Personalisation and Performed Authenticity in Political Content on TikTok

A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of Liberal Alliance's Campaign in the 2022 Danish General Election

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Abstract

This research analyses the presence of political personalisation and its role in establishing performed authenticity in political content on TikTok. Despite TikTok being a platform created for entertainment purposes, TikTok has come to play a significant role in political discourse and engagement with politicians Employing a qualitative approach to Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis, this research has sought to analyse how the Danish political party Liberal Alliance and their party leader, Alex Vanopslagh, used political personalisation to establish performed authenticity during the Danish general election of 2022. The research undertakes an analysis of the top 30 most popular videos by Liberal Alliance posted during the election campaign. The findings indicate that Liberal Alliance exhibits a professional level of political personalisation to perform authenticity. Liberal Alliance does not rely on the sharing of personal information to appear authentic, but rather through multimodal elements concerning his official role as a politician. As such, Liberal Alliance were found to apply a strategy with the primary intention of creating a persona which is relatable and down-to-earth to the target audience with content that seeks to inform, promote, and mobilise. The analysis also revealed that Liberal Alliance conforms to media logic by leveraging TikTok's affordances to provide more personalised content, as well as catering to various user gratifications such as information-seeking, entertainment, and personal identity. This research contributes to the limited existing knowledge of political personalisation within the context of TikTok, shedding light on its implications for democratic processes and political engagement among younger audiences. The growing popularity of political personalisation in political strategies necessitates scholarly attention to comprehend its potential advantages or implications for democratic systems. By examining the specific case of Liberal Alliance on TikTok, this study offers valuable insights into the strategic use of personalisation and authenticity in contemporary political communication on social media platforms.

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1. Introduction

The idolisation of political figures has, throughout history, resulted in countries being led towards dictatorship and repression (Frantz et al. 2020). While this is perhaps an extreme example, casting a vote because of a particular personality profile can lead to serious political consequences. Political participation and engagement with politics have been the concern of scholars for many years (Norris, 2011). In recent years, a particular focus has been put on trends among younger generations, due to a continuous decrease in their political and civic engagement (Spöri et. al, 2020). A consequence of such disengagement from political processes could negatively affect the voices and influence of a significant portion of the population in political decisions, but also a government's ability to effectively serve the public as well as an increasing undermining of the representativeness in the political system (Weiss, 2020). It is therefore of significant political importance to counter this political disengagement to protect democratic values and safeguard democratic institutions. By some scholars, social media has been seen as a potential solution. Popular culture and politics have, for a long time, been conceived as mutually exclusive fields with young people having little interest in electoral politics and primarily seeking (Siongers et al. 2019). But a selection of researchers in youth political participation has expressed great hopes regarding social media's potential to foster new relationships between political actors and young adults (Matthes, 2022).

With the introduction of mass used social media came the opportunity for political figures to directly access members of the public at all times; particularly during election season (Maharani & Nurafifah, 2020). This access gave birth to a new form of politician; the politician who had learned the potential and strategic advantage of engaging the youth. Particularly the platform of TikTok represents a new and rapidly evolving form of social media communication. Its technical affordances, such as its algorithm and content discovery features, as well as its focus on relatability and authenticity, have made it an attractive platform for politicians to communicate with their audiences. Authenticity is, as such, now seen as an 'increasingly important criterion by which citizens judge politicians' credibility (Jennings et al. 2021, p. 859). But also, the concept of political personalisation refers to a politician's sharing of private and personal everyday activities in seeking to establish 'authentic' and 'genuine' communication, using social media as a medium to launch themselves into a public spotlight (Manning, 2016).

The implementation of personalisation to establish authenticity has already had a profound impact on politics in countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom (Rahat & Kenig, 2018), but there still is an absence of academic literature which explores its relevance in connection to the partisan use of TikTok. It's also seen as a potential complication in the process of establishing sensible dialogue between politicians and their audiences due to the creation of information bubbles as well as the spread of disinformation which limits and undermines citizens' ability to form and express opinions (Dumbrava, 2021). To date, research has focused on TikTok in relation - and in comparison to - other social media platforms in seeking to understand the differences in political communication strategies (Cervi et al. 2021). However, it lacks analyses of how communicative strategies, such as elements of political personalisation and authenticity, especially in a Danish context, are used in cases where politicians have succeeded to connect to young voters (Marquart et al, 2020). Such a gap in research, amidst TikTok's growing cultural and political significance in times of heightened political tensions, emphasizes the importance of investigating how TikTok is contributing to shifting communication on social media. Consequently, this thesis aims to analyse how political parties utilise dimensions of political personalisation to establish performed authenticity on TikTok as part of election campaigning strategies. Specifically, which dimensions of political personalisation are used on TikTok as a means of establishing authenticity by the Danish political party of Liberal Alliance during the Danish general election of 2022. The analysis will consist of a Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of TikTok content posted by Liberal Alliance (henceforward: LA).

1.1 Contextual background

1.1.1 Alex Vanopslagh and Liberal Alliance

Founded in 2007, LA is considered one of the youngest parties in the Danish parliament. The party has established itself as a liberal party which advocates for liberal economic policies with public sector restructuring and tax cuts (The Local, 2015). LA is considered the most pro-business party in Danish politics, and they believe that Denmark's private sector is restricted by too extensive regulation (The Local, 2015). The party experienced impressive results in the 2015 elections and as a result, became joined the centre-right government with Venstre and The Conservatives. Since 2019 they have been part of the opposition, and the recent election

results considered, have continued as such. Alex Vanopslagh (henceforward: AV), the current political leader of LA, became the face of the political party's TikTok content in 2022. He experienced unprecedented success in attracting the vote of the younger generation by deploying a brand-new angle to digital political communication; meeting young voters halfway. Currently, LA have almost 100.000 followers and 2.100.000 million likes on TikTok (TikTok, 2023). As a result of this TikTok popularity, AV quickly became a media sensation among younger generations on TikTok, with younger female users claiming the term "Daddy Vanopslagh". LA succeeded in increasing its party size from 2.3% in 2019 (2% being the barrier to entering parliament) to 7.9% in 2022 making them the 6th biggest political party in the Danish parliament (Danmarks Radio, 2022), all thanks to their prioritisation of utilising TikTok as a part of their strategic social media campaigning (Reimar, 2022).

1.1.2 Media and news consumption in Denmark

The Danish parliament is composed of 179 mandates and of the 179, 175 mandates are divided between the elected candidates in Denmark, 2 in Greenland, and 2 in the Faroe Islands. News media, such as public service radio and television, and social media such as Facebook are a considerable part of most Danes' media consumption. Consumption of internet in Denmark is amongst the highest in the world, with 97% of Danes having access to digital media (Kristensen and Blach-Ørsten, 2021). A recent survey conducted by DR Medieforskning found that 41% of people between 15-29 answered that they used TikTok at least once a week in 2022 (Nielsen, 2023). While social media, and particularly TikTok, is continuing to grow in popularity, recent empirical studies have also shown that Danes' have a continued high attention and commitment to national quality media (Kristensen & Blach-Ørsten, 2021). However, it is worth noting that a report by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism found that, in 2022, one in three young adults in Denmark avoided watching or reading the news due to its negative nature and impact on mental health. This is a worrying tendency which is also growing internationally (Nielsen, 2023). In political campaigning, social media has come to play a critical role which few politicians have managed to utilise effectively. That is regarding both communication strategies used by politicians as well as the public's access to information and news (Kristensen & Blach-Ørsten, 2021).

1.2 Problem Statement

TikTok continues to grow as a platform that holds the potential to foster democratic participation, but the spread of political discourse and narratives can also contribute to political polarisation and the spread of misinformation. When addressing the role of politics, TikTok themselves have admitted that the platform is "first and foremost an entertainment platform" (TikTok, 2022). Despite this, political discourse, and politicians themselves continue to permeate the culture of TikTok. The growing popularity of personalised politics and its risk of leading to a polarisation of society and manipulation of public opinion (Lund & Zhong, 2022), makes it an important field to which scholarly attention should be dedicated. However, the political use of TikTok can also prove positive for democracy by helping to bridge the generational gap in political participation and thereby cultivate long-term political engagement among younger generations (Literat & Kligler-Vilenchik, 2023). By first addressing how previous literature and research have approached the fields of political personalisation and authenticity, this research seeks to highlight how the rapidly expanding political utilisation of social media can affect trends in political discourse as well as political participation. Such research can provide insight into how power is exercised and contested in the political sphere as well contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics within, and motivations of, political communication. This research, therefore, identifies how political communication is shaped and framed as a result of the power dynamics between politics and media institutions. In the context of TikTok, it is an example of social media's role in the mediatisation of politics as well as what effects applications such as TikTok and its affordances have on the individual, in a political context.

1.3 Aim of research and research questions

Since performed authenticity in the political sphere is judged by a politician's ability to remain true to themselves (Luebke, 2021), this research will assume that more personalised political communication provides more relevant information in forming these impressions. This thesis, therefore, seeks to analyse the presence of political personalisation and how it contributes to creating performed authenticity. More specifically, this thesis aims to analyse the case of "Daddy Vanopslagh" and LA to reveal how different dimensions of political personalisation were deployed in their TikTok content during the election campaign of 2022 and whether it contributed to establishing performed authentic communication. Conducting a Multimodal

Critical Discourse Analysis, allows for this research to uncover elements of personalisation and performed authenticity in both visual and verbal communication by also analysing the influence of technological, visual, and verbal affordances provided by the platform. To answer this aim of the research, I propose the following research questions:

RQ1: *Which elements of political personalisation can be exerted from the multimodal content by Liberal Alliance on TikTok?*

RQ2: *How do the identified elements of political personalisation contribute to performed authenticity?*

The purpose of this research is also to facilitate a broader discussion of why using elements of political personalisation to establish authenticity contributes to political success on social media. This research proposes that the mediatisation of politics as well as the behaviours of users on TikTok can be used as a measurement against how politicians deploy certain digital strategies to achieve authenticity through elements of personalisation. An analysis of user gratifications can help assess whether the content that contains elements of personalisation to establish performed authenticity aligns with certain user gratifications. Such an analysis can help assess the effectiveness of the strategy deployed by Liberal Alliance. From the results of this analysis, this research also seeks to discuss whether strategies such as deploying elements of political personalisation to establish performed authenticity, in the space of TikTok, could pose any limitations or advantages to political participation amongst younger generations. This facilitation of further discussion is addressed through the analysis of the following research question:

RQ3: *Which user gratifications does the content by Liberal Alliance on TikTok appeal to?*

RQ4: *How does the case of Liberal Alliance reflect a balance between political and media logic?*

1.4 Relevance to strategic communication

Zerfass et al. (2018) argue that 'strategic communication encompasses all communication that is substantial for the survival and sustained success of an entity'. While the continually changing media environment makes it important to study how politicians communicate with audiences through social media, the results of this analysis could also be considered relevant to understanding general issues associated with for example the organisational practices and strategies associated with communication in the digital sphere.

2. Literature review

2.1 Political personalisation

It firstly seems vital to clarify that political personalisation is by no means a new concept, and researchers have argued that it *"is as old as politics itself"* (Adam & Maier, 2016). The presence of politicians with charismatic personalities is not a new phenomenon, but it has become an increasingly widespread and almost systemic trend in many modern democracies (Adam & Maier, 2016). Drawing on a study of electoral behaviour dating back to the 1960s, Garzia et al. (2020) attempted to assess the popularity of party leaders at the expense of political parties and their growing impact on the outcome of elections. Their findings suggested that political personalisation has happened in conjunction with decreasing importance of partisanship in the structuring of voter choice. While their study does not address the role of social media, they argue that social media may contribute to an acceleration of direct and personalised campaigning. Concerning personalisation in the space of social media, Rahat and Kenig (2018) argue that while political actors originally used social media to win kudos in traditional media, it has been its own political arena for the past decade.

This shift in media dependency in political campaigning is even argued by Vergeer et al. (2011) to be as significant as the move from premodern to modern campaigning with the introduction of mass media. To support these claims, Louw (2010) similarly suggested that to seek, gain, and maintain power in liberal democracies politicians must be able to "generate media hype". It could be argued that such media hype is now largely due to the political ability to incorporate tools of personalisation into their social media activity. Therefore, politicians now must adopt a particular "rule-governed face", a mask, which displays the behaviour which is considered appropriate by the constituency, or age group, that they seek to influence (Louw, 2010). Paatelelainen et al. (2022) very interestingly argue that the hybrid media system, the synergy between traditional and social media, is now used beneficially by politicians in campaigning as they increasingly utilise the media hype which events such as televised tv debates, press conferences, and news media can generate on social media. Similar to this assumption, Karlsen et al (2016) believe that political campaigns can now only succeed if they manage to create a synergy between social and traditional media.

Political personalisation has by Rahat and Kenig (2018. p. 231) been defined as *"a process in which the political weight of the individual actor in the political process increases over time, while the centrality of the political group (i.e., political party) declines."* Rahat and Kenig (2018) argue that with young voters now preferring politicians who can appear authentic, honest, truthful, and responsible, political content targeted at a younger audience is being increasingly personalised and adapted to their preferences. Some scholars have argued that focusing on the individual politician rather than the wider political agenda of political parties is leading to a situation where elections are becoming more unpredictable (Rahat & Kenig, 2018). Some additional concerns include that it holds the possibility of increasing the presence of populist trends and that the potential for political actors to foster relationships with their audience can weaken accountability mechanisms (Smolo, 2021).

Much of the research relating to political personalisation contends that personalisation happens at the expense of institutions such as political parties. However, Rahat and Pedersen (2021) have provided an interesting perspective to this definition, as they argue that personalisation is not necessarily a result of the individual political actor increasing in popularity over time. Rather, it can also be a result of deliberate party strategy used to boost party influence. With departure in this perspective, Pruysers et al. (2018) defined political personalisation as the situation in which individual political actors become centrally important, prominent, and highly visible, rather than the individual political actors becoming *more* important and visible than the political party. This is an important perspective for this research, as it highlights how personalisation can also be used as a deliberate party strategy to improve election outcomes rather than a phenomenon which happens at the expense of the political party.

