

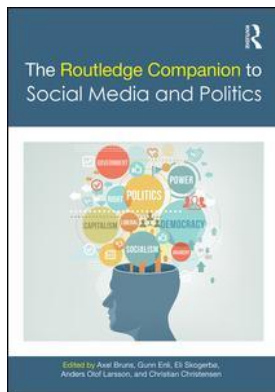
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### Not Just a Face(book) in the Crowd

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# NOT JUST A FACE(BOOK) IN THE CROWD

## Candidates' Use of Facebook during the Danish 2011 Parliamentary Election Campaign

*Morten Skovsgaard and Arjen van Dalen*

### Introduction

Great expectations surfaced in the build up to the 2011 Danish parliamentary election campaign, with blunt predictions such as: “We will experience a digital revolution in the election campaign” (Lotte Hansen, PR consultant and former spin doctor, in Andreassen, 2011, para. 1). These predictions were expressed following a phase of fast adaptation to the digital age. The Internet penetration and Facebook usage in Denmark was among the highest in the world (Internet World Stats, 2012; Socialbakers, 2012).

In spite of such ‘digital revolution’ expectations, the political parties were not totally convinced that social media were the most efficient way to communicate with voters. Already early in the election campaign, it was reported by the newspapers *Information* and *Jyllands-Posten* that the third biggest party in parliament, Danish People’s Party, did not even have a public Facebook profile. According to the party’s manager of press relations, they preferred personal dialogue with citizens on the streets or at public meetings.<sup>1</sup>

Social media have become an integral part of election campaigns in the Western world (Enli & Moe, 2013), but they have not revolutionised political campaigning, and the prediction of a digital revolution is thus exaggerated. Social media should not be discarded as insignificant in election campaigns, rather they should be considered one among several tools politicians resort to when they want to reach potential voters (Towner & Dulio, 2012: 99). Candidates utilise a mix of campaign channels such as advertisements, mass media, live debates, direct contacts on the streets or at people’s front doors, and social media (Kleis Nielsen, 2012: 17). There are also significant individual differences in the degrees to which the candidates embrace social media as new digital tools for political communication (Skovsgaard & van Dalen, 2013). The diversity of candidates’ use of social media in election campaigns contradicts the idea of an ‘across the board’ digital revolution and calls for more detailed analysis of who uses social media, to what extent, and for what reasons.

In this chapter we embark on a detailed analysis by combining a survey of the candidates for the 2011 Danish parliamentary election with their actual posting behaviour on Facebook during the campaign. Integrating these two data sources gives us the opportunity to explore who uses Facebook and for which reasons. Our study shows that social media should be seen as one among several tools in the campaign tool box. Campaigning on Facebook is particularly important for a select group of candidates—in particular younger candidates, who do not have easy access to the mass media and who primarily campaign to get attention for themselves rather than for the party. We first briefly describe the Danish electoral system, and the main sources of political information for Danes, to provide necessary context for our study.

### Danish Electoral System and the Growing Importance of Social Media

After the bourgeois coalition had enjoyed three rather comfortable election wins and 10 years in government, the 2011 election was decided by a small margin, and the centre-left coalition replaced the bourgeois government. The prospect of a close race resulted in an election campaign with high incentives to actively campaign on both sides of the political spectrum.

In the Danish multiparty system, elections are proportional, which gives candidates a double incentive to campaign. At the same time they compete to maximise their own parties' share of the total number of votes (interparty competition) and to maximise their own number of votes to beat their fellow candidates from the same party in the race for the party's seats in parliament (intraparty competition). With 784 candidates from nine parties of very different size in parliament (plus 20 independents) running for office, there is considerable variation in the incentive structure as well as the campaign strategy and resources among the candidates. This can be expected to affect to what degree and for what purposes the candidates use the different campaign channels—including social media.

