.57	18	489.06	277.57	0.004**
Fredrik Federley	62	112.27	76.61	49	60.43	33.89	1	47.00	-	0.000**
Paula Bieler	71	46.56	38.53	35	53.14	44.01	6	37.83	23.68	0.812
Hanna Wigh	94	51.61	32.57	12	76.92	39.59	0	-	-	0.010

Table 3 shows the politicians studied and their number of posts (N), mean of likes and standard deviation (SD) for the different types of content. Note: the differences of means are significant at **p < 0,05.

When conducting the multiple comparison correction (Bonferroni correction), in order to distinguish if there were significant differences between groups (content types) within the variable, we found that Wallström's personalised posts receive a significantly higher number of likes (adj.p=.003) compared to profession-

al content. However, there is no significant difference between personalised content and political messages (adj.p=.110). Federley shows similar results, his personalised content receives a significantly higher number of likes (adj.p=.000) compared to everyday life professional content but a significant difference between personalised content and political messages can not be established (adj.p=.497). Lööf's personalised content only receives a significantly higher number of likes when comparing it with political messages (adj.p=.005) and not with everyday life professional content (adj.p=.092). Kinberg Batra receives a significantly higher number of likes compared with both everyday life professional content (adj.p=.000) and political messages (adj.p=.000)

The politicians who have a significantly higher number of comments on personalised content compared to other types of content are: Riazat, Federeley and Wallström.

Engagement	Personalised content			Everyday life professional			Political Message			Sig.
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	p-value
Alice Bah Kuhnke	42	24.24	22.01	42	16.71	16.44	11	23.18	15.35	0.063
Gustav Fridolin	28	12.86	10.82	59	9.51	10.62	25	9.8	7.25	0.147
Margot Wallström	6	13.83	4.22	67	3.46	3.81	7	4.86	4.71	0.004**
Anders Ygeman	50	3.68	3.41	48	3.15	5.3	14	4.29	3.75	0.062
Rossana Dinamarca	62	8.9	9.7	37	7.51	15.65	13	16.23	21.26	0.088
Daniel Riazat	45	5.69	6.05	52	3.19	3.67	8	5.38	3.11	0.027**
Anna Kinberg Batra	28	18.11	24.49	29	12.38	27.92	31	15.19	52.83	0.055
Hanif Bali	73	14.63	23.8	4	10.00	5.35	1	41.00	-	0.299
Birgitta Ohlsson	57	2.88	3.23	33	2.58	3.16	22	3.5	4.67	0.962
Fredrik Malm	64	1.69	2.17	46	1.59	1.77	2	1.5	2.12	0.997
Ebba Busch Thor	53	26.08	49.39	37	11.68	12.11	22	14.95	13.75	0.067
Sara Skyttedal	53	3.92	4.89	52	4.44	5.72	7	7.86	8.23	0.169
Annie Lööf	38	26.37	32.52	24	14.83	11.02	18	32.94	64.51	0.267
Fredrik Federley	62	3.69	7.91	49	0.82	1.236	1	1.00	-	0.000**
Paula Bieler	71	2.1	2.59	35	2.09	2.87	6	2	2	0.77
Hanna Wigh	94	2.43	3.11	12	2.58	2.97	0	-	-	0.647

Table 4 shows the politicians studied and their number of posts (N), mean of comments and standard deviation (SD) for the different types of content. Note: the differences of means are significant at **p < 0,05 (Kruskal-Wallis).

When conducting the multiple comparison correction (Bonferroni correction) on engagement Federley's personalised content receives a significantly higher number of comments (adj.p=.000) compared with everyday life professional content. Since Federley only posted one political message a comparison between personalised posts and political messages was not needed. Wallström receives a significantly higher number of comments on personalised content both when compared with everyday life professional content (adj.p=.000) and political messages (adj.p=.048). Riazat shows, when employing the Kruskal-Wallis test, significance but when the Bonferroni correction, which is a bit more conservative (Narum, 2006), was used there is no significance between personalised posts and everyday life professional content (adj.p=.055).

To summarise, our different ways of measuring hypothesis 2 gave mixed results. The first way of measuring resulted in a clear majority of the top posts in popularity and engagement being personalised. The second way of measuring suggested that personalised content achieved a significantly higher number of likes, but not comments, compared to non-personalised content. The third way of measuring implied that political messages were the most popular and engaging content type but this can, as reflected on above, be somewhat misleading. Therefore, a fourth way of measuring was employed which showed that for some of the politicians, personalised content gave a significantly higher number of likes and comments but this was not the case for a clear majority of them. However, there were no significant differences the other way around either which suggests that if there is something that drives popularity and engagement it is the personalised content. The results indicate that there is a higher tendency to receive both popularity and engagement when posting personalised content which means that *hypothesis 2 is supported by the data*. However, the data cannot support hypothesis 2 to be statistically ensured for all politicians at all times.

5.4.2 Analysis related to Personalisation and Popularity - RQ2

Hypothesis 2 was supported by the data since personalised content was observed being associated with higher levels of popularity and engagement when looking at the most popular and engaging posts as well as for some of the politicians indi-

vidually. Personalised content also received a significantly higher number of likes compared to non-personalised content. The data could not, however, show a statistically significant relationship between personalised content and popularity/engagement when looking at every politician's overall content separately. Larsson (2017b) who examined the most popular posts on Norwegian party leaders' Instagram accounts was a central part of the previous research which the hypothesis was based upon and it is therefore not surprising that the results from the first way of measuring supported the hypothesis. Larsson (2017b) did not examine the politicians' overall content separately which this study did and it could, therefore, be argued that this study contributes to the field of research by determining that the tendency to gain more traction for personalised content is not applicable to all politicians individually at all times. However, there is neither a tendency the other way around.