The perception of personalisation as having a potential positive or negative influence on the democratic process seems to be widely debated among scholars. Kruikemeier et al. (2013) studied the effectiveness of personalisation and interactivity in political communication and found that it has a positive impact on political participation. This research provides an interestingly positive angle to the consequences of internet use since other scholars tend to disagree with this point of view and be generally more pessimistic about the impact of the internet on political involvement. One such scholar is Putnam et al. (1994) who believed that the distraction that media provides leaves citizens with too little time to engage and participate in civic activities. Scholars point out that internet is most often used for social interaction and information-searching. However, Putnam (1994) argues that the inclination towards also using

internet for entertainment purposes is most likely to negatively impact civic and political engagement (Boulianne, 2009).

Matthes (2022) more recently theorised that young adults use social media primarily for non-political purposes, and therefore political content on such platforms distracts more than it mobilises. But amongst those who agree that the use of the internet is positive for political engagement, Boulianne (2009) identify two groups of scholars who tend to have conflicting views on the matter; those who believe that the internet will engage citizens that are already predisposed to politics, and those who argue that the internet could also be successful in mobilising citizens who are not predisposed to politics. What becomes evident from these conflicting views, is that there is no single framework for determining whether political personalisation is inherently negative or positive. These views do however provide an interesting outset for this thesis, as it seeks to analyse how politicians might use these platforms to their advantage, without consideration for the impact it might have on civic engagement as well as political participation.

Previous studies have rarely studied the strategic use of personalisation by politicians and how they represent themselves in their own controlled media messages, circumventing the coverage by journalists and the news. The established power of traditional media is increasingly contested with the rise of new social media platforms. To a degree, social media has given politicians a new arena from which they can criticise the media, contest their power, as well as undermine their trust, despite still being somewhat dependent on some traditional media formats. While political events covered by traditional media do correlate with increased political engagement (Hayes & Lawless, 2015), social media has enabled individuals to directly attempt to engage audiences in political activities such as voting, without any hindrance by institutional gatekeepers (Owen, 2018). As such platforms continue to evolve and expand, it seems essential to understand the political usage of personalisation strategies to inform and connect with their target audience.

2.2 Authenticity in political communication

As this chapter will show, literature on political personalisation argues that the shift in political communication towards authenticity as a valued characteristic of the individual politician has gained significant importance and popularity. As this research seeks to analyse to what extent

LA performs authenticity through dimensions of political personalisation, it seems vital to also explore the definitions of authenticity. The concept of authenticity is a popular term in various areas of society, including modern political communication, where it has become a prominent narrative (Luebke, 2020). However, there is a lack of agreement on a clear definition of political authenticity in communication research, making it challenging to compare and integrate findings and identify current research needs. By the public and the media, the concept of authenticity is referred to as a politician's ability to remain true to themselves, but the research on political authenticity lacks a clear conceptualisation and has varied a lot, and it has been difficult to compare and integrate the results of findings in different research and studies (Luebke, 2020). Luebke (2020) attempted to define authenticity as a social construct that is created and negotiated in communication processes among politicians, media, and audiences. He identified four dimensions to measure the presence of performed authenticity in a political context: *ordinariness, intimacy, consistency, and immediacy*. As this is based on a social constructivist approach, this research will assume that it is not possible to define the "true self" and that authenticity is therefore a social construction. However, we can assume that politicians need to construct a type of authentic image which is then contested by audiences, the media, as well as political opponents. Using these dimensions is therefore also perceived as applicable in the measurement of the politicians' construction of an "authentic self".

One approach to explaining the role of political authenticity in political communication is through the concept of political personalisation. The hypothesis of personalisation has suggested that audiences are more aware of individual candidates and rely on characteristics when making voting suggestions (Gatterman, 2017). Following this hypothesis, authenticity can be considered to be one of the many relevant characteristics of political personalisation. However, the personalisation of politics does not alone explain why authenticity in particular has become one of the most important political virtues. *"The Good Politician"* by Clarke et al. (2018) is a book which attempts to explain why authenticity exceeds in importance over other characteristics in modern politics. They argue that it's the result of a changing audience expectation from valuing honest, strong, and hardworking politicians, to now desiring politicians who are normal, ordinary, and in touch with reality; politicians of the people. The authors hold a rather narrow conception of authenticity, but their reasoning remains compelling and comparable with similar literature on authenticity. However, this book fails to take into consideration that the public expects certain qualities from politicians for them to appear authentic, such as being open-minded and similar to them, but on the other hand, they are also

supposed to possess qualities that are above-average and attractive to the audience. Medvic (2013) explain this situation more as the ability of politicians to distance themselves from behaviour which is associated with "politics as usual" and instead appear true to themselves.

In the book *"Trust in the Age of Social Media: Populist Politicians Seem More Authentic*", Enli and Rosenberg (2018) found that when comparing mainstream media and social media, the younger generation is generally of the belief that politicians are more honest and authentic on social media. Scholars have researched engagement within social media and have discovered that political campaigns have indeed been adapting to online social media, with the newest transition being the TikTok app (Enli & Rosenberg, 2018). To back up this argument, studies of TikTok (Darvin, 2022) have demonstrated that concerning the concept of political personalisation, the industry of culture has contributed to creating a personality into celebrity form that is distinctly branded and appealing to the specific constituency and as well as the construction of a personality that the media can associate with a "profile" (Louw, 2010 p. 111). It is therefore about the staging of visual exposures for the mass public to plant a particular 'look' in the audience's mind. These findings go hand in hand with the previously mentioned tendencies involving politicians' authenticity on social media and how they seek to adopt a new persona to appeal to the audiences. Robertson (2015) also identifies how the relationship between the practice of politics and a society that is increasingly 'symbolic' is best characterised. The author suggests considering technology's role in the diminishing of space considering the role of socio-cultural change and transformations of 'social space' (Robertson, 2014, p. 13).

Especially the use of social media for political campaigns and politicians' everyday communication contributes to the focus on a few individual politicians and in particular, their authenticity. However, these processes should not be considered independent. The more personalised political communication by parties and politicians adapts to the media logic, and together with the news media's focus on individual politicians and their personalities, contributes to the growing role of candidates and their traits in public discourse (Balmas & Sheafer, 2010). Considering these theoretical perspectives and conceptualisations of authenticity in the context of political communication, it seems reasonable to argue that authenticity has gained importance for determining citizen attitudes and behaviour. The preceding theoretical reflections imply that the popularity of political authenticity results in

particular from the interplay of individual politicians and their traits, but also the citizens and media's valuing of authenticity as a trait for judging politicians.

2.3 The mediatisation of politics

To be able to write about the developments within political campaigning and its relationships with media, it seems crucial to also consider those concepts in a wider societal context. A question worth asking is to what extent are the roles held by media institutions and actors shifting interchangeably? Considering that the convergence of media isn't just a technological shift, but also the way by which media operates and consumers process news. In the context of the mediatisation of politics, the importance of media for political processes and institutions has increased (Esser & Strömbäck, 2014). But what is the relationship between political and media logic, and to what degree is the political system adapting to media logic? From the perspective of communication, it can be seen as a new instrumentalisation of the media that politicians use to achieve political goals. However, the concept of political logic in particular has long suffered from relatively vague definitions and conceptualisations, and both media and political logic are too simplified for a single logic guiding all politics and the media (Nygren & Niemikari, 2019).

The utilisation of social media as a strategic tool in political campaigning has grown rapidly due to advances in communication technology. Many scholars have seen Barack Obama's integration of social media into his election campaigning as the first election run partly in the digital space (Paatelainen et al, 2022. Yildrim, 2020). Since then, political communication has been widely used by politicians around the world, and the ability to create synergies between older and newer media is seen as a prerequisite for running successful political campaigns. Social media has allowed politicians to use media as an interactive tool in communicating with their audiences (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997), enabling them to create political discussion and mobilisation of networks much bigger than previously seen (Dahlberg & Siepera, 2007). However, while most politicians might be present on these social media platforms, only a few have been successful in connecting to audiences. This success has thus far primarily been gained by populist parties who have integrated social media fully into their communication strategies to exploit the opportunities that social media provides to mobilise support and facilitate personalised discourses and emotional appeals (Jacobs, 2023). A study of social media platform strategies performed by political parties in the Nordic countries found that

populist parties utilised mostly the same affordances as other political parties, but that their communication styles, particularly pertaining to anger, catered particularly well to the logics of the platform (Schwartz et al. 2021). Similarly, other studies have found that politicians increasingly use technical affordances of social media platforms which increase user interactions. If relating these findings in previous studies to the concept of mediatisation, then the alignment by politicians to social media means that they must use communication strategies which meet user expectations that stimulate their willingness to interact (Jost, 2022). There are currently not many studies that have researched this accommodation by political behaviour to user interactions on social media, but Blumler and Katz' (1974) introduction of the Uses and Gratification theory has been recognised as a tool to understand audience usage of media as well as their perception of it. This theory can be used in a political context to understand the user gratification which politicians must conform to win the attention of their audiences within the spaces of social media.

To encapsulate the growing significance of media logic, Chadwick (2013) suggested the concept of a modern hybrid media system, which implies that the forms and logics of traditional and digital media interact and compete with each other. He argues that this hybridisation shapes power relations among actors and ultimately affects the flows and meanings of communication (Chadwick, 2013. p. 63). Previous studies looking at the political use of social media have mostly looked at platforms such as Twitter and Facebook concerning user engagement or the potential manipulation by political discourse (Cecen, 2019). Wieringa, 2017, Wieringa et. al. 2018), While these social media platforms are increasingly used in political contexts worldwide, there is a lack of research which analyses the strategic use of these platforms from an international perspective. This limits the overall ability to draw conclusions and make generalisations about tendencies from previous studies.

Graeme Turner (2016) has attempted to look at the phenomenon as a wider societal tendency and in his book "*Reinventing the Media*" he argues that we have moved away from a "mass-mediated" environment and instead turned to a "multi-mediated" in which institutions have had to develop much more intricate ways of attracting as well as targeting audiences as much smaller sizes of bigger populations. He argues that this change in the media landscape is however not only because of changes to technology or the platforms, but that they are in fact subject to much larger factors, such as political and cultural factors. These large contextual factors will, depending on their configuration, influence the political as well as cultural role of

media with great variety depending on individuals, groups, and societies as these all have different interests and experiences, and they interpret facts according to different rules. Therefore, the act of assigning "truth" to a meaning becomes impossible and its subjective interpretation is instead made up of a multitude of different realities (personal, social, and cultural). These are not statements about the meaning of a fact as such, but they are statements that describe the meaning of a fact for a given group in society, namely Danish politicians on TikTok, seeking to influence young adults in Denmark.

3. Theoretical framework

The definitions and conceptualisation outlined in earlier literature have contributed to an examination of current and relevant issues associated with the political use of personalisation to establish performed authenticity. To understand the motivations behind this increasing focus on the personalisation of politics, this research firstly draws on the theory of the mediatisation of politics, as it provides a strong framework for understanding political reliance on media logic, as well as how it has potentially developed to motivate certain political behaviour and interactions in the digital space during election campaigning. As this research seeks to examine how political personalisation authenticity is used to establish performed authenticity, the mediatisation of politics is followed by an outline of a top-down approach to the theory of Uses and Gratifications. The combination of these two theories provides a comprehensive theoretical framework for exploring the role of political personalisation to establish performed authenticity.

3.1 Social Constructivism

This research is built on the view that reality is socially constructed. More specifically, the view of social constructivism. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argue that social constructivism is based on the idea that knowledge is constructed through social interaction and that meaning is shaped and constructed through social interactions and language, culture, and social practices. They argue that from a social constructivist view, these will vary depending on how different individuals and groups assign different meanings to them depending on their social contexts and experiences. Overall, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) see social constructivism as a useful framework for understanding how knowledge is constructed and learned in relation to social and cultural contexts. Social constructivism, therefore, provides a useful framework for understanding the role of communication processes in shaping political reality and influencing political outcomes. By emphasising political reality as a constructed concept, social constructivism highlights the importance of analysing communication practices and power relations to understand the complex and dynamic processes that shape political discourse and public opinion. As this research has sought to analyse a specific case concerning a specific audience, it has not been the objective of the research to make generalisations regarding larger populations. Therefore, social constructivism provides a fitting methodological perspective for this research. It is however also worth clarifying that although certain aspects of TikTok have

previously been identified as the source of certain user gratifications, TikTok as well as other media continue to adapt to global changes which results in a continuous shaping of factors and contexts in meaning creation of TikTok consumption (Schellewald, 2023). Therefore, in combination with a social constructivist approach, the frame of this research is based on a hermeneutic approach to meaning. The hermeneutic research approach is the understanding that social life is the meaning of an action and it requires a researcher to devote their attention to the interpretation of the meanings of social actions. In this research, a hermeneutic approach to the establishing of meaning will be practised through critical reading. Applying this approach to meaning construction in qualitative analyses means considering the context of the content as well as a continual interpretation of the content to enable an improvement of the analysis (George, 2020). A hermeneutic approach to meaning allows this research to explore multiple layers of meaning embedded in the content, but it also encourages the researcher to reflect on their preconceptions, biases, and interpretations. This self-awareness and reflexivity are particularly important when conducting qualitative analysis such as this one.

3.2 Mediatisation of politics

The conceptualisation of "the mediatisation of politics" upon which the foundation of this research is built, is the one by Esser & Strömbäck (2014). In their book *"Mediatization of Politics"* Esser and Strömbäck argue that mediatisation involves any kind of communication by any kind of sender, through any type of media, social media included. They argue that mediatisation involves every aspect of society and that this has reached "unprecedented intensity" new levels due to the "global diffusion" of communication tools available to the individual (2014, p. 42). These individual communication tools have allowed social media to penetrate all human activities on a deep level, yet Esser and Strömbäck (2014) still argue that organisation news media remains dominant within media environments. While it is recognised that this research is dated, and considering the fast-moving world of digital media, no other research seems to have contradicted or taken into consideration how the apparent ecosystem existing between politics, media, and the audience is starting to, or already has, altered for teenagers and young adults. In modern politics, citizens can generally be seen as more demanding and more volatile as voters, and it has increased political awareness about establishing attention and acceptance from audiences. Particularly in the case of political campaigning, media logic is a means used by politicians to achieve public attention in the struggle for power (Esser & Strömbäck, 2014).