According to Internet World Stats (2012), almost three million Danes use Facebook, which is equal to approximately 63 per cent of the population. Despite a high Facebook use, traditional mass media are still the most important source to political communication in Denmark. The Danes considered television the most important and trustworthy source of information in the 2011 election campaign (Hoff et al., 2013: 13). The Danish media system is characterised by an early professionalisation of journalism (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Politics is generally covered in accordance with a media logic where institutional news values determine what is covered and how it is covered. This means that election coverage in the Danish media are not biased based on political leaning, but rather that there is an uneven access to the mass media between incumbents and challengers, and between powerful candidates and less powerful candidates (Albæk et al., 2010; Hopmann et al., 2011).

Prior to the 2011 election, several political campaign leaders remarked that in spite of increased importance of social media, the channel was still of less importance compared to the mass media, which still set the agenda (Nygård Espersen, 2011). In addition, direct contact with voters was mentioned as a means of campaigning with more relevance than social media use. Danish politicians acknowledge that elections cannot be won by media spin alone. A tactical ground war, where parties strategically plan to get in personal contact is indeed a central part of winning campaign strategies around the world (Kleis Nielsen, 2012). These ground wars are not yet as professionalised and

strategically planned, as in the U.S. Nevertheless, Danish parties are also becoming more tactical in their personal contacts with voters (Nyegård Espersen, 2011).

In terms of being a source of campaign information, the importance of social media is growing even though other sources are still more important. According to surveys, almost one in five Danish voters gets political information from and engages in political debate on social media. There are, however, some segments that are more politically active on social media than others, and certain types of engagement are more common than others. First, young people are most politically active on social media and thus more likely to engage with politicians. Second, those who are already engaged in politics offline and who already were directly or indirectly related to the politicians' network were more likely to connect with politicians online (Normann Andersen & Medaglia, 2009: 110). Third, the most typical form of engaging with politics on social media is to 'like' or read posts, while actively searching for information or commenting on politicians' posts is still less common (Hoff et al., 2013). In the next part, we will discuss more closely how social media is used in recent Danish election campaigns.

### Key Advantages of Social Media in Danish Election Campaigns

Social media have a number of advantages as a campaign tool compared to other campaign channels, and in a Danish political context, three advantages are particularly relevant. First, there is a remarkably *lower entry barrier* compared to more costly campaign channels. While candidates have to pay large sums for advertising, all it takes to campaign on social media is a profile on Facebook or Twitter which serve as a platform from which any candidate can communicate unlimited. To design and maintain a professional social media profile might require both time and resources, but compared to the costs of spots on television or radio these costs are minimal. This makes Facebook an attractive campaign channel for Danish candidates who generally work with small budgets.

The second advantage is that social media is a platform where the political candidates have *more control over their message* than when they campaign through the mass media. By-passing the mass media is particularly attractive in Denmark, since Danish journalists are more critical towards politicians than their colleagues in several other European countries (Skovsgaard et al., 2012; van Dalen, 2012). In the context of the mass media, the candidates do not control how they are portrayed and they seldom come across with their messages without interference as the journalists will decide the framing of the story. Not least because journalists have a preference for conflict and negativity (e.g. Baum & Groeling, 2010; Soroka, 2014), social media has the advantage of being an arena where the candidates have more autonomous control over their message.

A third advantage is that social media are well-suited for *personalised and candidate-centred campaigns*, meaning that candidates primarily want to promote their own candidacy rather than the party. Such a personalised campaign is particularly important for Danish candidates who are engaged in intra-party competition for a seat in parliament, and need to mobilise potential voters (Skovsgaard & van Dalen, 2013). Social media offer ample opportunity for direct contact between the individual politician and potential voters (e.g. Druckman et al, 2007; Van Santen & Van Zoonen, 2010). Compared to canvassing, candidates will potentially reach more people on social media in an instant than they can shake hands with during a whole day on the street. Still, a kind of direct contact with potential voters can be maintained on the social media.

Politicians may engage in debate and respond directly to questions or comments from citizens, which is not possible when they campaign through the mass media.