According to the study's results, personalised content is the only type of content that is associated with higher levels of popularity and engagement which, in line with theories of both older and newer media logics, is not a surprising result. The older media logic concerns the way actors in society have to fit the media's format by reducing the information, catch the public's attention through content that is easy to grasp and communicating through narrative techniques such as personalisation (Strömbäck, 2014). These logics are also applicable when actors are their own media producers and have been complemented by social media logics which are shaped by the infrastructure of the platforms (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013). In other words, the older logic is relevant also in a newer context. The older media logic suggests that information that is reduced, easy to understand and relatable receives more popularity and the study's results indicate that this also is the case when politicians are communicating on Instagram. This means that actors, in the long run, need to adapt their content to fit the *modus operandi* of these platform in order to gain traction.

The part in Van Dijck and Poell's (2013) framework on social media logics that concern *popularity* is perhaps the most relevant when analysing these results. Popularity is a cornerstone in both creating and generating visibility and since the findings show a tendency for personalised content to receive more popularity and engagement this type of content will more likely gain visibility on the platforms and, thus, reach the public to a greater extent. This gives, according to Klinger and

Svensson (2015), incentives for posting content that is more personalised and maximises the attention but as the first research question showed this behaviour have, even though it is the most frequent type of content, not increased during the last parliamentary term which in this sense is a bit unexpected.

5.3 Results and Analysis related to RQ3

5.5.1 Results related to RQ3

RQ3a: Are politicians on Instagram incorporating aspects from their private sphere when communicating political messages?

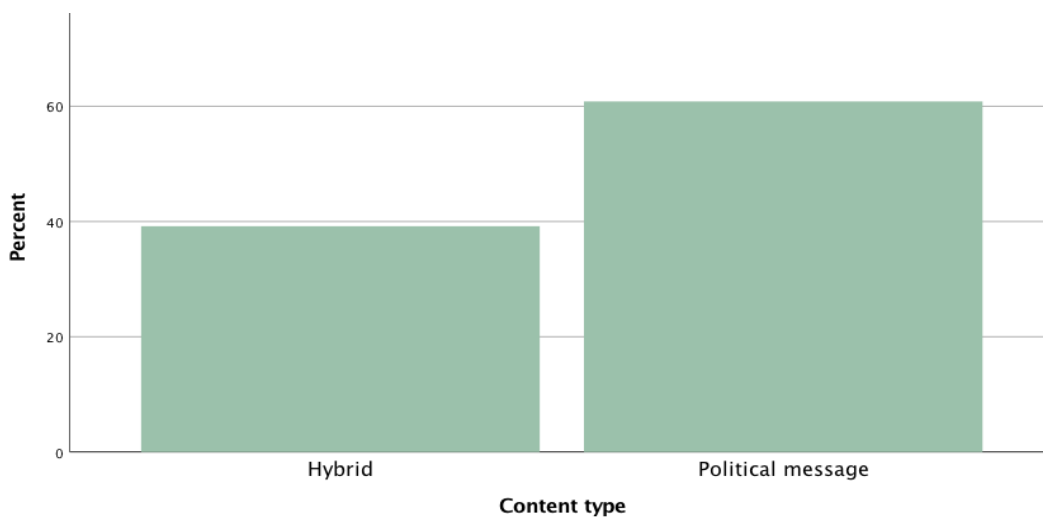


Figure 8. Percentage of hybrids and Political Messages

As the bar chart (fig. 8) illustrates hybrids are indeed used by politicians as a communication strategy when communicating political messages. Of all political messages 43,4 per cent are hybrids which means that the answer to research question 3a is that prominent Swedish politicians on Instagram *do* incorporate aspects from their private sphere when conveying political messages.

RQ3b: In that case, has the proportion of this communication strategy increased during the current parliamentary term?

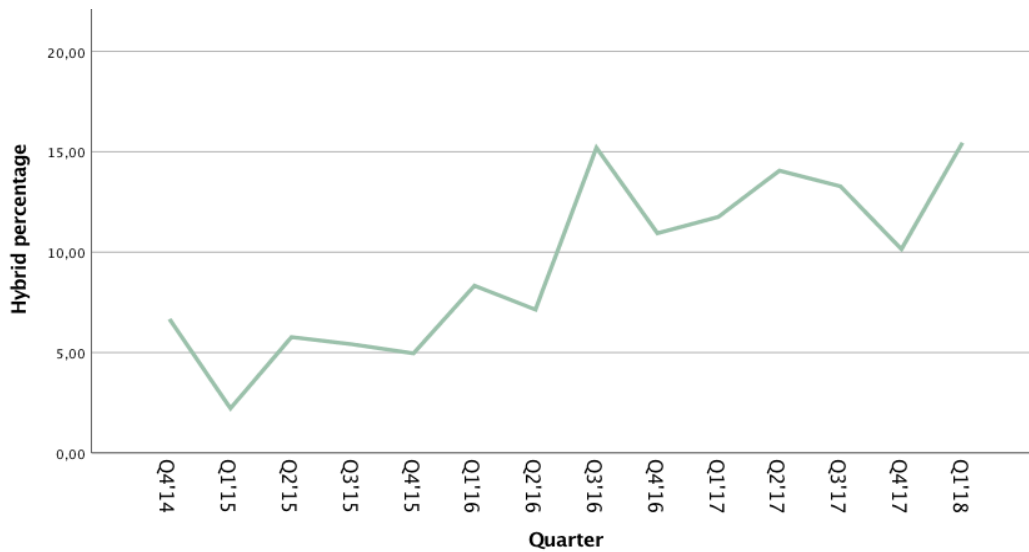


Figure 9. Timeline of hybrid development

The line diagram (fig. 9) illustrates that there has been an increase in the use of hybrids throughout the current parliamentary term. In the last quarter of 2014, 6,7 % of all posts were hybrids and in the first quarter of 2018, 15,5 % of all posts were hybrids. The diagram also shows that there has been a rather steady increase during the period which means that the answer to research question 3c is that the proportion of hybrids have increased during the current parliamentary term.

RQ3c: Are political messages with a connection to the politician’s private sphere more popular than political messages that are strictly political?