Esser and Strömbäck (2014) argue that new media platforms grant users greater control over the selection of political messages they receive. Rather than being passive consumers of traditional political journalism and statements from party and government officials, citizens can now interact with official sources and express alternative viewpoints on a variety of new media spaces, such as TikTok. New digital media continue to defy the institutional autonomy of mainstream news media and Esser and Strömbäck argue that political actors continue to become less dependent on the traditional news media and their "media logic". Thereby the whole media system of political communication, as well as the distribution of media power, has been affected. Audiences are increasingly preferring to digest online media and they consider it their most important source of political information. Esser and Strömbäck's four-dimensional model posits that politicians in the fourth dimension are either driven by political logic or media logic (2014, p. 7). This view has been contested by authors such as Nygren and Niemikari (2019), who argue that Esser and Strömbäck fail to take into consideration the possibility that the political sphere is using mechanisms of media logic to achieve a political instrumentalisation of the media and that while politicians do subscribe to media logic, it should be seen as a means to communicate and construct of political power (2019, p. 198).

This view of politics seeking and using power as the underlying premise of political logic is an important perspective when trying to understand the implications that the mediatisation of politics has on politics and democracy. The power dynamics in TikTok can also be sought explained by the concept of hegemony. Social media has changed the communication patterns of traditional media and allows various political actors who do not have strong cultural or political capital to influence public opinion and mobilisation, to compete for attention and influence (Gao, 2023). It describes how new dominant political narratives emerge on TikTok and also how these power structures can be disrupted by counter-narratives or alternative discourses. It must also be noted that the views presented about the concept of the mediatisation of politics in this chapter are addressed in relation to what normative and fundamental implications the development of media system scenarios might have on the quality of democracy in societies such as that of Denmark. On a general level, political power adapting to media logic is to be understood as the process of taking advantage of the technical as well as social affordances that platforms such as TikTok offer, in seeking to communicate power (Esser & Strömbäck, 2014).

Thus far, scholars in this chapter have argued that politics subscribes to media logic as part of political strategy. As this research tries to examine the political motivations behind utilizing political personalisation to achieve performed authenticity, it is crucial to include a theoretical motivation for how focusing on the political person rather than on their political affiliation, brings strategic advantage to the political party or institution. In this regard, Machinkowski and Steiner (2014) go as far as to question the whole notion of the mediatisation of politics by arguing that the utilisation of media by politicians is purely for political ends. Van Aelst and Walgrave (2017) propose a model for asking why and how political actors are using the media to reach political goals. They posit that political actors use media as an information and arena function. That is, politicians must learn to incorporate media rules into their daily work.

It seems vital to clarify that while these theories attempt to generalise the relationship between political and media logic, these assumptions will vary, as these change over time and the differences between countries and cultures are large. Variations in laws, political institutions, and political culture all have to be considered concerning this theoretical view of media and politics (Elmelund-Præstekær & Svensson, 2013). The development of mediatisation varies widely between countries, and studies have found that in a Danish context, more competition among media outlets gives political sources more power and influence over the public image (Elmelund-Præstekær & Svensson, 2013). However, from the literature covered thus far in this thesis, it should be possible to generalise that, in the context of large-scale processes such as individualisation and globalisation, political actors nor institutions can afford to avoid taking into consideration the role of media.

To understand the instrumentalisation and 'communication of power' in the political motivations behind deploying certain tactics to achieve authenticity on social media, we must also draw on theory related to performed authenticity in the context of mediatisation. As this research is grounded in the social constructivist approach, it will follow the observation by Alexander (2010) who sees performed political authenticity as a performance mode which aims to construct an authentic image which is then perceived well by the audience they seek to influence. As was highlighted in the literature review, younger generations have been found to generally perceive political communication on social media to be more authentic than in traditional media (Enli & Rosenberg, 2018). When candidates seek to use media to influence young voters in election campaigning, they must therefore construct an authentic image of themselves. Communication research on political authenticity has identified some strategies

for creating authentic performance (Luebke, 2021). Additionally, it has been interpreted as self-personalisation by politicians, in which the individual attempts to appear consistent with their true selves (Simunjak, 2023). Furthermore, These strategies and tactics will be presented later in the methodological approach together with the strategies and approaches to analysing personalisation and authenticity in a multimodal context.

3.3 Uses and Gratification Theory

The theory of Uses and Gratification is a Mass Communication theory which was developed by Harold Lasswell; it suggests that individuals are active participants in the communication process and seek out media that will satisfy their specific needs and desires (Lasswell, 1938). The theory primarily represents a bottom-up approach to examine people's interaction with media as well as their motivations behind it, and the theory is as such an audience-focused theory which assumes that the audience is active and that they hold the ability to control media as well as to freely engage with it. While the theory helps explains the motivations behind how and why politicians use social media to connect with audiences through authentic and personalised content, it does not explain a scenario in which politicians take advantage of social media to influence their audiences, as this research wants to argue is the case.

This research would like to suggest that if the theory of uses and gratification is looked at as institutional mediatisation, it can also be understood and applied as a top-down approach. From that point of view, it is possible to argue that institutions are altered by the logic of culture and society which is becoming increasingly dependent on media (Hjarvard, 2008). Adapting this approach will in contrast to the original approach help the research examine how politicians might use social media to gratify their audience's needs by providing content which resonates with their supporters. The Uses and Gratifications theory helps highlight the necessity of social media to have active audiences and thereby how politics has become much more personalised. While Hjarvard (2008) does not cover social media as an influence, this perspective of institutional mediatisation also makes it visible how changes in communication and organisation can add to the value of social media.

Researchers such as McQuail (1987) have identified the primary four media purposes to be *Entertainment, Integration and Social Interaction, Personal Identity, and Information.* These categories reflect attempts to modernise power relations between media

and audiences, as new forms of interactive communication are blurring the lines between forms of media systems. As social media continues to evolve and differs from platform to platform, studies using the User and Gratifications theory should consider the changes in communication technology, such as the use of new affordances introduced by new platforms. As McQuail's (1987) identification of gratifications is dated, in relation to social media, research such as this, should draw inspiration from more recent studies which have applied the theory in the sphere of modern social media, such as that of Herna (2022). This study applied the Uses and Gratifications theory to a study of media usage motives on TikTok. They find that user motivations for using the platform are as a source of information and secondly, as a source to get entertainment.

To understand how people make inferences about politicians based on their behaviour and actions, this research draws on the Correspondent Inference Theory (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007). This theory suggests that people infer personality traits and intentions based on their observed behaviour, especially in situations where the behaviour is freely chosen, unexpected, or inconsistent with social norms and expectations. By understanding how people infer personality traits and intentions, politicians can tailor their communication and behaviour to create a positive impression and build trust with their audience. It also suggests that people are more likely to infer positive personality traits and intentions about politicians who engage in behaviours that are perceived as authentic and relatable. This is because the behaviour is unexpected, freely chosen, and consistent with social norms and expectations of authenticity (Invernizzi & Ting, 2021). In this research, this theory provides valuable insight into the analysis of the most popular content by LA as it explains the impact of TikTok as a political tool and the formation of political attitudes and beliefs amongst its users.

Overall, by using social media strategically to establish these dimensions of performed authenticity, politicians can establish gratifications related to authenticity which can help them to gain support and influence public opinion. In this context, this study will assume that the behaviours of users on TikTok, concerning political content, which has been identified as leading to certain user gratifications, can be used as a measurement against how politicians deploy certain digital strategies to achieve authenticity. As such, it will assume that politicians use social media to establish gratifications related to authenticity and personalisation by communicating elements about their thoughts and opinions and interacting with audiences in a more informal and personal way. This style of communication creates a sense of intimacy and

trust with audiences which can help politicians gain support and influence public opinion. To establish personalisation, for example, use language and terminology with resonates with their younger audience or they may focus on issues which are particularly important to their target audience.

3.4 Summary of chapter

As this chapter has shown, politicians are increasingly required to adapt to mediated environments to appeal to their audiences. The mediatisation of politics and the Uses and Gratification Theory work well together in addressing the role of the media in establishing this appeal to shape public opinion and influence political outcomes. Both personalisation and authenticity can be effective strategies for politicians seeking to communicate power through mediated environments to accommodate the identified gratifications of audiences. By adapting content to audience expectations, politicians can build stronger connections and increase their chances of a favourable election outcome. As this chapter has shown, the fast-changing environment in which social media research operates also raises methodological challenges for studies relating to political communication and the study of personalisation in politics. These will be introduced in the following chapter along with the dimensions of both authenticity and personalisation that forms the analytical framework for this study.

4. Methodology

As Tracy (2010) argues, high-quality qualitative methodological research is marked by first of all a worthy topic with rich rigour which makes meaningful contributions and coherence. Thus far, this research has sought to advocate for the relevance and internal validity of the research through previous literature and theory. This chapter will present the methodological and practical approaches to this research, as well as the reliability and validity of the research through transparency about the data collection, analytical processes, as well as the challenges and limitations associated with those. As this research seeks to analyse media which converges several communication forms together, one way to proceed with data analysis is by a multi-layered qualitative approach, such as a Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis. As such, conducting qualitative research by a multimodal approach allows for an in-depth analysis of a phenomenon in which a valid and relevant conclusion can only be drawn from the combined analysis of all elements present in the data (Flewitt et al. 2019). Additionally, as this research seeks to also understand the motivations of LA based on the dynamics between politics, media, and audiences, a critical approach to qualitative data offers the researcher larger accessibility to information and perspectives that are valuable to the creation of interpretations.

This research follows an inductive approach, and the purpose of using this approach when conducting qualitative analysis is to establish clear links between raw data in a briefly summarised format, as well as to establish a framework of the underlying structure of experiences or processes that are evident in the raw data (Thomas, 2016). This methodological approach allows the researcher to make an observation based on the existing theory and empirical evidence, to identify patterns through an analysis of visual, audio, as well as textual analysis, and to make a general conclusion about LA's application as well as the use of political personalisation in multimodal content. The methodological perspective for this study has been a social constructivist approach to reality, as earlier outlined. A potential disadvantage of this approach is that there is no neutral, external standpoint from which the meaning of signs and actions can be objectively measured. To meet this potential flaw in reliability and validity, this research has drawn inspiration from Richards (2015) who states that qualitative research should include elements of quantitative nature if it can be counted in the attempt to create themes and patterns without losing the needed meaning. Due to the subjectivity of the analysis conducted

in this research, elements of quantitative nature have been gathered to support the results of the analysis and put into context with the qualitative data.

4.1 Multimodal Critical discourse analysis

The article titled: *"Personalization of Politics: A Critical Review and Agenda for Research"* by Adam and Maier (2016), identifies and addresses current problems with political personalisation and how it affects the current democratic processes of the Western world. They propose that for research on personalisation to develop further, and to overcome the current inconsistencies, a standardised analysis method should be employed. Additionally, they argue that for research on political personalisation to research political traits, data collection should go beyond a focus on verbal statements and instead take visual effects into account as well. They even argue that for audiences, personalisation is characterised by the visual image more than so than verbal statements (Adam & Maier, 2016). Considering the growth of visual communication as well as the spread of political content on social media, it seems a vital aspect of research in political communication on social media to focus on the inclusion of visual and nonverbal elements.

Just as is common in CDA, the Multimodal approach is not so much interested in the specific semiotics, but rather in how they interplay in the communication of power relations. MCDA expands on CDA by also analysing the meaning and discourses in for example images and body language (Peeples, 2015, p. 42). MCDA is a social semiotic approach that connects the micro-level meaning of texts or visual communication to macro-level structures of society. This approach focuses on how language and images construct social reality and the effects of specific narratives on power dynamics (Ledin & Machin, 2020). Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) are examples of authors who have contributed to the study of multimodality. In 2001, they introduced the concept of multimodality concerning linguistics and the creation of discourse and theorised that an analysis involving multimodality focuses on two things, and that is firstly the semiotic resources of communication, the modes, and the media used as well as the communicative resources in which these resources are used (Kress & van Leeuwen 2001, p. 11). Kress and van Leeuwen also emphasise that, in the age of digitalisation, the different modes have become technically equal at some level of representation, providing a unified technology and semiotics (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). In this thesis, the communicative choices of LA are analysed through elements such as world choice, music and colours, and

filming angles to reflect on the representation and communication of political branding on TikTok and its societal relevance. In methods of analysis, the approach as well as the foundation for the analysis of multimodal content will be further explained.

4.2 Data collection and sampling method

In this research, the data chosen for analysis has been limited to content posted by the official account of LA on TikTok and consists of the top 30 viewed videos posted between the 2nd of September 2022 and the 1st of November. While the election was not announced until the 5th of October, the extended timeframe has been chosen as content posted within this interval has sought to influence and determine the vote of the audience in the Danish General election (Redder, 2022). The length of the videos is between 7 and 55 seconds long. As the content contains spoken word, it has been transcribed and translated for further analysis of the verbal mode. The transcription of the content allowed the researcher to identify patterns as well as differences and similarities in the content (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This contributed to a better overview of the content and helped the further analysis in structuring and comparing the results between content. However, since this analysis has been conducted from the 30 most viewed videos, it cannot be concluded that the content is representative of the chronological distribution order intended by LA. The results of the analysis are therefore most likely to present a concentration of elements that is higher than is representative of the whole content posted during the Danish general election.

As the aim of this research is to analyse how political parties utilise political personalisation on TikTok as a tool to establish performed authenticity, the sampling method used for data collection is purposive sampling (Robinson, 2014). The reason for choosing this particular content for analysis is that they are the videos which have been the most popular among audiences, and they, therefore, provide interesting information about which content has engaged the audience the most. The primary criticism of purposive sampling is that researchers have previously failed to disclose their selection criteria which, as a result, undermines the transparency and thereby reliability of their analysis (Robinson, 2014). For this research, understanding what content has been the most popular amongst audiences contributes to the analysis of the concepts from a larger societal and cultural context.

4.3 Quality assurance

As this research is based on the analysis of visual and verbal content through a qualitative Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis, the validity of this research relies on the integrity and ethical behaviour of the researcher (Tracy, 2010). The criteria introduced by Lincoln and Guba (1985) have also provided a valuable approach to trustworthiness. One of their criteria, credibility, involves establishing confidence that the concluded findings of the study are true and believable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For this research, this means considerations such as avoiding the researcher's own bias in the filtering of data as well as data collection which has been met through the consistency between the gathered data and results (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016. Chapter 7, p. 18). Merriam and Tisdell (2016. P. 251) argue that this reliance on readers' interpretation of the content as consistent and dependable, is equally valid to traditional measurements. Particularly in social sciences, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argue that observations being repeated a number of times does not make them more reliable as they can have been done repeatedly wrong. While this research does not use strategies associated with triangulation to increase the validity of the analysis, the data of this research has been sufficiently saturated to ensure that the findings are representative. Following the hermeneutic approach to the creation of meaning means that the data collection and data analysis has been repeated and assessed thoroughly as new knowledge is gained from the content. Lastly, the comprehensive documentation of the data collection and data analysis conducted in this research provides a detailed audit trail for future studies. As such, appendixes 1 and 2 provide extracts of the analysis for the reader to see the analytical process.