Compared to social media, traditional mass media have advantages when the goal is to get in contact with the broader population (Maarek, 2011). Since people who follow politicians on Facebook are often already supporting them (Normann Andersen & Medaglia, 2009), candidates preach to the already converted on social media, which, of course, is problematic if the goal is to win over voters (Karlsen, 2011). Through mass media candidates can reach supporters and opponents as well as undecided voters. Although media exposure would be beneficial for all candidates, not everyone is able to make use of this to the same extent. Due to institutionalised news values, the mass media tend to cover already powerful and high-profiled candidates, at the expense of less influential and less profiled candidates (e.g. Hopmann et al., 2011; van Dalen, 2012).

A survey among the candidates for the 2011 election in Denmark pinpoints newsworthiness as an important factor explaining how Danish candidates use social media and traditional media (Skovsgaard & van Dalen, 2013). The survey identified three different groups of politicians on the basis of their media use; the first group emphasised traditional mass media while also giving some priority to social media. The second group almost disregarded national media and focused more on social media in addition to local and regional newspapers. The third group did not find any of the campaign channels very important, which indicates that they hardly campaigned at all. A characteristic of the second group, the candidates who emphasise social media more than mass media, was that they were less ‘newsworthy’, and that they use social media to compensate for the lack of access to mainstream media. Among the typical traits were that the group using social media most actively were less experienced, and more likely to be challengers compared to candidates who emphasise traditional mass media above social media. The candidates who focus mainly on the national news media use social media mostly as a supplementary channel; first and foremost intended as a means to gain coverage in traditional media (Skovsgaard & van Dalen, 2013).

Survey measures rely on the respondents’ self-reported perceptions of their behaviour rather than actual behaviour, and studies have found significant inconsistencies between self-reported behaviour and actual behaviour (Olsen, 1998). Based on these findings, this study will combine the survey data with analysis of the candidates’ actual use of Facebook. The rationale for choosing Facebook is its position as the dominant social network site in Denmark,<sup>2</sup> and in turn, its unique status in terms of reaching voters and its related popularity among Danish politicians (Hansen & Kosira-Pedersen, 2014).

As we demonstrated above, the widespread usage of Facebook combined with the easy access, control over the message, and the personalised and direct mode of communication make the social media site a potentially useful campaign channel for candidates. There were, however, significant differences between how various groups of politicians—depending mostly on their competitive position—used Facebook according to the survey. Based on this backdrop, we will investigate the following questions: First, *what characterises the candidates* who are most likely to have a public Facebook profile? To what degree do individual differences demonstrate patterns related to age, incumbency status, and personalised campaigning, and chances of being elected? Second, how does the use of Facebook *compare to traditional* campaigning such as canvassing and interviews in broadcast media, and which candidates are most likely to use each

of these forms of campaigning? Third, *what motivates politicians* to use social media, and to what degree do politicians use their public Facebook profile mainly for a personalised campaign or mainly for reaching a broader audience? Through studying these questions, this chapter will provide detailed insight into candidates' use of Facebook in the Danish election campaign. Before we proceed to the analysis, we will present the data and the method of the study.

### Data

The above research questions will be analysed on the basis of a combination of two datasets from the 2011 Danish parliamentary elections. The first dataset is a collection of all updates on the public Facebook pages of candidates who were running for a party in the 2011 election campaign (van Dalen et al., 2014).<sup>3</sup> The limitation to public profiles is a result of Facebook's privacy policy, and as a result we do not study the politicians' private profiles.

Out of the total number of 784 candidates, 217, or 28 per cent, of the Danish candidates had a public Facebook profile and posted at least one message during the 2011 campaign. The campaign ran from 26 August, when the prime minister called the elections, until election day, on 15 September. Over this period all status updates by the candidates were collected. These 6,388 status updates include 2,805 simple status updates, 1,872 links, 1,143 pictures, 545 videos, and 23 other types of updates.