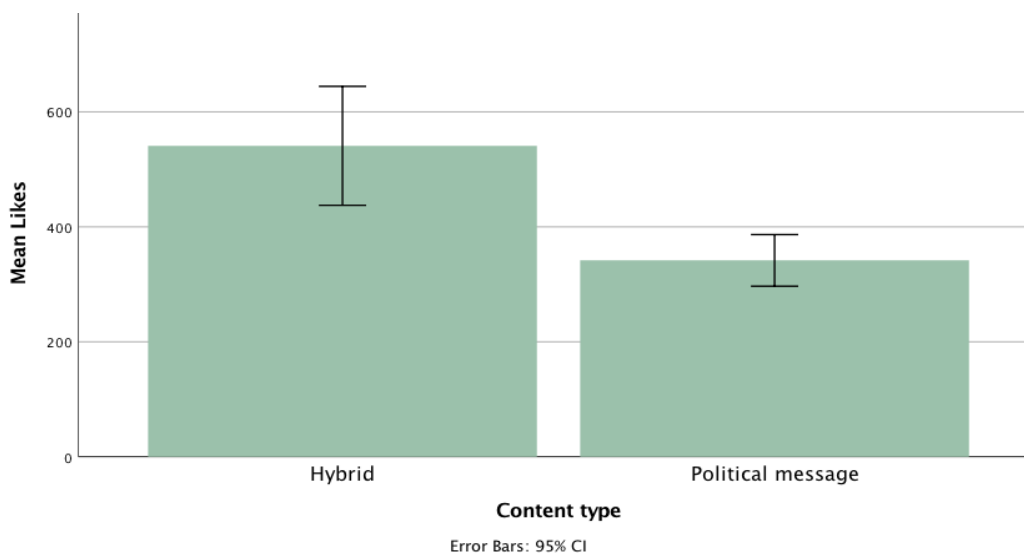


Figure 10. Mean of likes for hybrids and Political Messages

As illustrated in the bar chart above (fig. 10) hybrids receive a higher mean of likes (M: 541, SD: 628) compared to strictly political messages (M:342, SD: 312). The Mann-Whitney U test showed that these differences were significant ($p=.033$) which means that research question 3c's answer is that hybrids receive significantly higher levels of popularity compared with political messages that are strictly political.

5.5.2 Analysis related to hybrids - RQ3

The strategy to incorporate private aspects when conveying political messages belongs to Van Aelst et al.'s (2011) second dimension of personalisation - privatisation - which implies an increased focus on the politicians as private persons. Privatisation is applied both to build an image of the politician but also, as the study's results show, when conveying political messages. This goes in line with Ekman and Widholm's (2017) claim that social media is steering an increased focus on the personal characteristics of the politicians and that this, in turn, leads to personalisation in political communication strategies.

The study did not only prove that these hybrids exist but also that they have increased during the current parliamentary term as well as that they are gaining a significantly higher number of likes than political messages that are strictly political. The personalisation thesis is based on the idea that it is an upward trend (Van Aelst et al., 2011) and even though the study does not show any indications that this was the case on the overall content it seems to be the case in terms of political messages. If applying the theory of social media logics to this trend it can be argued that the political actors have adapted to the current logics of programmability and popularity (Van Dijck & Poell's, 2013) in the sense where there is a realisation that visibility is best achieved if the content is personalised. Hybrids can, thus, be considered being a result of politicians' need to convey political messages, but still requiring popularity on the platform in order to reach visibility for these political messages. This might explain why there is an increased use of hybrids during the past few years.

Referring to Chadwick's (2013) concept of the hybrid media system actors can today "create, tap or steer information flows in ways that suit their goals" (p.4) which means that there are a lot of new possibilities for strategic communi-

cation in this digital era which is intertwined with the older mass media era. The possibilities Instagram provides, partly by putting the visuals in the centre, have enabled politicians to communicate with the electorate in ways where political messages can be framed to be relatable and possibly captivating. And indeed, the study's results indicate that the public finds hybrids being more appealing than strictly political messages.

6. Conclusions and discussion

6.1 Conclusions

In this study, we examined prominent Swedish politicians' Instagram accounts in relation to the personalisation thesis. In more detail, whether or not the proportion of personalised posts have increased during the current parliamentary term and if personalised content is associated with higher levels of popularity and engagement. Moreover, we explored whether or not Swedish politicians incorporate aspects from their private sphere when communicating political messages and if this, in that case, have increased during the current parliamentary term and if it achieves more popularity than other political messages.

The first hypothesis was not supported by the data since the proportion of personalised posts did not increase during the current parliamentary term. This result was rather surprising seeing that most previous research on the personalisation thesis in an online context point to the opposite result. The second hypothesis which concerned an association between personalised content and popularity/engagement was supported by the data. However, the study could not provide evidence of personalised content always gaining more traction but was able to confirm that there is an association.

The findings concerning the third research question showed that political actors do incorporate private aspects when communicating political messages, they have done so increasingly during the period of study and these hybrids gain more popularity than political messages that are strictly political. This suggests that prominent Swedish politicians strategically communicate their political messages embedded in private aspects in order to reach their electorate and the results clearly show that this is a successful strategy, at least in terms of gaining a more central position on the social media platform Instagram.

6.2 Discussion

As pointed out in the theoretical framework, personalisation is a consequence of both media logics and political communications strategies (Van Aelst et al. 2011). Knowing that, it can be argued that the tendency to post personalised content has been saturated because it simply has reached its highest point. In other words, the politicians might not be able to adapt more to the media logics in their communication strategies than what they already have. If the politicians' content would merely consist of personalised posts it could arguably decrease the politicians' professional credibility.

Another reason as to why politicians might choose to not communicate increasingly personalised could be because all communication is not primarily aimed to potential voters but rather fellow party members. It is important to remember the internal aspect of politicians' social media use since it might have an effect on what type of content is being posted. It seems reasonable to assume that fellow party members have a higher tendency to follow prominent politicians in their respective party on social media which means that communication strategies need to be aimed for these too. If politicians were to only communicate personalised, the intra-party support could be at risk seeing that these people most likely have a high interest in the ideological aspects of politics as well.