4.4 The creation of personalisation and authenticity in discourse

As this research, first of all, aims to analyse the presence of political personalisation from a multimodal perspective, the conceptualisations must reflect multidimensionality. The variables that form the foundation of this research have been constructed through a combination of various categories which have been sampled through theory, and previous work which have applied similar categories to TikTok and other social media. Metz, Kruikemeier, and Lecheler's (2020) conceptualisation of self-personalisation focuses on the multi-dimensionality of the concept and distinguishes between professional, emotional, and private personalisation. Additionally, Rahat and Kenig's (2018) conceptualisation of political personalisation as being either institutional, media or behavioural personalisation allows for an

analysis of elements concerning with considers both technical, visual, and verbal elements. However, only the dimensions of controlled media and behavioural personalisation have been found to apply to this study and therefore institutional personalisation will be excluded. To analyse to what extent these dimensions of personalisation contribute to establishing authenticity, Luebke (2021) proposes three analytical perspectives of authenticity in a political context to examine the dynamic processes of constructing political authenticity: *performed, mediated, and perceived* political authenticity.

Considering the nature of this research, the analysis will focus on the conceptualisation of performed authenticity as proposed by Luebke (2021), which interprets authenticity as a specific mode of performance that aims to construct an authentic image for the audience. Luebke (2021) identifies four dimensions of performed authenticity which serve as a starting point for operationalisation of the concept: *ordinariness, intimacy, consistency, and immediacy*. From these four categories, we can assume that the dimensions relevant to judging politicians' authenticity are representative. It is worth clarifying that this research does not intend to make judgements of the analysed material based on the present levels of authenticity, as it is not possible to make generalisations about such a subjective concept. However, these pre-determined dimensions for analysis of elements about political personalisation as well as authenticity provide the foundation for an informed discussion about the potential causes and effects of the presence of authenticity in political content on TikTok. A visual distinction between the different elements for the analysis of the different conceptualisations will be introduced in the following chapter.

4.5 Method of analysis

The MCDA analysis in this thesis has been based on the structure of analysis as presented by Mayr and Machin (2012). They emphasise that MCDA should first focus on a description of the semiotic choices, followed by why the messenger chose them and what consequences these choices have. The analysis should then look at how and if these semiotic choices specify any kind of associations that have not already been specified directly. Lastly, the analysis should look at language choices, the present discourses and how these, along with power, contribute to establishing everyday identities; for example as done by politicians (Machin & Mayr, 2012). But while the goal of multimodal discourses is to examine how meanings are communicated and constructed using different modes, some authors have argued (Kress & van Leeuwen,

2006) that the toolkit for a more precise visual analysis was missing, and that the more classical approaches to CDA, such as the Systemic Functional Linguistics by Halliday (1978), could also be applied to the analysis of visual communication.

In the analysis of visual elements, this analysis adapts Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). The primary objective of SFL is to analyse and interpret language as a means of social interaction since language systems are determined by the users and the settings surrounding it (Halliday, 1978). According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), the three metafunctions in SFL can be applied to all semiotic modes, instead of solely to language. As the videos chosen for analysis in this research contain visual elements such as subtitles, background music and other effects, a selection of elements pertaining to the different dimensions of the *ideational, interpersonal, and textual* (Halliday, 2004) have been chosen for this analysis. These are introduced in the framework below. This analysis thereby seeks to analyse how and if these semiotic choices specify any kind of associations that are not specified directly. Lastly, the analysis should look at language choices, the present discourses and how these, along with power, contribute to establishing everyday identities; for example, done by politicians.

The structure of the analysis pertaining to the multimodal elements has been based on the framework developed by Haiping's (2017) and his approach to Halliday's Systemic functional theory (SFT). Haiping (2017. p. 221) argues that to simplify a Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis, the analysis should be summarised into three overall categories: Context (physical setting), verbal mode (institutional linguistic features, intonational systems), and nonverbal mode (eye-contact, facial expressions, bodily conduct). While Haiping's (2017) framework is based on the analysis of criminal court discourse, the structure has been transferred and adapted to this research. The specific elements which have been chosen for the analysis of this research include first the analysis of the genre and format of the content followed by an analysis of facial expressions, bodily conduct, gaze, frame, social distance, attitude, and linguistic features (rhetorical devices). Additionally, to ensure a thorough analysis features such as audio, intertextuality, as well as ideology have also been considered as part of the multimodal analysis. A definition of each concept can be found in the figure below.

Format and genre	Categorisation of the communicative content based on the technology and culture of TikTok.
Facial expressions (Haiping, 2017)	Communicability (private time or information situations, sociability (formal places or informal situations, and emotionality (when e.g. emotions fluctuate strongly) (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006)
Bodily conduct (Haiping, 2017)	Hand gestures, posture, confidence, approachability, smiling/frowning, tone, and volume of voice (Rominiecka, 2018)
Social distance (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006)	The potential social closeness between the viewer and the participant in the visual content. Analysed through the size of a "frame" and how close-up shots (showing the head and shoulders of the participant), medium shots (the body of the represented participant down to the knees) and long shots (body of the participant covers half the height of the frame). Also revealed through eye-contact.
Modality	The expression of certainty, probability, obligation, or permission in the language used.
Contact (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006)	Demand and offer.
Linguistic features (Haiping, 2017)	Rhetorical devices, modalities,
Audio (Fairclough, 2003)	Sound, music, and other audio effects used to reinforce an emotional or affective response.
Intertextuality (Fairclough, 2003)	How the content reference to other texts, events, or speeches to establish a personal connection
Ideology (Fairclough, 2003)	An examination of the underlying ideology and values

Figure 1: Framework of analysis. Own construction.

The following codebooks provide the foundation for the interpretation of the data related to the concepts of political personalisation and performed authenticity and are based on the conceptualisation of professional, emotional, and private personalisation by Metz, Kruikemeier, and Lecheler (2020), the conceptualisations of controlled media behaviour and behavioural personalisation by Rahat and Kenig (2013), as well as Luebke (2021)'s definition of political authenticity as a multi-dimensional construct which consists of four the four different dimensions of *consistency, intimacy, ordinariness, and immediacy* as has been covered in the theoretical framework chapter. This framework has sought to provide the

foundation for an in-depth analysis of elements pertaining to political personalisation and performed authenticity.

Professional personalisation (Metz, Kruikemeier, and Lecheler, 2020)	Reference to personal activities	The politician is shown performing activities related to political function as a member of parliament (e.g. video concerning an ideological belief or policy defence).
	Reference to professional qualities	Professional qualities related to the politician's role as a member of parliament (e.g. honesty, experience, integrity, are shown
	Professional audience appeal	The politician acts as a professional on social media directly speaking to the audience (addresses audience as e.g. "you", "follower", "fans")
Emotional personalisation (Metz, Kruikemeier, and Lecheler, 2020)	Emotional expression	Emotions of politician are displayed (e.g. joy, astonishment, anger, grief)
	Emotional appeal	Emotions content (e.g. emojis, memes, humour) is used by the politician.
	Emotional thought	Politician expresses thoughts using opinion verbs (e.g. think and "believe").
Private personalisation (Metz, Kruikemeier, and Lecheler, 2020)	Private information	Information that is not related to the politician's role as a member of parliament is shared. This information is considered intimate and concerns the person behind the official office (e.g. marital status, children, favourite football club etc.)
	Personal life	Intimate expressions of the politician's surroundings are shown (i.e., use of selfie perspective)
Controlled media behaviour (Rahat and Kenig, 2018)	The media content focuses progressively on the individual politician and less on the political groupings. The story shifts from "brand" names, party labels, and ideological markers.	
Behavioural personalisation (Rahat and Kenig, 2018)	The presence of Ethos, improvisation, visible authorship, saying I and me instead of "we" and "us".	

Ordinariness (Luebke, 2021)	Down-to-earth, talks in a familiar way, not aloof
Immediacy (Luebke, 2021)	Politician does not appear strategic but rather driven by convictions and emotions.
Consistency (Luebke, 2021)	Presents positions consistent with his/her true beliefs, stands by positions regardless of costs (as defined by Sweetser and Tedesco, 2014).
Intimacy (Luebke, 2021)	Shares private thoughts, opinions, and feelings, speaks openly about life.

Figure 2: Framework of analysis. Own construction.

5. Analysis and results

This chapter will present the empirical findings beginning with an analysis of political personalisation followed by their reliability to the dimensions of authenticity. The analysis of the elements of political personalisation and authenticity has sought to uncover patterns relating to the motivations and strategy used by LA to achieve specific user gratifications such as *Entertainment, Integration and Social Interaction, Personal Identity, and Information* (McQuail, 1987).

5.1 Political personalisation

This first chapter of the analysis takes an affordance-based approach in the analysis of political personalisation. Firstly, an introduction of the results pertaining to the technical affordances, verbal modes, and linguistics. These results will be followed by an analysis of elements pertaining to self-personalisation, controlled media - and behavioural personalisation, and how these results correlate with the results of the technical affordances.

5.1.1 Technological affordances

The examination of the contextual factors shows that LA has adapted and created content which caters to its target audience on TikTok by incorporating various types of formats and genres that are unique to the platform. This is particularly in relation to the different affordances specific to TikTok. The content indicates that LA holds a high level of understanding of the tools available on TikTok. As can be seen in Figure 3, 87% of the content used hashtags and 80% used subtitles. Creative tools such as music and added sound effects (27%), emoticons (27%), and filter/effects (17%) indicate that LA has a strong knowledge of affordances from a technical perspective. However, this observation can perhaps be slightly contested by LA's lack of use of the main genres on TikTok, as only one of the videos directly replicates a TikTok trend.
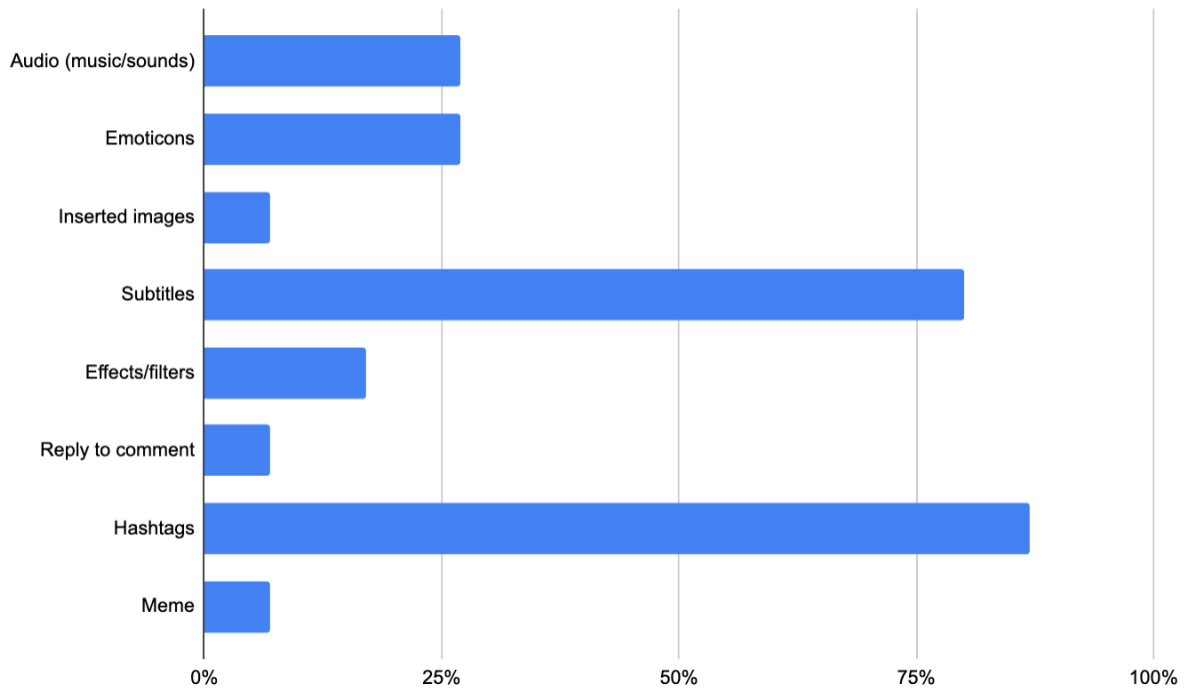
Figure 3: Percentage of content containing the use of TikTok creative tools. Own construction

The most frequented type of genre by LA was found to be the use of skits and reposts of content from parliamentary and TV debates during the election month, as they accounted for 60% of the analysed content (figure 4). The use of skits as content on social media is a popular type of entertainment, particularly on TikTok, as it allows users to reproduce them and form relationships around them (Ojomo et al. 2021). Although satire is usually meant as a humorous and entertaining mode of communication, it is usually associated with a greater purpose relating to social or political criticism to enact societal and political change. While used for entertainment purposes, this type of content revealed a tendency to contain informative content about political agendas or policies. Based on the arguments made by Graeme Turner (2016) concerning the mediatisation of politics, these discourses of humour and satire emulate how mediatisation demands politicians to partly imitate and adapt to technical affordances of pop-culture media content on TikTok to succeed in the digital space. It indicates that achieving engagement could depend on the ability of the politician to adapt to the affordances of the platform.
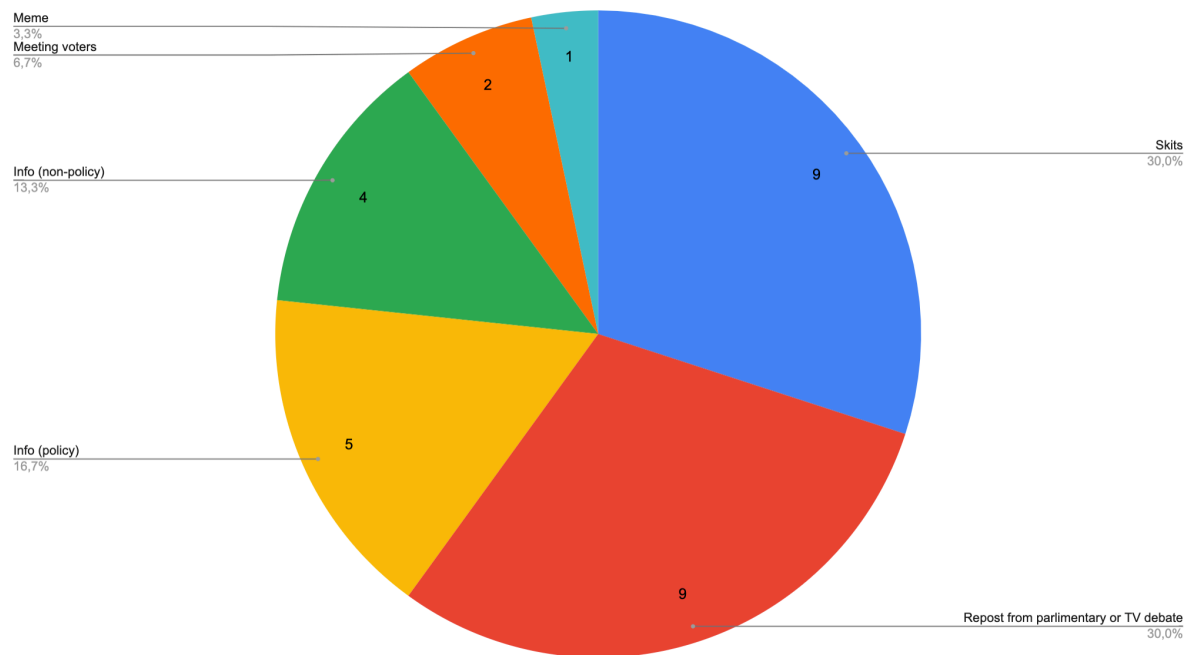
Figure 4: Distribution of content genres. Own construction.