This dataset was merged with the responses of 375 of the same candidates to a questionnaire including questions about their professional background, the election campaign, and motivations to use social media (see Elmelund-Præstekær & Schumacher, 2014; Skovsgaard & van Dalen, 2013). Data collection took place in October and November 2011, as part of the Comparative Candidate Survey project.<sup>4</sup> Response rate for the survey is 49 per cent and the respondents are representative of candidates' age, gender, and party affiliation, but it is worth noting that new candidates responded more frequently than established candidates. Combined, these two data sets will provide insight into the politicians' activity and motivations for using Facebook, as well as differences between various groups of politicians.

### Characteristics of the Most Active Politicians

On average, candidates with an active public Facebook profile posted 29 updates during the three weeks parliamentary election campaign, but there was substantial variation between the individual candidates. While 44 per cent of the candidates posted less than once a day, the most active candidate posted 179 updates in total. To identify shared characteristics of the most active candidates we identified the ten most active candidates (Table 25.1).

A key characteristic of the most active candidates was that they had personal strategies, rather party-centred strategies; among the 10 most posting candidates the number of new candidates was fairly equal to the number of established candidates. Four candidates are from government parties and six candidates from opposition parties. The second most posting candidate was incumbent Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen from the liberal party, Venstre. Another party leader, Johanne Schmidt Nielsen from the left-wing party, Enhedslisten, is in fourth place. The candidate with most posts on his public Facebook profile was Uffe Elbæk, a former journalist who ran for the social

Table 25.1 Politicians with Most Posts on Public Facebook Profile during 2011 Parliamentary Election Campaign in Denmark

<i>Politician</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Incumbent?</i>	<i>Party leader</i>	<i>Posts</i>
Uffe Elbæk	B—Radikale Venstre	No	No	179
Lars Løkke Rasmussen	V—Venstre	Yes	Yes	151
Mette Abildgaard	C—Det Konservative Folkeparti	No	No	121
Johanne Schmidt-Nielsen	Ø—Enhedslisten	Yes	Yes	110
Kirsten Hasberg	K—Kristendemokraterne	No	No	92
Manu Sareen	B—Radikale Venstre	No	No	88
Torsten Schack Pedersen	V—Venstre	Yes	No	82
Morten Østergaard	B—Radikale Venstre	Yes	No	79
Ellen Trane Nørby	V—Venstre	Yes	No	78
Kim Raben	F—Socialistisk Folkeparti	No	No	77

Note: Campaign lasted from 26 August to 15 September 2011 (21 days).

liberal opposition party, Radikale Venstre. His nine updates on average per day during the campaign are exceptionally high. It is more than double the updates compared to number six on the top 10 of the most posting candidates.

Of the 10 most posting candidates, three were not elected into parliament. Thus, being highly active on Facebook is no guarantee for electoral success. This finding corroborates with a study of the effects of online campaigning in the Danish 2011 parliamentary election that found no effect of online campaigning on personal votes in the election when controlling for campaign resources, and the active use of other campaign channels (Hansen & Kosiara-Pedersen, 2014).

Table 25.2 demonstrates the number of candidates of each of the nine parties who had a public Facebook profile. The parties can be divided into three groups; for three smaller parties outside government, more than 40 per cent of the candidates have a public profile. This is followed by the two governing parties Det Konservative Folkeparti and Venstre, as well as the main opposition party (Socialdemokratiet), with around 30 per cent of candidates with a public profile. Finally, for three parties (Enhedslisten, Dansk Folkeparti, and Kristendemokraterne) less than 15 per cent of candidates have a public Facebook profile. For those candidates who actually have a public Facebook profile, there are no large differences between parties in numbers of updates. The mean number of posts per active candidates is 29, and most parties are not far from that average apart from Dansk Folkeparti, whose candidates are less active with an average of 10 posts.