Seeing that 53 per cent of all Swedes are using Instagram, which is the highest usage penetration in the world, Instagram has become an important communication channel not least for politicians who want to reach their potential voters and party members. However, the social media logic of Instagram favours personalised content with high rates of popularity and engagement which makes it hard to reach out with political messages and policy initiatives. Consequently, this demands a change when planning and carrying out political communication strategies. In order to adapt to the *modus operandi* of Instagram, the study's results suggest that political actors incorporate private aspects when conveying political messages (hybrids) and, in that way, try to reach their potential voters. In other words, Instagram was not made for conventional political communication but it can be an effective tool to strategically communicate with, and to, potential voters if the politicians chose to adapt to the logic of Instagram and make the political messages personal in some way. There is indeed great potential to reach the cov-

eted younger segment of the electorate and by communicating personalised with them it might result in a higher political interest among this group of people (Kruikemeier et al., 2013).

Referring back to the problem formulation, there is also a need to shed light on the negative consequences of political communication becoming more personalised. It can be argued that personalisation depoliticises the public debate and leaves the public less informed on substantial issues since communication on the ideological aspects of politics decreases and focus is instead increasingly directed towards the lifestyle of the politician and non-political trivial issues. Since Instagram is centred around pictures it inherits a constraint in conveying political messages of a complex manner which can be seen as intensifying the tendency of shifting focus towards the politician's personal sphere. On Instagram, there is no space for communicating complicated policy initiatives: posts need to be visually appealing and the caption needs to be short and create engagement. Even if the study's result showed that there was no increase in personalised posts during the last few years, the proportion of personalised posts on Instagram is still very high (50,3 %) compared to the other types of content. Political messages only made up for 11,5 per cent of the total sample of posts. It is important that this is reflected upon since the younger generations which to a large extent consume news and acquire knowledge on political issues through social media (Gottfried, Barthel, Shearer & Mitchell, 2016) might get a distorted perception of politics.

The number of people who question the liberal democratic system has increased and there are scholars who suggest that social media can be used as a tool to re-establish a connection with the electorate and as a platform to discuss political matters. The increased use of hybrids, which this study found, is interesting in relation to this since it can be seen as a strategy to meet the demands of not only the social media logics but also of the public. This leaves room for politicians to disguise their political messages in visually appealing and personal ways but also creates opportunities for future communication practitioners. However, if this is positive or negative for the public discourse and the democracy is beyond the scope of this study.

6.3 Research contribution and suggestions for further research

The study has contributed with insights on a few different areas. Firstly, the personalisation thesis has been examined in a social media context from a political actors perspective which is an important contribution seeing that few studies have examined this specific area and more generally, the personalisation thesis have previously had mixed results. Secondly, the study found that personalised content is not always at all times receiving more popularity and engagement which previous studies have not been able to determine. This conclusion could be drawn due to the fact that the study was based on a relatively large sample size and did not only examine the most popular posts which previous research have done. Lastly, the concept of hybrids is an important contribution to the field and has provided a basis for future research. The coding scheme used to identify hybrids can be implemented also in other contexts than Instagram which can be regarded as a methodological and conceptual contribution.

While this study has contributed with important insights regarding personalisation on Instagram and the use of hybrids the area can be further researched. Political communication on Instagram is a rather new phenomenon and research on this area is, thus, still in an early stage. Future studies should continue to explore the hybrids found in this study. Are hybrids successful also beyond the social media logics as a communication strategy in terms of gaining the public's trust and votes? Another interesting approach would be to examine the most popular Instagram accounts belonging to politicians and see what their communications strategies are. This could be done with quantitative methods but also through a qualitative semiotic analysis in order to examine the images on a deeper level and understand the conveyed connotations. In this way, feelings and emotions created by images can be explored which can lead the way for future political communication strategies.

The personalisation thesis should also be further researched from a political actors perspective. Up until now, a lot of focus has been directed towards the media perspective by examining whether or not the media has an increased focus on political candidates and their characteristics. The new media landscape has, however, changed the dynamics and the politicians are increasingly their own media

producers which means that this trend also needs to be researched from the perspective of the politicians.

References

- Armstrong, R. A. (2014). When to use the Bonferroni correction. *Ophthalmic & Physiological Optics*, 34(5), 502-508.
- Asp, K. & Johansson, B. (1999). *Medierna och personvalet* (SOU 1999:92). Stockholm: Faktainfo.
- Aylott, N. (2005). *President Persson. How did Sweden get him? In The presidentialization of politics. A comparative study of modern democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Barthes, R. (1977). Rhetoric of the Image. In S. Heath (Ed.), *Image – Music – Text* (p. 32–51). New York: Hill and Wang.
- Bennulf, M., & Hedberg, P. (1993). *Person och parti i massmedierna* (SOU 1993:63). Stockholm: Allmänna Förlaget.
- Binderkrantz, A. S., & Green-Pedersen, C. (2009). Policy or processes in focus? *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 14(2), 166-185.
- Bjerling, J. (2012). *The Personalisation of Swedish Politics. Party Leaders in the Election Coverage 1979-2010*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg. Retrieved 25 April, 2018, from <http://hdl.handle.net/2077/31451>.
- Blumenthal, S. (1980). *The Permanent Campaign: Inside the World of Elite Political Operatives*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Blumler, J.G., & Kavanagh, D. (1999). The third age of political communication: Influences and features. *Political Communication*, 16(3), 209-230.
- Bucher, T. (2012). Want to Be on the Top? Algorithmic Power and the Threat of 91 Invisibility on Facebook. *New Media & Society*, 14(7), 1164–1180.
- Chadwick, A. (2017). *The hybrid media system: politics and power*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ekman, M., & Widholm, A. (2015). Politicians as Media Producers. *Journalism Practice*, 9(1), 78-91.