In recognising that music as a cultural form, also in the context of TikTok, produces meanings and interpretations which can affect the way audiences interact with it, it has also been considered important for this analysis of LA's TikTok content. Music is undeniably a powerful medium, which has also been shown used, to a degree, by LA. The analysis shows that when audio is added to the content, it is music which is popular and used frequently on TikTok. Video 5, 15, and 25 all featured TikTok famous songs such as "Afraid to Feel" by LF SYSTEM, "Pimpin Ain't Eazy" by Kodak Black and "Candy Shop" by 50 Cent. The latter seeks a powerful delivery as well as to convey meaning such as macho masculinity and sexualisation (Djupvik, 2014) of AV. This sexualisation also indirectly brings attention to the term "Daddy Vanopslagh" which as earlier stated, has been frequently used by his target audience to describe him.

Through this selection of music, AV capitalises on the nickname created for him, and he uses it to maximise his social media attention by portraying himself as relatable, funny, and down-to-earth. Additionally, from the use of popular music, which is likely to resonate with the target audience, it could be observed that LA has sought to exploit the physical appearance of AV to gain a strategic advantage. This assumption can be further observed in video 25, where AV visits a school and is greeted by many young voters who want to take photos with him. These

elements show how discourses related to the concepts of "celebrity politician" and familiarity are used as powerful tools for steering the audiences on TikTok. In the context of Louw's identification of the "celebrity politician" (2010, p. 175) this speaks to LA's ability to systematically stage a series of visual exposures to plant a particular look in the audience's mind. This view of AV in the light of the identification as a "celebrity politician" is further reinforced by the focus on AV in the analysed content; only one video was found to also feature another prominent member of LA; Henrik Dahl. The content which had been reposted from debates was also found to have cropped out other participants otherwise visually visible in the original, and this isolation of AV could also indicate an attempt to provide the audience with a narrow focus as well as intimate closeness to AV, while it also created a limited relationship with opponents (as seen in video 16).
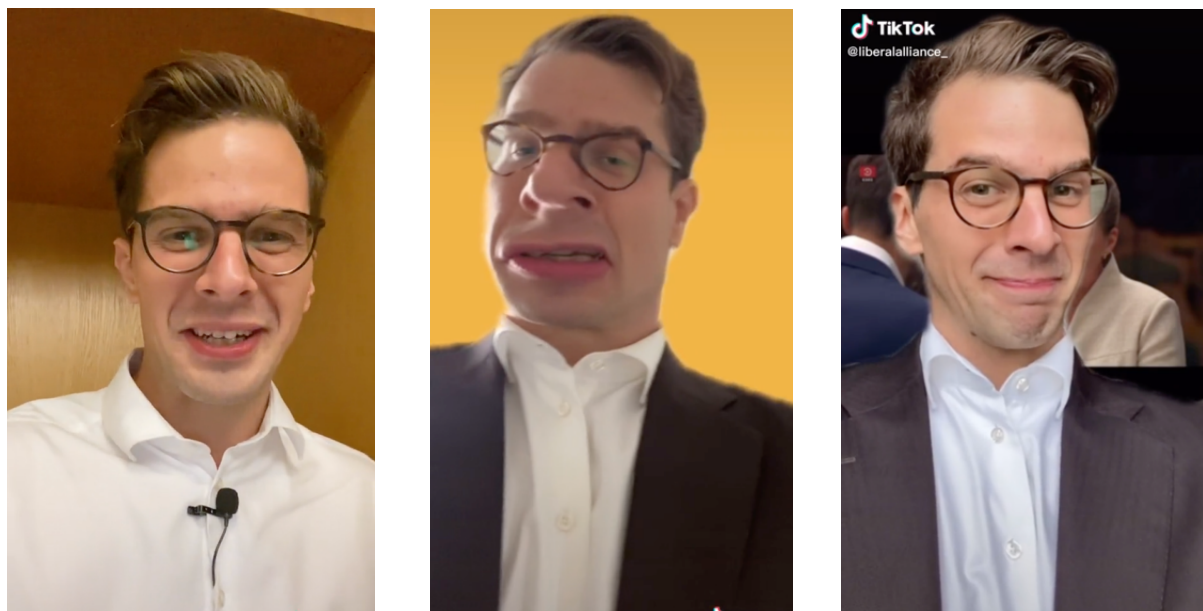
Figure 5: Video 6 and video 12

The setting of the analysed content was found to be primarily political settings, such as the chambers, offices, and halls of the Danish Parliament, and the second most popular location was public spaces such as the street or in campaign cars. Machin and Mayr (2012) posit that the setting of visual communication can be strategically chosen to communicate a specific value to create a specific effect on the audience in an attempt to alter the power dynamics between political and media logic. This type of content indicates the attempt of LA and AV to exploit the audience's inclination towards content in which the sender act as a kind of prism through which social complexity is reduced to simple moral codes attached to easily

understood and humanized messages (Louw, 2010. P. 178). Social relations between the viewers, objects, and backgrounds can be suggested by the size of the frame (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), and along with other visual semiotics, it plays a significant role in making the participants in content appear stronger and more powerful (Machin & Mayr, 2012). The examined content in this analysis shows that there is a varying degree of social distance present in the videos, but that the most common form of angle was filmed slightly below eye level, as can be seen in Figures 5,6, and 8. The medium-shot social distance as seen in video 5 was observed to be the most popular used distance, and it could be perceived as an attempt to enhance the audience's connection to the content. These contextual factors suggest that the low percentage of eye contact does not have a significant impact on the audience. While the professional settings of most of the videos indicate a more professional and traditional strategy in political communication, the angle of filming in most of the content, as well as the use of self-recorded videos suggests an attempt at appearing more authentic and relatable.

5.1.2 Verbal mode and linguistic strategies

This analysis observes that LA communicate political messages by adapting content from traditional TV transmissions to a platform which is more frequently used by their target audience to stimulate active participation. The content by LA which has been reposted from parliamentary and/or TV debates was found to make up 37% of the analysed content. This type of content has been found to mainly consist of showcasing political activities, and ideological or policy information as can be seen in video 2 which shows AV arguing against the state of the Danish welfare system during an election TV debate between party leaders. While there is not much research to confirm why reposted content from traditional media sources is particularly successful on TikTok, it is a format which allows for the communication and target of a message in a neutral setting using the short video format. A study of Scandinavian political rhetoric found that audiences, in debate settings such as that displayed in video 2, prefer when politicians make coherent and well-reasoned mini-speeches and arguments, in comparison to heckling and interrupting (Kjeldsen et al. 2021). The utilisation of this type of content indicates an attempt to amplify a message to control the narrative, which can be especially useful in situations where the message would otherwise have been portrayed in a negative light by traditional media. These observations are further supported by the high degree of strategic linguistic and rhetorical devices such as alliteration, personal pronouns, repetitive statements, the rule of 3, as well as rhetorical questions present in the 'reposted TV debate' content by LA.

Video 11 is a good example of how these rhetorical devices are used strategically. AV uses extensive repetition to amplify certain points such as the sentence *"Splurging with taxpayer money"* which is repeated twice and the word "taxpayer's money" is expressed with a degree of absurdity and disbelief and is used as the closing argument in the video.

This genre of content along with the rhetorical devices illustrate how LA uses agenda-setting to reinforce their messaging and thereby frame the discussion around certain issues to strategically shape the narrative around them. While it is dependent on the audience and the context in which is it used, this type of strategy can create a sense of credibility and authority for LA and AV. Seen in a wider societal context, this strategy can also be understood through the concept of hegemony. From this point of view, it is argued that structuring content to create particular ideas, values and identities contributes to the formation of a shared political culture and popular consent is used to legitimize the existing social order. In this context, political actors must engage in a constant struggle to construct and disseminate narratives that can create a sense of content among the public while also challenging and contesting the dominant narratives of their opponents. It highlights the importance of discursive and symbolic struggles in shaping public opinion and political outcomes.

Another argument for the popularity of this type of content can be found perhaps in the political shift to the digital space, and Graeme Turner's (2016) claims about a "multi-mediated" media environment. Participation in politics by mass audience has in modern times been argued as largely passive due to audiences not encountering politics directly, but instead through mediated politics in media (Nimmo & Combs, 1990). This is further supported by the statistic that TV consumption for young adults between the ages of 18-34 is significantly lower than that of older generations (Richter, 2020). Additionally, when comparing this to Esser and Strömbäck's (2014) arguments that organisational news media dominate the transmission of information to society, the preliminary results of this analysis would indicate that LA operates in a media environment in which organisational news media no longer serve as the dominant transmission of information for the target audience.

While TikTok is a platform with social interactions as its basic premise, the analysed content by LA does not show a particular use of technical affordances which lead to user gratifications associated with social interaction. This analysis has found that regarding the three levels of interaction by Lilleker and Vedel (2013), the content primarily falls into the category of

information/promotion followed by mobilisation. From a technical perspective, the affordances used by LA indicate that the content of LA primarily leads to user gratifications of information-seeking and entertainment. The analysis indicates that LA has sought to appeal to user gratifications of personal identity through the use of verbal modes and linguistic strategies rather than direct interaction with audiences. As the analysis of technical affordances has already suggested that content shows little direct interaction and addressing of audiences, LA has instead sought to use strategies to construct and frame narratives which seek audiences to find validation or inspiration which aligns with their own personal identity. This can be seen in LA's use of language to encourage comments and facilitate a discussion. An example of this can be found in video 18 when AV says: "*If you are watching out there, then I want to say: ask yourself, have you seen a single convincing and concrete plan from the government to fight inflation and provide actual help for Danes?*" These results could imply that LA does not utilise TikTok as a tool to stimulate dialogue and that they instead primarily use TikTok as a tool for promoting political activities as well as mobilising potential voters.

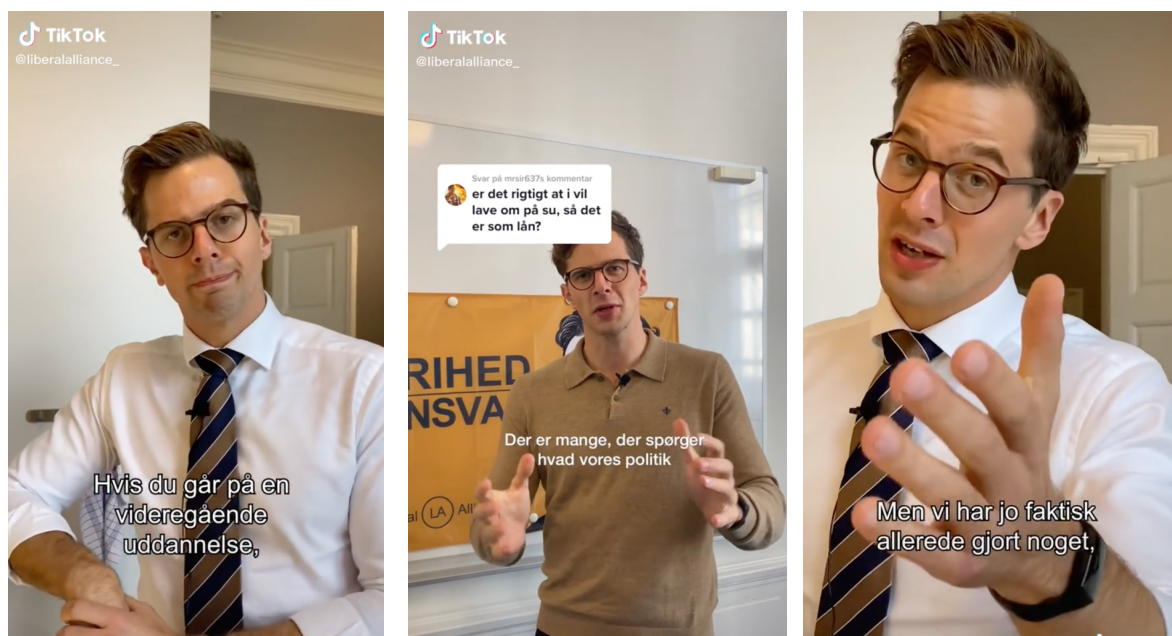## 5.1.3 Professional personalisation: the moral fiber of digital politics

Figure 6: Video 14 and video 8

« If you are in higher education, I just want to inform you that Liberal Alliance has helped to raise the free amount by DKK 4,000, so that you can earn more money alongside your studies without a tax offset. » (video 14)

There are three broad qualities that citizens expect politicians to display; authenticity, integrity, and competence (Valgarðsson, 2020). This analysis finds that content containing elements of professional personalisation is primarily used to create an image of AV that reflects these qualities. These are demonstrated by LA as can be seen from the example in the citation above (video 14). AV relies on the use of statistical facts, formal language, as well as the focus on political accomplishments and showcases AV performing activities related to the political function of parliament as can be seen in figure 6. In content which displayed AV in TV debates and parliamentary settings, AV does not address the audience and instead attempts to appeal to audiences through the expression of professional qualities, in this case, by including himself in the shared political responsibility that he is criticising his opponents for. Video 2 is an example of how this is done; AV does not address the audience directly, and he refers to his colleagues as *"we"*, thereby not including the audience as part of the "group". This can be seen from the following statement: *"So maybe we are pouring money into a system that is not good enough."* (video 2).