A mix of three factors seems to explain the difference in presence on Facebook. First, the high activity on Facebook among smaller opposition parties could be a way to compensate for the difficulties they might have of accessing the mass media. Due to the news values of power and relevance, mass media pay most attention to politicians

Table 25.2 Number of Posts per Party on Public Facebook Profiles during 2011 Parliamentary Election Campaign in Denmark

Party	% of candidates who have active public profile	No. of posts per active candidates <sup>1</sup>
F—Socialistisk Folkeparti (92)	45.70 per cent	32.95 (18.7)
I—Liberal Alliance (74)	43.20 per cent	20.88 (13.2)
B—Radikale Venstre (75)	42.70 per cent	35.00 (34.5)
C—Det Konservative Folkeparti (86)	31.40 per cent	26.19 (26.4)
A—Socialdemokratiet (93)	29.00 per cent	30.26 (17.1)
V—Venstre (93)	28.00 per cent	35.04 (34.0)
Ø—Enhedslisten (92)	14.10 per cent	37.85 (29.9)
O—Dansk Folkeparti (92)	10.90 per cent	9.60 (9.9)
K—Kristendemokraterne (87)	9.20 per cent	24.13 (30.5)
All candidates (784)	27.70 per cent	29.44 (25.4)

Note: <sup>1</sup>Mean number of posts with standard deviation between brackets. Campaign lasted from 26 August to 15 September 2011 (21 days).

who are either in parliament or who are expected to win the elections (Hopmann et al., 2011). A public Facebook page can be a means to by-pass the traditional media and directly be in contact with potential voters, but it can also be a way to catch attention from journalists who are often in the social networks of politicians.

A second possible explanation is related to the candidates' target groups for their campaign and the demographics of their potential voters. Liberal Alliance and Det Radikale Venstre are among the parties whose voters are politically most active online.<sup>5</sup> The party whose voters are least likely to search for political information online (Dansk Folkeparti) is among the least active Facebook parties. Candidates from Dansk Folkeparti with a public profile post significantly less than candidates from other parties.

Third, incentives to invest in a (personalised) campaign can also account for some of the differences in active Facebook use across the parties. The only party which organises most of their candidate lists with a closed list (Enhedslisten) is also a party where many candidates do not have a public Facebook profile. This is despite the fact that voters from Enhedslisten are as likely to search for political information online as voters of the parties with the most active candidates on Facebook. Candidates for Enhedslisten have a fixed place on the party list, which means that their campaigns have little influence on whether they are elected or not. Candidates from other parties can make it into parliament despite their low place on the party list by attracting personal votes. Accordingly, they may benefit personally from campaigning on Facebook, by motivating people to vote and bond with supporters. For candidates for Enhedslisten this incentive to use Facebook to run a personalised campaign is weaker, which seems to be reflected in the results.



The party with the lowest presence (Kristendemokraterne) was below the electoral threshold in all of the opinion polls leading up to elections. It thus had a very small chance to make it into the parliament and thereby few incentives to campaign on Facebook.

### Facebook in the Campaign Mix

In order to contextualise the role of Facebook in relation to the total campaign mix, we have compared the use of public social media profiles to participating in interviews on radio and television and canvassing, i.e. personal meetings with voters on the street, because these were regarded as important campaign channels by Danish campaign professionals (Nyegård Espersen, 2011).

Candidates are more likely to participate in interviews (71.4 per cent), or meet voters on the street (94.3 per cent), than to have a public Facebook profile (72.3 per cent). Table 25.3 demonstrates that there were no significant gender differences in the preferences for these various campaign tools. Age was however a significant factor; Facebook is particularly relevant for young candidates, while older candidates are less likely to have a public profile. In comparison, age had no influence on the degree of interviews and canvassing.

Moreover, the analysis demonstrated that motivation to run an individual campaign is a key explanation for politicians' active public Facebook use. Candidates indicated on a scale from 0 to 10 whether they mainly campaign to get as much attention for themselves (0) or for the party (10). Candidates are less likely to engage in all three

Table 25.3 Explaining the Use of Different Campaign Channels

	<i>Public Facebook profile</i> B (SE)	<i>Interviews on radio and television</i> B (SE)	<i>Canvassing</i> B (SE)
Gender	.25 (.27)	.03 (.27)	2.96 (.65)
Age	-.05 (.01)***	-.01 (.01)	.01 (.02)
Campaign mainly for party	-.12 (.04)**	-.10 (.04)*	-.20 (.09)*
In parliament	.50 (.47)	2.54 (1.03)*	.32 (1.06)
Constant	1.57* (.51)**	2.15 (.52)***	3.64 (1.05)**
<i>n</i>	325	325	317
Nagelkerke R square	.15	.11	.08
Correctly classified	72.6 per cent	71.4 per cent	94.3 per cent
-2 log-likelihood	348.620	351,639	129.283

\*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$ .

campaign activities when they campaign for the party rather than for themselves. Even though campaigning for oneself and for the party is not mutually exclusive, this finding indicates that the individual campaign is a more important driver for engaging with all these campaign channels than the party campaign.