- Ekman, M., & Widholm, A. (2017). Political communication in an age of visual connectivity: Exploring Instagram practices among Swedish politicians. *Northern Lights: Film & Media Studies Yearbook*, 15(1), 15-32.
- Enli, G. S., & Skogerbø, E. (2013). Personalized Campaigns in Party-Centered Politics: Twitter and Facebook as arenas for political communication. *Information, Communication & Society* 16(5), 757-774.
- Filimonov, K., Russman, U., & Svensson, J. (2016). Picturing the Party: Instagram and Party Campaigning in the 2014 Swedish Elections. *Social Media + Society*, 2(3), 1-11.
- Foa, R.F., Mounk, Y., & Inglehart, R. F. (2016). The Danger of Deconsolidation. *Journal of Democracy*, 27(3), 5-15.
- Foa, R. F., & Mounk, Y. (2017). The Signs of Deconsolidation. *Journal of democracy*, 28(1), 5-15.
- Gottfried, J., Barthel, M., Shearer, E., & Mitchell, A. (2016). *The 2016 presidential campaign—A news event that's hard to miss* (Pew Research Center). Retrieved 12 May, 2018, from <http://www.journalism.org/2016/02/04/the-2016-presidential-campaign-a-news-event-thats-hard-to-miss/>.
- Gustafsson, N. (2015). Social Media and Parliamentary Infighting: Digital naturals in the Swedish Riksdag? In W.T., Coombs, J. Falkheimer, M. Heide, & P. Young (Eds.), *Strategic Communication, Social Media and Democracy* (pp. 95-105). New York: Routledge.
- Habermas, J. (1989). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Habermas, J. (1996). *Between facts and norms: contributions to a discourse theory of law and democracy*. Oxford: Polity Press.
- Habermas, J. (2006). Political communication in media society: Does democracy still enjoy an epistemic dimension? The impact of normative theory on empirical research. *Communication Theory*, 16(4), 411-426.
- Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Hart, R. (1992). *Seducing America. How Television Charms the Modern Voter*. London: SAGE.

- Hermans, L., & Vergeer, M. (2012). Personalization in e-campaigning: A cross-national comparison of personalization strategies used on candidate websites of 17 countries in EP elections 2009. *New Media & Society*, 15(19), 72-92.
- InstaBro. (n.d.). *InstaBro for Mac OS X: Browse and download Instagram photos easily*. Retrieved 23 March, 2018, from <https://datastills.com/instabro/>.
- IIS. (2017). *Svenskarna och internet 2017 - Undersökning om svenskarnas internetvanor*. Retrieved 18 April, 2018, from https://www.iis.se/docs/Svenskarna_och_internet_2017.pdf
- Johansson, B. (2008). Popularized election coverage? News coverage of Swedish parliamentary election campaigns 1979-2006. In Strömbäck, J., Ørsten, M., & Aalberg, T. (Eds.), *Communicating politics. Political communication in the Nordic countries* (p.181-194). Göteborg: Nordicom.
- Kalsnes, B. (2016). *The power of likes: social media logic and political communication*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Oslo, Oslo. Retrieved 02 May, 2018, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317281598_The_power_of_likes_Social_media_logic_and_political_communication.
- Karvonen, L. (2010). *The Personalization of Politics: A Study of Parliamentary Democracies*. Colchester: ECPR Press.
- Klinger, U., & Svensson, J. (2014). The Emergence of Network Media Logic in Political Communication: A Theoretical Approach, *New Media & Society*, 17(8), 1241-1257.
- Kriesi, H. (2011). Personalization of national election campaigns. *Party Politics*, 18(6), 825-844.
- Kruikemeier, S., Van Noort, G., Vliengenthart, R., & de Vreese, C. H. (2013). Getting closer: the effects of personalized and interactive online political communication. *European Journal of Communication*, 28(1), 53-66.
- Lalancette, M., & Raynauld, V. (2017). The Power of Political Image: Justin Trudeau, Instagram, and Celebrity Politics. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 00(0), 1-37.
- Langer, A. I. (2006). *The politicisation of private persona. The case of Tony Blair in historical perspective*. London: London School of Economics and Political Science.

- Larsson, A. O. (2017a). Top Users and Long Tails: Twitter and Instagram Use During the 2015 Norwegian Elections. *Social Media + Society*, 3(2), 1-12.
- Larsson, A. O. (2017b). Skiing all the way to the polls: Exploring the popularity of personalized posts on political Instagram accounts. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 1-15.
- Loader, B. D., Vromen, A., & Xenos, M. A. (2016). Performing for the young networked citizen? Celebrity politics, social networking and the political engagement of young people. *Media, Culture and Society*, 38(3), 400-419.
- Maarek, P. J. (2014). Politics 2.0: New Forms of Digital Political Marketing and Political Communication. *Tripodos*, (34), 13-22.
- McAllister, I. (2007). The personalization of politics. In Dalton, R, J. & Klingemann, H. D. (Eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior* (p. 571-588). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Narum, S. R. (2006). Beyond Bonferroni: Less conservative analyses for conservation genetics. *Conservation Genetics*, 7(5), 783-787.
- Neuendorf, K. A. (2017). *The Content Analysis Guidebook*. London: SAGE.
- Olsson, E-K., & Eriksson, M. (2016) The logic of public organizations' social media use: Toward a theory of 'social mediatization', *Public Relations Inquiry*, 5(2), 187–204.
- Postman, N. (1985). *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. London: Heinemann.
- Rahat, G., & Sheaffer, T. (2007). The personalization(s) of politics: Israel, 1949–2003. *Political Communication*, 41(1), 65–80.
- Reinemann, C., & Wilke, J. (2007). It's the debates, stupid! How the introduction of televised debates changed the portrayal of chancellor candidates in the German press, 1949-2005. *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 12(4), 99-111.
- Riksdagen. (2018). *Ledamöter & Partier*. Retrieved 18 April, 2018, from <https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/ledamoter-partier/>.
- Rusmann, U., & Svensson, J. (2017). Interaction on Instagram? Glimpses from the 2014 Swedish Elections. *International Journal Of E-Politics*, 8(1), 50-65.
- Šimunjak, M. (2012). The Private Life as Part of Croatian Politicians' Communication Strategies: The 2009-2010 Presidential Elections. *Medijske Studije*, 3(5), 34-50.