Similarly, the analysis also finds that videos often display visual references to LA either on clothes or in the background where no direct reference is made. This slightly decreases the effect of self-personalisation, and increases the ethos of the party, as it is a reminder given to the audience that the views being presented in the video, are views belonging to LA. Examples of how this is done visually can be found in Figure 6 and Figure 8, where the logo of AV is present in the background and on AV's shirt. These examples show how the content by LA seeks to display AV as a competent politician who dominates the debates with short remarks that are logical, spot on, and closing arguments that are straight to the point. These findings thus far suggest a popularity of content that focuses on the political and professional qualifications of AV which are more relevant to the political message that is sought communicated.

While this analysis has found that professional personalisation is used with the intention of communicating ideology and policy information, it is also often used in combination with elements of emotional personalisation. The presence of emotional personalisation shows the content seeks to convey emotions about the political agenda through discourses relating to the concepts of power, integrity, and superiority. In video 7, AV appeals to emotions of integrity, honesty, and loyalty as he defends a fellow politician's privacy as can be seen in the following extraction: *"Stop it now! This is not about Pape's private economy. Come on! That, that is*

simply dishonourable!" The results however also find that LA often combines the use of professional and emotional personalisation through humour in seeking to appeal to user gratifications of entertainment. However, how this is done will be elaborated on in the following chapter.

The personalisation of politics is often judged from a normative perspective meaning that it is used to redirect attention from political ideology and policy to personalisation as well as non-political information. Other earlier studies have also supported this perspective, such as that of Metz, Kruikemeier and Lecheler (2019). However, this analysis would suggest that the strategic intention is rather to use non-political information and visual elements to redirect the attention of the viewer to the political information. These results indicate that LA uses elements of professional personalisation to apply to the user gratifications of information-seeking and personal identity, as it primarily is concerned with appealing to the identity of the audience through arguments of ideology and policy.

Overall, the saturation of elements pertaining to professional personalisation in the analysed content could indicate an influence on, and popularity of, content seeking to communicate ideology and policies when used in combination with technical affordances that are popular with TikTok audiences. Critics of professional personalisation have argued that such a strategy can lead to devaluation of political discourse and an oversimplification of politics, rather than substantive policies or issues (Louw, 2010. P. 178). It is argued that the format can make it difficult to convey nuanced and complex ideas when politicians, and other public figures, increasingly seek to stand out in a crowded environment to capture the attention of audiences. While this could indeed be right, the results could also indicate an attempt to reduce this information overload by conforming to the media's preferences for visualized simplicity, binary oppositions, and titillation, and hence contributes to the production of social 'one dimensionality' (Louw, 2010. P. 178).

5.1.4 Emotional personalisation: professional unprofessionalism

Figure 7: video 1, video, 17 and video 20

« Shit, I am so cool; I am so f**king good at TikTok! Everyone else sucks at it, man!
Whaddup, Alex! Alex! Mmmmmh, more likes! » (video 3)

In their analysis, Kruikemeier (2014) and Hermans and Vergeer (2013) did not take visuals into account when examining self-personalisation. Similarly, research by Loader, Vromen, and Xenos (2016), as well as Filimonov (2016), concluded that personalisation is most present in the form of emotional and private elements, and less so in combination with professional personalisation. However, this analysis finds that LA often combines the use of elements pertaining to professional and emotional personalisation. This is based on the observation that visual, and non-verbal elements such as informal body language and emotions such as anger, integrity, and passion work as supporting elements to convey and strengthen elements of policies and ideology. The results suggest that this is done with the overall goal of appealing to the user gratification of entertainment through visual linguistic styles.

However, the analysis also finds that LA professional and emotional personalisation is used to appeal to the user gratification of entertainment and information-seeking through a professional use of unprofessional communication. Examples of this can be found in video 3. The video initially focuses on one of the key election issues of LA; young people's use of social media,

and how to reduce mental health issues in young adults. However, as the video progresses, the viewer becomes aware that AV is making fun of himself and being ironic about his extensive presence and success on TikTok. The example highlighted above also demonstrates how LA and AV use humorous language as well as self-irony and sarcasm to appeal to their target audiences. Video 6 and video 17 provide additional examples of AV using language that adapts to the language of his target audience, i.e. *"You huge boomer, man" (video 17)*, and the degree of intimacy in video 6, due to the angle at which it is filmed. By using words such as "*f**cking" (video 3)*, AV is appearing very informal and aligned with the language use of the target audience. Additionally, the use of phrases such as *"f**cking", "yeah man!" ,"Shit, I'm so cool" , "The others suck, man!" , "Clown, man",* as well as calling himself *"Daddy Vanopslagh"* are more examples of how he connects with the audience through his choice of language.

These identified elements contribute to creating a consistent and recognisable "profile" across analysed content. They reveal how LA seek to create a persona that the media can easily associate them with. This strategy could potentially be explained by Louw's (2010) argument that politicians must display behaviour which is considered appropriate by the target audience that they seek to influence. From the perspective of Danish political communication, LA apply a use of language which breaks away from the typical political appearance of a professional and non-personal persona. As earlier theorised, the effectiveness of such a strategy could be suggested to be because the behaviour is unexpected, freely chosen, and consistent with social norms and expectations of political authenticity (Invernizzi and Ting, 2021).

This interplay between media and political logic on TikTok, as has thus far been identified in the combination of professional and emotional personalisation, creates an environment that is appealing to political content using entertainment and information. As such, the analysis pertaining to the use of professional and emotional personalisation indicates that political logic is conforming to media logic by deploying behaviour and preferences which leads to certain gratifications in their target audiences. This corresponds well with the preliminary findings of this analysis, as content which combines professional and emotional personalisation primarily has been found to appeal to the gratifications of information-seeking, personal identity, and entertainment through fun and enjoyable content.

Previous research on self-personalisation shows that politicians are often reluctant to share private information, such as personal preferences and information about their private lives. Studies such as that of Metz, Kruikemeier and Lecheler (2020) have argued that particularly the use of private personalisation in political communication has a big effect on audience engagement. However, this analysis found very little presence of private personalisation in the content by LA. One could argue that although this analysis has indicated a non-existent presence of information about the private life or personal opinions of AV, there is a subtle presence of private personalisation in the form of visual communication such as the setting of filming, clothes, body language, using the selfie perspective when filming, and the music. As such, in their definition of private personalisation, Metz, Kruikemeier, and Lecheler (2020) argue that the use of the "selfie angle" provides an intimate look in the personal sphere and therefore contains a degree of private personalisation. The informal body language as seen in the figures below also provides examples of how private personalisation is communicated through non-verbal behaviour. As Alex Vanopslagh has previously been away from politics due to stress, the decision to not incorporate private personalisation might be due to a separation of work and private life, as is also considered the norm in Denmark (Gardner, 2019). However, it is also an indication that LA has sought to not be considered too unprofessional in campaigning. This restriction of access to the private life of the politician can also be seen as a crowd-manipulation as it provides the persona with a type of mystery which attracts the audience (Louw, 2010. P. 178).

5.1.5 Controlled media behaviour: politicians as separate entities

Figure 8: video 17, video 18, and video 29.

« (...) then I remembered, I got a gift from Rosa Lund and Enhedslisten. » (video 1)

According to Matthes (2022) and Rahat and Kenig (2018), personalisation only happens when individual politicians are highlighted at the expense of institutions such as political parties. In controlled media behaviour, it is theorised that content focuses increasingly on the individual politician and less on political groupings, as well as shifting the story from party labels, and ideological markers. However, while this analysis finds indications that LA focuses its content primarily on AV, it does not indicate that it happens at the expense of party communication relating to policy or ideology. As has been earlier argued, this has been identified through a focus on the individual politician, which does not happen at the expense of LA (i.e. either verbally or non-verbally through the presence of logos or the mention of policies). This is particularly the case in content that is otherwise very heavily focused on the charismatic abilities of AV, as can be seen in video 3 and 29 where no verbal reference to LA is made, but AV is instead wearing a jacket with the logo of LA. However, while these results indicate that LA naturally seeks to maintain its presence in the content, video 21 serves as an example of controlled media personalisation and how references to LA might not have the intended effect on audiences. In the video, AV addresses how many have asked why they can't vote for him directly instead of for the party:

"If you cast your vote for the party, it is almost the same as casting your vote for me and it is the same if you vote for one of our lead candidates." (video 21)

Controlled media personalisation is not only considered the focus on one individual in political content, but also the general preoccupation with other individuals, at the expense of their political groupings. The results of this analysis show that this type of narrative is frequently used by AV, and an example of this can be seen in video 1. In the video, AV refers to Rosa Lund, the party leader of Enhedslisten, and creates a focus on the individual politician rather than her party affiliation. This video is an example of the larger social media strategy of both LA and Enhedslisten, which has sought to focus on the friendly relationship between AV and Rosa Lund, the party leader of the far-left party "Enhedslisten" to provide gratifications of entertainment through displays of humour. Much of the content by LA which has focused on political opponents has also been focused on Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen. This content was found to often attack her as the representative wholly in charge of the decisions made by the government, as can be seen in video 12 and 29. Similar examples can be found in video 17 when AV mention his political opponent, yet fellow right-wing politician, Jakob Ellemann Jensen without making mention of his political party:

« Jakob Ellemann came by my office. AGAIN! Because he wanted me to promote his TikTok because doesn't have enough followers (...). He can take care of his own party; I want to keep my followers to myself! »

This example from video 17 displays the attempt at creating potential polarisation of candidates in an attempt to shift or challenge power relations in the political sphere. This type of content creates the risk of information bubbles as it does not present a balanced view of the issues, which can lead to echo chambers where audiences only see content which confirms their existing beliefs. Particularly the technical affordances offered by TikTok in relation to the algorithm and the "for you" page allow politicians to take advantage of this access to create a specific narrative for their audience. This is a tendency which is seen in political attempts to control the media coverage of narratives and reputations which can contribute to shaping public opinion. This type of control highlights the importance of new digital media platforms such as TikTok for political communication, but also how this type of content can contribute to amplify certain issues or messages and contribute to polarise public opinion and make it more difficult to e.g. reach consensus on important political issues. However, both of these examples focus

on the political traits of these politicians and do not, as theorised by Rahat and Kenig (2018) focus on non-political traits. These results could therefore indicate that the implications of controlled media behaviour are limited and indicate a focus on maintaining professional election campaigning by the party.

5.1.6 Behavioural personalisation

« I meet a lot of people around the country who say, "I really want to vote for you Alex," but it is only possible to run in one constituency (...) If you put your vote to the party, it is almost the same as voting for me. » (video 21)

The basic premise of behavioural personalisation is that it reflects a change in behaviour and the distancing of the individual politician from the political party (Rahat & Kenig, 2018). This analysis finds that the content by LA does signify a use of language pertaining to the more individualistic "I" and "me" as well as visible authorship and improvisation. A degree of behavioural personalisation is also found in the use of improvised language, such as in video 30, where AV is asked a question by the debate host, which strengthens the Ethos of AV, as he is able to retaliate quickly. Additionally, the portrayal of AV in parliamentary and TV debates primarily focuses on conveying powerful statements which at no point leaves room for the opponents present to contradict AV's statements. This finding is also supported by how the format of the content is used to leave the audience with the perception of AV providing the closing arguments in a debate. Together with the elements of controlled media behaviour, the presence of behavioural personalisation creates a risk of echo chambers and information bubbles, as it limits the exposure to alternate perspectives. The presence of both types of personalisation in political content on a platform which already personalises content to the user paints an example of a potentially worrying result of a larger tendency of politicians to communicate directly with target audiences instead of through traditional or news media sources. Among voters, this tendency of behavioural personalisation means that politics is increasingly perceived as a game between competing politicians and individuals instead of it being based on party identity and ideology.

Dimensions of behavioural personalisation are also very relevant for understanding the link between the state and society. In attempting to understand the weight of the citation from video 21, one might refer to the concept of *personalisation of participation* which by Rahat and

Pedersen (2021) is considered a subcategory of behavioural personalisation. It explains how political participation is encouraged by individuals rather than political groups. Considering the findings of this analysis, as well as the stark increase in voter turnout, from 2.3% in 2019 to 7.9% in 2022, Garcia et al. (2022) would suggest that this is an indication that over time, attitudes towards party leaders increasingly influence voters' decision to turn out for elections while the importance of the party identification declines. However, it is not possible to draw that conclusion from these results, but it provides an interesting ground for further analysis. One of the limitations to this strategy can be explained by the term "partyness" which explains the display of personalisation not as a contrast to party politics but rather as a contrast to the party's usual ability to act as a link between state and society (Rahat & Kenig, 2018. Pruysers et al., 2018. p. 4). The use of social media platforms in a political context, such as TikTok, allows politicians to create content which is more engaging and relevant to younger voters, potentially increasing their level of political engagement and participation. However, it can also lead to a decrease in "partyness" which can contribute to the fragmentation of political discourse, as users are exposed to a wide range of political viewpoints and ideologies. The analysis of behavioural personalisation does not seek to imply that personalisation doesn't potentially have damaging effects on political parties, but rather observes, as is also argued by Pruysers et al. (2018. p. 4), that political personalisation in the case of LA happens separate to the political party and is the result of political strategy. In a wider context, the phenomenon should be seen as a situation in which political actors become centrally important and visible, but not necessarily at the expense of a political party.

5.2 Authenticity

As the aim of this research is to analyse how political parties utilise political personalisation on TikTok as a tool to establish performed authenticity, this next chapter will compare the results of the analysis pertaining to political personalisation for their relation to the four dimensions of performed authenticity *Ordinariness, Immediacy, Consistency, and Intimacy*.