Candidates who defend a seat in parliament are not more likely to have a public Facebook profile than new candidates. These candidates are, however, more likely to appear in interviews, most likely because they are powerful elite sources and thus fulfil key news values. Canvassing is, however, done by almost all candidates and is not related to either being a newcomer or an established politician. The fact that new forms of campaigning do not replace but rather supplement old forms might explain why canvassing is in general still more popular among the candidates than campaigning via social media (Kleis Nielsen, 2012). Research has shown that the direct meeting with voters has a considerable effect on turnout (e.g. Gerber & Green, 2000), and this effect is acknowledged by the party organisations (Nyegård Espersen, 2011).

### Public Facebook Profiles, Personalised Campaigning

Candidates who have a public Facebook profile do indeed see social media first and foremost as a campaign channel to run a personalised campaign. The main motivations to use social media are to present oneself and to have direct contact with voters (see Table 25.4). Reaching as many voters as possible is less important than running a personalised campaign, but still motivates two-thirds of the candidates. About half of the candidates use social media to organise the campaign, while gaining visibility in traditional mass media is the least important of the six reasons.<sup>6</sup>

Younger candidates are not only more likely to use Facebook; their motivation to use Facebook also differs from older candidates. Younger candidates are more motivated to use social media to have direct contact with voters than older candidates, while gaining media attention through social media is significantly more important for established candidates than for newcomers. Moreover, half of the candidates, with an overrepresentation of established candidates, state the aim to *appear modern* as a motivation for social media use. This finding confirms a recent study that found that British MPs regard Twitter as a “bandwagon they need to jump on” (Jackson & Lilleker, 2011: 86).

Table 25.4 Motivation to Use Facebook and Twitter for Candidates with Public Facebook Profile during the 2011 Parliamentary Election Campaign in Denmark

Make oneself and one's points of view visible	86 per cent
Communicate directly with voters	84 per cent
Reach as many voters as possible	65 per cent
Appear modern	51 per cent
Organise campaign	46 per cent
Gain visibility in traditional media	38 per cent

Note:  $N = 87$  (minimal), based on candidates with a public Facebook profile who filled out the candidate survey.

### Chances of Being Elected and Public Facebook Use

Perceived chances of being elected impact on the candidates' use of Facebook. Table 25.5 shows that candidates who believed they were very likely to win a seat in parliament were also most likely to use Facebook actively. This is hardly surprising, because the ones who were very confident of being elected are the high-profile politicians with the largest campaign resources, as well as being the most profiled in news media (Skovsgaard & van Dalen, 2013).

Disregarding the group of candidates who were very confident to win, the group of candidates who from the beginning thought that it was an open race for a seat in parliament is most likely to have a Facebook profile and to frequently update their profile during the campaign. Moreover, this group were even more active on Facebook than the candidates who thought they were likely to win, although differences were not significant. A key reason for this tendency could be that candidates who thought that they were in an open race for a seat in parliament know they had a lot to gain but also a lot to risk in the campaign and thus were highly motivated to campaign but lacked the more established candidates' access to mass media. Consequently, they have a double incentive to be on Facebook.

### Conclusion

Although Facebook has gained a prominent position as a communication channel in Danish politicians' campaigns, our study shows social media should be seen as one among several tools in the campaign tool box. The number of candidates who engage in interviews with mainstream media and go out canvassing during election campaigns still exceeds the number of candidates who have a public Facebook profile. Almost half of the candidates with an active Facebook profile posted updates less than once per day on average, while only six candidates posted more than four updates per day in average during the three week campaign.