- Schill, D. (2012). The Visual Image and the Political Image: A Review of Visual Communication Research in the Field of Political Communication. *Review Of Communication*, 12(2), 118-142.
- Sennett, R. (1976). *The Fall of Public Man*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- SOM-institutet. (2016). *Svenska trender 1986-2016*. Retrieved 23 April, 2018, from https://som.gu.se/digitalAssets/1649/1649642_32-svenska-trender-1986-2016.pdf.
- Speelman, D., Heylen, K., & Geeraerts, D. (2018). *Mixed-Effects Regression Models in Linguistics*. Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Statista. (2018a). *Number of monthly active Instagram users from January 2013 to September 2017 (in millions)*. Retrieved 18 April, 2018, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/253577/number-of-monthly-active-instagram-users/>.
- Statista. (2018b). *Usage penetration of Instagram in selected countries as of January 2018*. Retrieved 18 April, 2018, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/325567/instagram-penetration-regions/>.
- Strömbäck, J. (2014). *Makt, medier och samhälle: en introduktion till politisk kommunikation*. Lund: Studentlitteratur Ab.
- Svensson, J. (2012). Negotiating the political self on social media platforms. An in-depth study of image-management in an election-campaign in a multi-party democracy. *eJournal of eDemocracy and Open Government*, 4(2), 183-197.
- Swedish Institute. (2018). *The Swedish System of Government*. Retrieved 19 April, 2018, from <https://sweden.se/society/the-swedish-system-of-government/>.
- Ten Have, T. R., Kunselman, A. R., Pulkstenis, E. P., & Landis, R. J. (1998). Mixed Effects Logistic Regression Models for Longitudinal Binary Response Data with Informative Drop-Out. *Biometrics*, 54(1), 367-383.
- Van Aelst, P., Sheafer, T., & Stanyer, J. (2011). The personalization of mediated political communication: A review of concepts, operationalizations and key findings. *Journalism*, 13(2), 203-220.
- Van Dijck, J., & Poell, T. (2013). Understanding Social Media Logic. *Media and Communication*, 1(1), 2-14.

- Van Dongen, H. P., Olofsen, E., Dinges, D. F., & Maislin, G. (2004). Mixed-Model Regression Analysis and Dealing with Interindividual Differences. *Methods In Enzymology*, 384, 139-171.
- Van Santen, R., & Van Zoonen, L. (2010). The personal in political television biographies. *Biography*, 33(1), 46–67.
- Van Zoonen, L. (2005). *Entertaining the Citizen: When Politics and Popular Culture Converge*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Wahlgren, L. (2008). *SPSS steg för steg*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Wheeler, M. (2013). *Celebrity Politics*. London: Polity Press.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Sampling of posts

ALICE BAH KUHNKE

Q4'14: Missing data

Q1'15: Missing data

Q2'15: 99 posts → Skip Interval = 12

Q3'15: 65 posts → Skip Interval = 8

Q4'15: 85 posts → Skip Interval = 11

Q1'16: 81 posts → Skip Interval = 10

Q2'16: 87 posts → Skip Interval = 9

Q3'16: 85 posts → Skip Interval = 11

Q4'16: 100 posts → Skip Interval = 13

Q1'17: 81 posts → Skip Interval = 10

Q2'17: 76 posts → Skip Interval = 10

Q3'17: 68 posts → Skip Interval = 9

Q4'17: 82 posts → Skip Interval = 10

Q1'18: 80 posts → Skip Interval = 10

TOTALT=989

GUSTAV FRIDOLIN

Q4'14: 23 posts → Skip Interval = 3

Q1'15: 22 posts → Skip Interval = 3

Q2'15: 13 posts → Skip Interval = 2

Q3'15: 26 posts → Skip Interval = 3

Q4'15: 20 posts → Skip Interval = 3

Q1'16: 18 posts → Skip Interval = 2

Q2'16: 19 posts → Skip Interval = 2

Q3'16: 41 posts → Skip Interval = 5

Q4'16: 62 posts → Skip Interval = 8

Q1'17: 50 posts → Skip Interval = 6

Q2'17: 43 posts → Skip Interval = 5

Q3'17: 30 posts → Skip Interval = 4

Q4'17: 45 posts → Skip Interval = 6

Q1'18: 51 posts → Skip Interval = 6

TOTALT=463

MARGOT WALLSTRÖM

Q4'14: Missing data

Q1'15: Missing data

Q2'15: Missing data

Q3'15: Missing data

Q4'15: 19 posts → Skip Interval = 2

Q1'16: 17 posts → Skip Interval = 2

Q2'16: 16 posts → Skip Interval = 2

Q3'16: 24 posts → Skip Interval = 3

Q4'16: 38 posts → Skip Interval = 5

Q1'17: 35 posts → Skip Interval = 4

Q2'17: 18 posts → Skip Interval = 2

Q3'17: 25 posts → Skip Interval = 3

Q4'17: 33 posts → Skip Interval = 4

Q1'18: 37 posts → Skip Interval = 5

TOTALT=252

ANDERS YGEMAN

Q4'14: 45 posts → Skip Interval = 6

Q1'15: 44 posts → Skip Interval = 6

Q2'15: 46 posts → Skip Interval = 6

Q3'15: 33 posts → Skip Interval = 4

Q4'15: 35 posts → Skip Interval = 4

Q1'16: 17 posts → Skip Interval = 2

Q2'16: 17 posts → Skip Interval = 2

Q3'16: 49 posts → Skip Interval = 6

Q4'16: 67 posts → Skip Interval = 8

Q1'17: 40 posts → Skip Interval = 5

Q2'17: 49 posts → Skip Interval = 6

Q3'17: 43 posts → Skip Interval = 5

Q4'17: 65 posts → Skip Interval = 8

Q1'18: 42 posts → Skip Interval = 5

TOTALT=592

ROSSANA DINAMARCA

Q4'14:69 posts → Skip Interval = 9

Q1'15:74 posts → Skip Interval = 9
 Q2'15:65 posts → Skip Interval = 8
 Q3'15:86 posts → Skip Interval = 11
 Q4'15:50 posts → Skip Interval = 6