5.2.1 Ordinariness

This analysis of political personalisation has observed a high degree of elements pertaining to creating an authentic "ordinariness". This is judged through a politician's ability to adapt a "persona" or a "mask" which also reflects their own so that the public knows that the persona

is not merely an attempt at impression management (Jamieson & Waldman, 2003). Ordinariness is also usually reflected through amateurism, which could be argued to be indirectly present in the content through the use of language that defies the usual expectations of political communication as shown earlier in the analysis of emotional personalisation (chapter 8.4). Another example of how this is achieved, is the use of the selfie angle, as seen in Figure 5. This angle of filming suggests a reduction of the separation between the politician and their audience by presenting the self in a more amateur way both in terms of the quality of filming, but also in the language used in combination with this angle. The analysis indicates that in content created by LA, ordinariness is primarily established through verbal modes connected to emotional personalisation through the use of humour and seeking to appeal to the user gratification of entertainment. Visual modes, however, more frequently communicated aspects of ordinariness through amateurism and improvisation as seen in the images in Figure 5. Ordinariness can therefore be assumed to be created through a high degree of personalisation, which can contribute to creating user gratifications related to entertainment and personal identity. From the view of the Correspondent Inference Theory, it could also be argued that politicians seek to communicate in these manners which usually violates their role expectations because it separates them from their opponents who tend to behave within the expected political norms. As audiences on TikTok are generally found to be attracted to content that is emotionally engaging and relatable, this type of strategy can lead to an increase in audiences. It could therefore from this analysis be assumed that LA has deployed strategies of personalisation both relating to technical affordances as well as content by LA leading to user gratifications of entertainment and personal identity to establish an authentic image of AV as ordinary and as "one of the people" who does not deploy extensive strategy to achieve success on TikTok.

5.2.2 Immediacy

Figure 9: Video 22

The construction of "immediacy" is mostly associated with a politician's ability to use live videos, unscripted content, personalised messages, and hashtag challenges. This analysis does not find much content relating to "immediacy". Displays of emotions in the content of LA are very balanced with controlled emotional performances. The emotional displays present in the content by LA have been found to predominantly relate to humour and entertainment, or seriousness, dedication, and passion as can be seen in video 2 where AV is shown leaning over a debate podium with his shirt sleeves pulled up, giving the impression that he is "at work" and his face is serious as he criticises the state of the welfare system. This analysis does find the content to at times display relatively pre-planned content. However, when AV speaks directly to the audience, he does so without a script and the choice of words attempts to convey a sense of contentment and social ease in front of the camera, which altogether is considered a favourable tactic for politicians seeking to look authentic instead of strategic. This can be seen in video 1 where AV sits informally and delivers a pun to the audience with the perceived intention of it looking improvised. Examples of how immediacy is present can also be found in video 22 where he announces that he will be going live on Twitch later in the week, as can be seen in figure 9. Video 9 also serves as an example of how hashtag challenges are used to encourage audiences to participate in content creation which creates a sense of community and immediacy (Luebke, 2021). However, the analysis shows that the content lacks an appeal to

the user gratification of social interaction through the use of technical affordances. However, this could be an indication that this gratification has been met through other means.

Immediacy conveys a degree of spontaneity and therefore is a loosely scripted or wholly unscripted linguistic style seen more as a direct expression of the politician's true self (Pillow et al. 2018). This analysis of immediacy overall indicates that the content concerning the technical affordances provided by TikTok, such as through the angle of filming, has been shown to provide the biggest sense of immediacy together with verbal modes, such as the tone and improvisation in language. However, this lack of immediacy might be explained by the overall dimension of immediacy associated with content on TikTok. TikTok's algorithmic structure allows politicians to rapidly amplify and disseminate political messages and allows them to play a role in shaping the visibility and reach of political content. Politically planned speeches are by audiences considered to be inauthentic and not a real reflection of the true feelings and opinions of the politician. However, the results of the analysis indicate the most popular content of LA does not reflect many dimensions of immediacy; most of the content has been planned, due to objects such as microphones or filming with a high-quality camera instead of a phone. Content being filmed in a formal setting by a second figure also implies that the content is staged and contains some degree of planning.

5.2.3 Consistency

> *« But I hear the question as this: How can Mr. Alex Vanopslagh hold such a liberal point of view? That is maybe just because I am a liberal".* (video 5)

In this analysis of consistency, it has been observed to be mostly present in elements of professional personalisation. The content by LA particularly focuses on consistency through discourses relating to ideological beliefs, election campaigning as well as policy positions of LA. An example of this can be found in video 8, as the video is an attempt to bridge to gap between the target audience and LA on a key issue which is LA's position on the structure of the student stipend. In the video, AV is seen defending the position of the party, although it is not a favourable position in the eyes of the target audience. This type of consistency strengthens viewers' perception of particularly AV as being driven by morals, principles, and logic. This type of consistency could be argued as relevant in strategic political

communication due to the correlation between the actions and the expectations of their target audience.

From the perspective of democratic theory, it could also be argued that the public in modern societies has compelling reasons to value authenticity in political discourse, and it, therefore, proved more beneficial to be transparent about an issue which is relevant to many viewers, even though it could end up being a potentially damaging action. The issue of the SU stipend became a popular topic of discussion when news sources reported that LA intended to change the current system of the SU stipend, but it did not have any long-lasting impact on their election campaign. This is determined by the ability of the participant(s) of the content to appear true to themselves in all situations and hold on to their positions and values despite potentially facing negative consequences. This analysis of consistency indicates that LA does appear consistent in the top 30 most popular videos which have been analysed. This consistency in the analysed content can be sought explained by LA's ability to create a strong brand identity as well as build trust with audiences. When content is consistent in messaging, politicians can create a sense of emotional resonance with audiences and help them to find and access the political content that is most important and relevant to them more easily. Therefore, the results would indicate that the presence of consistency primarily leads to user gratifications of emotional resonance, trust, and information-seeking.

Politicians aim to establish a consistent political narrative, and this makes messages and actions across time in for example social media posts, important for the creation of authenticity. This is primarily measured through the presence of principles and morals, consistent narratives in campaigns, and the consistency between current and former positions, messages, values, principles, and actions as well as across different situations such as private and public settings (Luebke, 2021). In the analysis of the content by LA, these factors are particularly well demonstrated in the content which has been reposted from TV or parliamentary debates. These videos show clear examples of AV attempting to convey policy positions and the above citation serves as one example of how this is "subtlety" conveyed in his reference to him being a Liberal. The increasing number of media contexts makes it difficult for candidates to appear consistent across time and space and in the space of TikTok. It allows audiences to actively select sources that are potentially already consistent with their ideological positions which in turn strengthens the pre-existing impressions of the politician's authenticity (Luebke, 2021). These processes in which audiences make impressions of politicians are embedded in a system

of socially grown expectations and notions of authenticity which according to this study happens through strategies of political personalisation.

5.2.4 Intimacy

As has already been observed in this analysis, visual and non-verbal factors are highly influential in the transmission of elements related to political personalisation. When analysing content for displays of authenticity, literature and theory often refers to the notions of "front stage" and "backstage" by Goffman (1956). Goffman's framework is more fitting for the context of in-person communication; however, it has been applied to the context of social media and political authenticity (Hogan, 2010, Slerka and Merunkova, 2019). In the context of social media, and this analysis of authentic behaviour of political figures, the analysis has shown that LA often deploys a "backstage" tactic to their TikTok content in an attempt to convey professional levels of intimacy and personal life in a "private setting". The majority of the analysed content is filmed in the offices of LA, as can be seen in Figures 6, 7, and 9. These are locations that are inaccessible to the general public. This corresponds with the analysis of self-personalisation which indicates that the use of self-personalisation to construct authenticity has primarily sought to do so through a professional degree of private information through visual behaviour such as body language, social distance, and eye contact, which leaves a degree of mystery for the audience to decode.

The analysis of the dimension of intimacy found very little information relating to personal or private information. Social media platforms are otherwise usually important for the construction of an authentic persona. However, this contributes to the earlier results which also showed little presence of private personalisation, and thereby indicates that there is an overall focus on professional authenticity, communicating a clear line between the personal and professional persona. In other studies, intimacy is also considered a valuable component in establishing trust and closeness, and it is often employed in multimodal strategies. While the content does not verbally express any intimate information, the visual non-verbal modes such as the emotions of AV when speaking during debates or the occasional use of slightly informal attire could be argued as somewhat intimate, the results of the analysis would indicate that these dimensions could also be attributed to one of the other three dimensions of authenticity.

5.3 Summary of analysis

In this section, the findings of the analysis will be summarised with respect to the research questions of this study. The analysis reveals that LA has effectively adjusted its content on TikTok to appeal to its intended audiences. They have been found to do so by incorporating a diverse range of visual and linguistic elements that are distinctive to the platform. The results have indicated that political logic largely conforms to media logic. In general, the exerted elements of political personalisation show AV as a down-to-earth, one-of-the-people, *authentic* politician. This strategy contributes mostly to performed authenticity through the dimensions of Ordinariness and Consistency. The content reveals a lack of personal or private information, which could indicate a wish to appear unprofessional to a certain degree. The analysis similarly reveals that the content primarily gratifies users' needs for information-seeking, entertainment, and establishing personal identity. This indicates that the content seeks to inform/promote, mobilise, and create dialogue between audiences rather than with audiences. However, this type of conforming to media logic in the space of TikTok has been found to potentially create some implications concerning the manipulation and misinformation of audiences, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

It seems important to reiterate that from a political perspective, social media is used with the intention of persuasion, influencing, or changing political views and opinions. Social media fundamentally changed how politicians communicate to the public, making it an integrated, almost essential, part of election campaigning, which provides the opportunity to personalise and individualise content to target audiences like never before. The results of this analysis have suggested that the dimensions of personalisation in the content by LA are primarily professional and emotional dimensions relating to the official role of AV seeking to convey information, entertainment through elements of humour, and integrity. The examined content was also shown to contain a large degree of classic strategic persuasive techniques in the content which displays AV in a formal political setting such as in parliamentary debates as well as in content which seeks to explain policy issues. While scholars such as Matthes (2022) have suggested that young adults primarily use social media for non-political purposes, the content by LA reveals that audiences have interacted most with content appealing to the user gratifications of information seeking, entertainment, and personal identity. The analysis of the content has also shown that there is a balance between content seeking to inform and content seeking to entertain, indicating that the audience is both interested in information about policy and politics in general, as well as to be entertained.

The results of this analysis have also found that in discourses of authenticity, information relating to personal vulnerability or private life was not found to be present. These results contribute to the finding that LA and AV have chosen to limit elements pertaining to private personalisation. In this sense, the findings of the study have aligned with similar studies of political personalisation. The study of self-personalisation of politics on Facebook by Metz, Kruikemeier and Lecheler (2020) similarly found a higher presence of professional personalisation in the political communication used by German politicians. Therefore, this research would like to suggest that while private personalisation has earlier been found to trigger audience engagement, it has not been a critical component for stimulating audiences on Liberal Alliance in a political context.

The analysis of Liberal Alliance's use of TikTok reveals that they hold a strong technical knowledge of TikTok-specific affordances. The communication strategy of the party manages, to an extent, to adapt to the user preferences of genre format. AV's use of language in the analysed content has been found to adapt well with that of LA's target audience as well as language making references to TikTok-specific trends or sayings. Most previous studies looking at the use of political personalisation on TikTok have found that candidates do not fully exploit the affordances which TikTok provide to engage with audiences. While it is undeniable that this research has found a significant presence of personalisation in the content by LA, the analysis also shows that they have succeeded in utilising the affordances offered by TikTok. However, in the case of LA, the results suggest that direct engagement with audiences does not seem to provide the most popular content and that utilising affordances by TikTok is instead a matter of identifying the needs of audiences. These findings have begged the question of whether personalisation should be considered the main strategy of LA or if it is rather a combination of personalisation with the ability of the party to connect with the needs and gratifications of the audience, as a whole?

Discourses pertaining to the power relations between political logic and media logic were generally found to function as an interplay: Liberal Alliance conforms to media logic by utilising many of the affordances offered by TikTok to provide personalised content which leads to various user gratifications associated with the creation of performed authenticity. But the analysis also shows that leaders can emerge as a result of being able to use social media effectively. The media is a means for achieving power and each means of communication shifts power in fundamental ways, but the media sets the conditions in which leadership takes place (Davis and Taras, 2020). Each technology has different affordances and different attributes and demands different skills from leaders, but politicians are still reliant on audiences to spread their content. The algorithmic effect that TikTok has allows for content to reach the right audience, exponentially speeding up the process of "generating media hype". Through this analysis, it has been identified that LA utilises political personalisation to create discourses particularly referring to the dimensions of ordinariness and consistency in performed authenticity.

The case of LA serves as an example of how content can be tailored in the direct targeting of specific audiences who are already present on the platform of TikTok. However, it also

signifies a requirement for a symbiosis between the demands of the audience and how these are met by politicians.

These results represent a larger tendency in society; audiences now require politicians to fight for the attention of publics. These publics demand political authenticity in a digital environment where information about all aspects of society is providing audiences with an information overload. The million-dollar question is whether social media represents a shift in power; does it produce new types of leaders and signal the end of those who cannot navigate the necessary affordances? Not necessarily. Bøggild et al (2021) argue that European Parliamentary systems which are more party-centred political systems, are more likely to see voters be willing to display group disobedience and engage in norm-breaking behaviour. Therefore, politicians who hold different personality traits, as part of a campaign strategy or not, will navigate social situations differently than their peers. Politicians who possess extraverted personality traits are seen as more inclined to prefer personalised representation in parliament (Bøggild et al, 2021) which enhances the individual's tendency to seek attention as well as to participate in political debates with loud self-confidence in defending political views. Particularly in European parliamentary systems, politicians face conflicting pressures from other representatives as well as their audiences, when deciding how to behave as political representatives.

By considering the original definition of political personalisation; for there to be personalisation, it should happen at the expense of the political party. This analysis has shown that although there are present elements of personalisation to a varying degree, it does not happen at the expense of the communication about the political party or policies that AV represents. However, further research looking at the audience perception of this content might help clarify information retention and which information is valued the most amongst audiences. It should however be considered that this analysis has been conducted on election campaigning material and therefore is not comparable with regular term communication. It was found by Marland et al. (2017) that political personalisation is very present during regular term, however, this research would like to argue that there are many factors which can affect the audience perception and engagement with content containing political personalisation, such as frequency of posts, which for LA has arguably been significantly higher during election campaigning. The content displaying AV in parliamentary settings also does not show him talking from a personal point of view but rather from his political and ideological point of view that he represents as the party leader of LA. As was highlighted in the introduction, it could be argued

that party democracy is suffering amongst the younger generations and politics, in general, are failing to activate young voters. In these cases, where younger generations tend to increasingly mistrust institutions in general, it could be argued that a more personalised interaction between politicians and audiences could potentially contribute to reviving it. Although the results of the analysis indicate that audiences engage avidly with content concerning political and ideological information, it creates the risk of reinforcing information bubbles and echo chambers. While this research is not able to draw any conclusions as to whether the content by AV specifically has managed to mobilise their target audience, the stark increase in followers and likes on TikTok has most likely had a significant influence on their exposure to target audiences as well as beyond. These are tendencies which are likely to have influenced the favourable election outcome that LA saw as a result.