Digging deeper, we see that in the Danish campaign context Facebook campaigning on social media such as Facebook can be seen as a supplement, but not the most important tool for incumbent candidates and parties who have relatively easy access to

Table 25.5 Explaining the Use of Public Facebook Profiles by Chances to be Elected during the 2011 Parliamentary Election Campaign in Denmark

	<i>Public Facebook profile %</i>	<i>Number of posts M (S.D)</i>
Thought I had no chance ( $n = 121$ )	17 per cent	3.85 (10.99)
Thought I had small chance ( $n = 98$ )	30 per cent	6.49 (13.23)
Thought it was an open battle ( $n = 29$ )	41 per cent	13.93 (34.52)
Thought I was likely to win ( $n = 48$ )	36 per cent	11.79 (20.16)
Thought I was certain to win ( $n = 16$ )	63 per cent	32.38 (35.13)

mainstream mass media. For candidates without such resources and access to the mass media, who are involved in an open battle and pursue a personalised campaign, social media present a welcome opportunity to campaign and reach more voters.

The relatively small competing parties have the biggest proportion of candidates with a public Facebook profile. This finding confirms the idea that social media might be used as compensation for lack of exposure in the mass media. Given that mass media's news values favour the biggest and most powerful parties, these smaller parties have the clearest incentives to be on Facebook. By the same logic, parties with the lowest incentive to be on Facebook due to low intraparty competition, due to minimal chances of reaching the two per cent threshold to win seats in parliament, or due to an older target group in the electorate, have the lowest proportion of candidates with a Facebook profile.

The main motivation among candidates to campaign on Facebook is to promote themselves and their opinions, and communicate directly with voters, or in other words to personalise their campaign. Apparently, one thing is that candidates say that they use Facebook to personalise the campaign and another is what they actually do. A study of candidate updates in the 2011 parliamentary election in Denmark shows that candidates hardly separate themselves from the party line when they campaign on Facebook (van Dalen et al., 2014). And other studies, though not of this particular election, show that politicians communicate directly with voters to a very limited extent (Duvander Højholt & Kosiara-Pedersen 2011; Goldbeck et al., 2010; Grant et al., 2010; Jackson & Lilleker, 2011).

However, the results in this chapter show that younger candidates are more eager to engage with voters while older candidates are more inclined than young candidates to say that they are on Facebook to appear modern and to gain visibility in the mass media. Despite the discrepancy between what candidates say and what they do, these results also indicate that the younger generation of candidates in their campaigns are more inclined to utilise the special features that Facebook and other social media offer. This could be an indication that future Danish candidates will integrate social media more in their campaign mix and utilise the strengths of this communication channel to complement the other communication channels in their campaign.

## Notes

- 1 "DF: Forsamlingshus ikke Facebook," *Jyllands-Posten*, September 2, 2011. "Kommunikation: DF gider ikke Facebook," *Information*, September 2, 2011.
- 2 [www.infomedia.dk/media/77918/sociale-medier-2013-danskernes-holdning-til-og-brug-af-sociale-medier-yougov-smpdk-2013.pdf](http://www.infomedia.dk/media/77918/sociale-medier-2013-danskernes-holdning-til-og-brug-af-sociale-medier-yougov-smpdk-2013.pdf)
- 3 The Facebook profile data were collected by Zoltan Fazekas, Department of Political Science and Public Management, University of Southern Denmark.
- 4 The survey data were collected by Christian Elmelund-Præstekær, Department of Political Science, University of Southern Denmark, as part of the Comparative Candidate Survey.
- 5 We analysed online activity of voters for different parties with data from the 211 Danish election studies (Stubager et al., 2013).
- 6 When interpreting these data, one has to take into account that these are self-reported motivations. It cannot be ruled out that social-desirability influenced the answers. The finding that half of the respondents with a Facebook profile admit to be on Facebook in order to appear modern suggests that social desirability did not lead to completely idealised answers.

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