Q1'16:58 posts → Skip Interval = 7
 Q2'16:46 posts → Skip Interval = 7
 Q3'16:53 posts → Skip Interval = 7
 Q4'16:54 posts → Skip Interval = 7

Q1'17:37 posts → Skip Interval = 5
 Q2'17:35 posts → Skip Interval = 4
 Q3'17:45 posts → Skip Interval = 6
 Q4'17:43 posts → Skip Interval = 5

Q1'18:40 posts → Skip Interval = 5

TOTALT=1662**DANIEL RIAZAT**

Q4'14:8 posts → Skip Interval = 1

Q1'15:18 posts → Skip Interval = 2
 Q2'15:22 posts → Skip Interval = 3
 Q3'15:9 posts → Skip Interval = 1
 Q4'15:12 posts → Skip Interval = 2

Q1'16:9 posts → Skip Interval = 1
 Q2'16:6 posts → Skip Interval = 1
 Q3'16:6 posts → Skip Interval = 1
 Q4'16:13 posts → Skip Interval = 2

Q1'17:5 posts → Skip Interval = 1
 Q2'17:9 posts → Skip Interval = 1
 Q3'17:8 posts → Skip Interval = 1
 Q4'17:11 posts → Skip Interval = 1

Q1'18:10 posts → Skip Interval = 1

TOTALT=146**ANNA KINBERG BATRA**

Q4'14: Missing data

Q1'15: Missing data
 Q2'15: Missing data
 Q3'15:72 posts → Skip Interval = 9
 Q4'15:81 posts → Skip Interval = 10

Q1'16:120 posts → Skip Interval = 15
 Q2'16:183 posts → Skip Interval = 23
 Q3'16:201 posts → Skip Interval = 25
 Q4'16:265 posts → Skip Interval = 33

Q1'17:223 posts → Skip Interval = 28
 Q2'17:242 posts → Skip Interval = 30
 Q3'17:142 posts → Skip Interval = 18
 Q4'17:65 posts → Skip Interval = 8

Q1'18:68 posts → Skip Interval = 9

TOTALT=1662**HANIF BALI**

Q4'14:3 posts → Skip Interval = 1

Q1'15:2 posts → Skip Interval = 1
 Q2'15:17 posts → Skip Interval = 2
 Q3'15:7 posts → Skip Interval = 1
 Q4'15:1 posts → Skip Interval = 1

Q1'16:0 posts → Skip Interval = 0
 Q2'16:7 posts → Skip Interval = 1
 Q3'16:16 posts → Skip Interval = 2
 Q4'16:10 posts → Skip Interval = 1

Q1'17:2 posts → Skip Interval = 1
 Q2'17:32 posts → Skip Interval = 4
 Q3'17:16 posts → Skip Interval = 2
 Q4'17:24 posts → Skip Interval = 3