The question asked earlier in this research, of whether political personalisation holds any potential implications for our current democratic process, has also been found difficult to answer through this analysis. A discussion of implications and potential consequences of political personalisation should be either examined in relation to party democracy or from a more systemic level. As previous historic examples have shown, such as Berlusconi's Forza Italia or Macron's En Marche, political parties are dependent on the personal success of their leaders. On a more local level, it has also been seen as a successful strategy for parties to nominate famous media personalities as candidates (Rahat and Pedersen, 2019. p. 2). It should therefore be considered that such personalisation does not necessarily hurt a political party and might instead be the result of a deliberate party. However, the analysis does find that this use of strategic political communication might prove implications for the political participation of audiences. As such, the analysis finds that Liberal Alliance provide an example of the decline of the political "collective". It shows a shift in the focus of dialogue from topics to individuals, through both visual and verbal expressions. This tendency could be seen as a consequence of political personalisation. The results related to technical affordances and visual semiotics would suggest that the content primarily appeals to user gratifications of information-seeking and entertainment. The low presence of content appealing to user gratifications of personal identity and social interaction indicates that the content primarily seeks to inform and mobilise. The argument politicians increasingly focus on the performative side of TikTok instead of using it as a means of strengthening the dialogue with target audiences has therefore similarly been found to be reflected in the content of this analysis. While the analysis shows the elements

of personalisation are contributing to creating a bigger focus on AV, the focus on AV as the main character is however not perceived to happen at the expense of the political party.

With politicians' social media activities now more or less belonging to the media arena, and with contact between representatives and citizens now commonly being established through social media platforms, politicians hold the ability to bypass traditional media and utilise social media and its affordances to their advantage to create and shape certain behaviour within their target audiences. Liberal Alliance show how understanding the uses and gratifications of their target audience and by utilising TikTok as a medium, they can use it as a communicative strategic advantage. As outlined in the theoretical framework, this research originally suggested that the success of Liberal Alliance in using TikTok was due to their ability to use the platform to gratify the needs of their audiences by providing content which resonates with their interests. The results of this research show that Liberal Alliance have strategically combined the use of entertaining, socially interactive, and informative content to their platform which contributes to a sense of personal identity in the audience. These factors are some of the main needs of audiences in using the platform as identified by the Theory of Uses and Gratification.

The ability of LA to generate content which both favours the party's political campaign, and at the same time manages to satisfy the needs and gratifications of the audience, shows the political potential to take advantage of the new digital environment which TikTok provides, but also the new opportunities that the behaviour of young adults provides for content circulation. Therefore, the results of this analysis indicate a representation of the current state of audience demands both in the presence of personalisation in the strive for authenticity, but it also presents the state of this distinct digital era and the unique structure it presents to the advantage of the "influencer" or in this case, "politician.¨

With its type of analysis and its results, this research contributes to the limited existing knowledge of political personalisation in the context of TikTok. It also on a more general level adds to research about communicative opportunities that TikTok offer political actors to exploit during election campaigning. However, the methodology of the research does suffer from a limitation concerning the structure of the analysis. It does not take into account the engagement from the audiences, for example, feedback in the form of comments, which would have allowed for a more comprehensive evaluation of the effects relating to political communication. As

such, this research provides the foundation for further study to analyse the audience's perception and preferences concerning similar content of LA as well as other political parties. It would also serve as an interesting outset for a comparative study of different political strategies, both across political parties in Denmark as well as abroad, as well as comparative research on any ideological differences in the use of political personalisation as a strategy. While the results of this analysis apply to LA and audiences in a Danish context, these conclusions might prove applicable outside of this context. While TikTok might have been the first platform to combine certain affordances, it will most likely not be the last, and the same goes for Liberal Alliance. While their use of TikTok is a new strategy in a Danish context, the combination of politics and entertainment through personalisation is likely a trend which will become more successful. However, this is a trend which should be validated through more comparative research to determine whether it is a growing trend, how it evolves, as well as analyses of whether political behaviour on social media, in general, is a result of the type of political and media systems they operate in.

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7.2 Appendix 1: Examples of analysis

Context	Video with subtitles (37 seconds long). Video is filmed by second person, handheld, and is filmed while walking down the halls of what is presumed to be the Danish Parliament.
Verbal mode	Video starts out in formal language, mocking a usual political TikTok. He uses formal language to explain that young people use too much time online, however, from the tone of the language it is evident that it is a skit, and he makes use of exaggeration. "It is crucial that we put an end to young people's use of social media (…)" and *"They spend WAY too much time on social media"* refers to young people in third person. Humour and irony.
Nonverbal mode	He is wearing formal clothes, and a sweater on top which bears the logo of the political party. In the second half of the video, someone pretends to interrupt him to tell him that they have received a total of 1 million likes on TikTok and he begins to celebrate. The video and the choice of language both in the first and the second half is ironic and brings attention to two opposites in points of view.
Contact	Gaze is fixed on the audience until he holds conversation with a person who is not within the frame. The audience does not see the person but is instead invited to look at Alex' reaction to what he is saying. Once he breaks out into dance, his gaze is again fixed on items behind the camera.
Social distance	Filmed by second person. The first half of the video shows Alex from the waist and up. The second half shows his full body.
Modality	The politically motivated speech in the first half of the video includes modalities of possibility and expectation *"(…) so that we can stop unhappiness amongst the youth"* and *"It is crucial that we stop* (…)"
Professional personalisation	Although it is a video produced to entertain, it does refer to young people's use of social media and that more focus should be put on it to reduce mental health issues in young adults. This speaks to the target audience that is young people.

	<u>Professional audience appeal:</u> He speaks directly to the audiences. In wearing the shirt with the logo of his party, it minimizes the effect of the personalisation, as it is a reminder that he is affiliated with them, and that the views being presented in the video, are views belonging to Liberal Alliance and not him alone.
Emotional personalisation	He breaks out into dance and celebration (e.g., yelling *"Shit I am so cool, I am so f**king good at TikTok! Everyone else sucks at it, man! Whaddup, Alex! Alex! Mmmmmh, more likes!"*
Private personalisation	By using words such as f**cking, he is appearing very informal. While filmed in formal clothes, in the workplace, it breaks away from the typical political appearance and use of language. He does not share any personal details, but his choice of words, brings it down to the level of the audience.
Controlled media personalisation	He wears the logo of Liberal Alliance, minimizes the effect of personalisation. Stands in stark contrast to his statements of *"I am so fucking good at TikTok!"* This is potentially to minimize the effect of personalisation and shift of focus away from the politician.
Behavioural personalisation	Says "we", which minimizes the effect of personalisation. Improvisation in the second half, although planned in advance. The irony contributes to increase his trustworthiness and integrity as a politician, as he is able to reflect on his own actions and is able to make fun of himself.
Ordinariness	His choice of words is very familiar to the target audience "Daddy Vanopslagh", "f**cking" "yeah man!" "Shit, I'm so cool" "The others suck, man!". Calling himself "Daddy Vanopslagh" also lets him identify himself with his audience, that have been calling him that throughout the election month. He has otherwise not been keen to use the wording out of fear for lack of professionalism as he has relayed in content which is not posted on their own channel.
Immediacy	The audience is aware that the video is planned, as it includes props such as the confetti.
Consistency	He makes fun of himself, while it is still evident that the political message is that it would be double standards to preach about the younger generations use of social media, when he is trying to reach them through those same platforms; as many other politicians are also trying to do, yet not addressing.
Intimacy	The audience being let in on a "private conversation" creates a sense of intimacy between Alex and the viewer.

7.3 Appendix 2: Example of analysis

Context	Video with Only the exclamation of **"Vores paternoster!"** has been subtitled. The video is filmed by Alex himself (selfie POV). The video features an added effect of a glory (at 00:06sec).
Verbal mode	He separates parliament **"We"** and **"our"** from the audience **"you"**. "Paternoster" informal reference and humorous as the first half of the word has the same pronunciation as the word "boob" in the Danish language. He clarifies it by explaining the real meaning of the word, which is a biblical reference to a hymn(?). *"Here we bloody go"* and *"You can can get a little damn scared of(...)"* use of informal language (Swearword of "sku" is not possible to translate in this context). The language does not appear scripted, but the jokes do appear to be planned.
Nonverbal mode	Informal media usage. He is wearing formal attire, and he is in the workplace. He is also wearing a microphone which indicates that it is not a spontaneous decision to record. He drives to the third floor and says *"Now I'm on the third floor which makes me want to go back down again, because this is where the Social Democrats have their offices, so I'll hurry off again"*. It is however said with a smile which indicates that it was a planned joke, and not meant as anything but a harmless joke. It is however a reference to the political activities of parliament.
Contact	Gaze is fixed on the audience throughout the video.
Social distance	It is filmed very close to his face, angled so that the POV is from slightly underneath his face giving it a slightly more personalized impression.
Modality	No presence

Professional personalisation	He's appealing to the audience by acting as a professional on social media who speaks directly to the audience (use of words such as **"you"**).
Emotional personalisation	He is joking both about political opponents, as well as the proximity of the word "paternoster" to the slang word of "breasts". He appears happy and in a good mood.
Private personalisation	Information relating to his personal opinions about a function of his workplace. A degree of private personalisation, however in a controlled environment.
Controlled media personalisation	Focuses on the individual politician. He is filming himself, and he makes no mention of his political party or their ideology as well as policies.
Behavioural personalisation	The content provides a degree of personalisation, as it does not appear completely scripted, but part of what is said has been planned in advance and perhaps practiced. It, however, does not ruin the impression of visible authorship.
Ordinariness	Clear displays of ordinariness in his choice of language. He appears genuine, he talks in a familiar way, as well as speaking directly to the audience. His content also appears to be intimate, due to the angle at which it is filmed, but also from his choice of words, which do not appear scripted. *"And sometimes you also think that you have to pray a little prayer before you walk in here, because you can get a little scared of ... I'm just going to damn jump in quickly",* the sentence shares his personal feelings towards the elevator which he considers to be a little dangerous. While not a detail which reflects aspects of his personal life, it is a private thought which connect the message to the audience.
Immediacy	Content does appear to be planned, but it does not appear strategic, as there is no obvious ideological gain from the video, besides the inclination of the viewer towards his personality.
Consistency	Makes an ideological jab at the opposition, but it is done in a joking manner, which makes him seem more authentic.
Intimacy	Shares private thoughts about the elevator; however, this is not a particularly personal line of thought.

7.4 Appendix 3: Analysed data

Video number	Date	Weekday	Title	Length	View count
1	31/10	Monday	Enhedslisten kan også gøre gavn. #fyp #foryou #foryoupage	00:16	800K
2	05/10	Saturday	"Send flere penge" løser ikke alle problemer! #dkpol #foryou #fyp #foryoupage	00:07	656K
3	16/10	Sunday	🥱🥱🥱 #fyp #fypage #foryoupage #foryou #liberalalliance	00:37	599K
4	02/09	Friday	Hold nu kæft…#fyp "fypage #foryoupage #liberalalliance #foryou @Alex Vanopslagh	00:08	626K
5	13/10	Thursday	'Jeg er liberal' 😎	00:15	548K
6	03/10	Monday	Pater-hvad? #fyp #foryou #foryoupage	00:28	484K
7	09/09	Friday	Socialdemokratiet er I gang igen. #fyp #fypage #foryoupage #liberalalliance #foryou	00:16	478K
8	30/10	Sunday	Besvarer @mrsir637 Vi vil IKKE afskaffe hele SU'en eller omlægge den til et lån 🤗 #fyp #foryou #foryoupage #liberalalliance	00:55	472K
9	11/10	Tuesday	Besvarer @Malthe Larstrøm. Vil du have en signeret plakat?	00:53	467K
10	14/10	Friday	Skat. #fyp #foryou #foryoupage #politiktok #dkpol "liberalalliance	00:21	465K
11	14/10	Friday	Det er frås med borgernes penge! #fyp #foryou #foryoupage #politiktok "liberalalliance #dkpol	00:22	449K
12	06/10	Thursday	W Kåre #fyp #foryou #foryoupage #liberalalliance	00:19	449K
13	18/10	Tuesday	Vi kan sænke afgiften på bilen, men vi kan ikke hjælpe dig med at blive en bedre billist. #fyp #foryou #foryoupage	00:09	434K
14	24/10	Monday	… It folds 🎵 #fyp #foryou #foryoupage	00:28	427K
15	30/09	Friday	😈😈 #foryoupage #foryou	00:11	418K
16	06/10	Thursday	Stram men ikke skør udlændingepolitik. Partilederdebatten kan ses I link I bio.	00:14	417K
17	20/10	Thursday	Skud ud til @jakobellemannjensen #foryou #foryoupage #fyp	00:25	415K
18	07/10	Friday	Har regeringen en plan, altså en rigtig plan, for at løse alle de problemer, der hjemsøger danskernes hverdag? #foryou #foryoupage #fyp #dkpol	00:37	367K
19	31/10	Monday	Gong! #fyp #foryou #foryoupage	00:12	343K
20	06/10	Thursday	Alex er blevet socialist #fyp #foryou #foryoupage #liberalalliance	00:18	330K
21	01/11	Tuesday	Sådan stemmer du på Alex og partiet! God valgdag til jer alle! #fyp #foryou #foryoupage	00:34	325K

22	21/10	Friday	Se med! Link I bio 🔥 #fyp #foryou #foryoupage #liberalalliance	00:13	321K
23	01/10	Saturday	Godt der snart er valg 🗳️ #fyp #foryou #foryoupage #liberalalliance	00:06	290K
24	30/09	Friday	Fremtiden er sikret. #foryou #foryoupage	00:29	288K
25	05/09	Monday	Ungdommen er liberal #fyp #foryou #foryoupage	00:24	286K
26	22/10	Saturday	Kom og få merch og mød mig ved Hovedbanegården I morgen! #fyp #foryou #foryoupage #foryoupage	00:37	276K
27	09/09	Friday	The more you know 🤏 #foryou #foryoupage #liberalalliance	00:19	276K
28	15/10	Saturday	#fyp #foryou #foryoupage	00:13	274K
29	09/10	Sunday		00:15	257K
30	14/10	Friday	#fyp #foryou #foryoupage #politiktok #dkpol	00:15	252K