Q1'18:48 posts → Skip Interval = 6

TOTALT=185

BIRGITTA OHLSSON

Q4'14:375 posts → Skip Interval = 47

Q1'15:311 posts → Skip Interval = 39

Q2'15:329 posts → Skip Interval = 41

Q3'15:298 posts → Skip Interval = 37

Q4'15:237 posts → Skip Interval = 30

Q1'16:291 posts → Skip Interval = 36

Q2'16:339 posts → Skip Interval = 42

Q3'16: 300 posts → Skip Interval = 38

Q4'16:319 posts → Skip Interval = 40

Q1'17:392 posts → Skip Interval = 49

Q2'17:414 posts → Skip Interval = 52

Q3'17:319 posts → Skip Interval = 40

Q4'17:335 posts → Skip Interval = 42

Q1'18:228 posts → Skip Interval = 29

TOTALT=4487**FREDRIK MALM**

Q4'14:16 posts → Skip Interval = 2

Q1'15:16 posts → Skip Interval = 2

Q2'15:58 posts → Skip Interval = 7

Q3'15:21 posts → Skip Interval = 3

Q4'15:54 posts → Skip Interval = 7

Q1'16:53 posts → Skip Interval = 7

Q2'16:39 posts → Skip Interval = 5

Q3'16:27 posts → Skip Interval = 3

Q4'16:35 posts → Skip Interval = 5

Q1'17:34 posts → Skip Interval = 5

Q2'17:26 posts → Skip Interval = 3

Q3'17:28 posts → Skip Interval = 3

Q4'17:22 posts → Skip Interval = 3

Q1'18:26 posts → Skip Interval = 3

TOTALT=455**EBBA BUSCH THOR**

Q4'14:10 posts → Skip Interval = 1

Q1'15:24 posts → Skip Interval = 3

Q2'15:33 posts → Skip Interval = 4

Q3'15: 20 posts → Skip Interval = 3

Q4'15:31 posts → Skip Interval = 4

Q1'16:32 posts → Skip Interval = 4

Q2'16:28 posts → Skip Interval = 4

Q3'16:19 posts → Skip Interval = 2

Q4'16:37 posts → Skip Interval = 5

Q1'17:34 posts → Skip Interval = 4

Q2'17:56 posts → Skip Interval = 7

Q3'17:50 posts → Skip Interval = 6

Q4'17:52 posts → Skip Interval = 6

Q1'18:83 posts → Skip Interval = 10

TOTALT=509**SARA SKYTTE DAL**

Q4'14:74 posts → Skip Interval = 9

Q1'15:101 posts → Skip Interval = 13

Q2'15:94 posts → Skip Interval = 12

Q3'15: 80 posts → Skip Interval = 10

Q4'15:99 posts → Skip Interval = 12

Q1'16:114 posts → Skip Interval = 14

Q2'16:183 posts → Skip Interval = 23

Q3'16:104 posts → Skip Interval = 13

Q4'16:83 posts → Skip Interval = 10

Q1'17:88 posts → Skip Interval = 11

Q2'17:98 posts → Skip Interval = 12

Q3'17:76 posts → Skip Interval = 10

Q4'17:77 posts → Skip Interval = 10

Q1'18:68 posts → Skip Interval = 9

TOTALT=1339

ANNIE LÖÖF

Q4'14: Missing data

Q1'15: Missing data

Q2'15: Missing data

Q3'15: Missing data

Q4'15: 58 posts → Skip Interval = 7

Q1'16:52 posts → Skip Interval = 7

Q2'16:174 posts → Skip Interval = 22

Q3'16:120 posts → Skip Interval = 15

Q4'16:153 posts → Skip Interval = 19

Q1'17:155 posts → Skip Interval = 19

Q2'17:183 posts → Skip Interval = 23

Q3'17:139 posts → Skip Interval = 17

Q4'17:149 posts → Skip Interval = 19

Q1'18:161 posts → Skip Interval = 20

TOTALT=1344**FREDRIK FEDERLEY**

Q4'14:231 posts → Skip Interval = 29

Q1'15:199 posts → Skip Interval = 25

Q2'15:215 posts → Skip Interval = 27

Q3'15:244 posts → Skip Interval = 30

Q4'15:203 posts → Skip Interval = 29

Q1'16:188 posts → Skip Interval = 23

Q2'16:277 posts → Skip Interval = 34

Q3'16: 396 posts → Skip Interval = 50

Q4'16:266 posts → Skip Interval = 33

Q1'17:242 posts → Skip Interval = 30

Q2'17:246 posts → Skip Interval = 30

Q3'17:322 posts → Skip Interval = 40

Q4'17:338 posts → Skip Interval = 42

Q1'18:290 posts → Skip Interval = 36

TOTALT=3657**PAULA BIELER**

Q4'14:33 posts → Skip Interval = 4

Q1'15:12 posts → Skip Interval = 2

Q2'15:33 posts → Skip Interval = 4

Q3'15: 62 posts → Skip Interval = 8

Q4'15:57 posts → Skip Interval = 7

Q1'16:70 posts → Skip Interval = 9

Q2'16:71 posts → Skip Interval = 9

Q3'16:60 posts → Skip Interval = 8

Q4'16:11 posts → Skip Interval = 1

Q1'17:26 posts → Skip Interval = 3

Q2'17:30 posts → Skip Interval = 4

Q3'17:116 posts → Skip Interval = 15

Q4'17:58 posts → Skip Interval = 7

Q1'18:47 posts → Skip Interval = 6

TOTALT=686**HANNA WIGH**

Q4'14:20 posts → Skip Interval = 3

Q1'15:18 posts → Skip Interval = 2

Q2'15:13 posts → Skip Interval = 2

Q3'15: 11 posts → Skip Interval = 1

Q4'15:12 posts → Skip Interval = 2

Q1'16:12 posts → Skip Interval = 2

Q2'16:23 posts → Skip Interval = 3

Q3'16:7 posts → Skip Interval = 1

Q4'16:20 posts → Skip Interval = 3

Q1'17:23 posts → Skip Interval = 3

Q2'17:28 posts → Skip Interval = 4

Q3'17:8 posts → Skip Interval = 1

Q4'17:14 posts → Skip Interval = 2

Q1'18: 4 posts → Skip Interval = 1

TOTALT=213

Appendix 2 – Coding manual

Variable 1: Unitname - Initials and Quarter

- The unitname is identified by an abbreviation with: *initials, quarter, year and what unit number it is in the quarter*. For example, a post from Anna Kinberg Batra the 1st of January 2017 would be identified as *AKB_Q1'17_1*.

V2: Date - publishing date

- This section consists of the exact date on which the post was published.

V3: Number of comments

- When counting comments the total amount of comments in the field are counted, including the politicians answers.

V4: Number of likes

V5: Type of content

V5.1: Everyday life private

- That is, if there is nothing professional or political implication in the picture or text, it is to be coded as a *Everyday life private*-post.

V5.2: Everyday life professional

- All professional postings that does not contain a political message or standpoint is to be coded as *Everyday life professional* in order to distinguish when the politician is only doing work-related tasks from actual political messages as well as everyday private content.

V5.3: Political message

- Presence of political message, that is, when the politician obviously intends to convey a political message of some sort, or manifests her/his standpoint in a matter that relates to the political sphere.

V6: Connection to private sphere within everyday life professional

- If the everyday life professional post is containing anything from the politician's private sphere, this box ought to be ticked.
- A connection can concern either: Partner, Children, Other family members, Upbringing and past life, Personal values, Personal interests

V7: Connection to private sphere within political message

- If the political message is containing anything from the politician's private sphere, this box ought to be ticked.
- A connection can concern either: Partner, Children, Other family members, Upbringing and past life, Personal values, Personal interests

Appendix 3 – Coding scheme

Intercoder Reliability

Percent agreement (or “crude agreement”) was employed on 5 % of the total population of posts in order to test the intercoder reliability and it was calculated in the following way: A (Number of Agreements)/ (total number of cases) =PAo (Proportion Agreement Observed)

All variables combined

Number of Agreements: 421
Total number of cases: 444
PAo= 0.9482
Percent Agreement: 94,82%

Variable 2 - Date/ Quarter

Number of Agreements: 80
Total number of cases: 80
PAo= 1.0
Percent Agreement: 100%

Variable 3 - Comments

Number of Agreements: 80
Total number of cases: 80
PAo= 1.0
Percent Agreement: 100%

Variable 4 - Likes

Number of Agreements: 79
Total number of cases: 80
PAo= .9875
Percent Agreement: 98,75%

Variable 4 - Referring to self

Number of Agreements: 69
Total number of cases: 80
PAo= 0.8625
Percent Agreement: 86,25%

Variable 5 - Type of content

Number of Agreements: 77
Total number of cases: 80
PAo= 0.9625
Percent Agreement: 96,25%

Variable 6 - Everyday professional - connection to private sphere

Number of Agreements: 27
Total number of cases: 30
PAo= 0.9
Percent Agreement: 90%

Variable 7 - Political message - connection to private sphere

Number of Agreements: 16
Total number of cases: 20
PAo= 0.8
Percent Agreement: 80%

