

Toning Your Communication

A quantitative study of different tones in political communication.

In today's political landscape, social media is all the rage, with political parties using it as an important channel of communication. Despite this, there has been little research regarding how to best use social media in a political context, and also regarding the use of social media in general. The purpose of this thesis is to examine what tone of communication is optimal for social media, more specifically on blogs. Blogs were chosen because of being deemed the most important channel, and also because of being a well established channel of communication.

To examine what tone elicited the most positive response, we compared a group of respondents that had read a blog with a personal tone to a group of respondents that had read a blog with an official tone. In addition to the main study, a side study investigating potential signal effects of being present on social media was also conducted.

The results showed that the official tone elicited the most positive responses for almost all parameters measured. The results obtained were quite surprising, since they contradicted the information gathered in interviews, and also existing academic research. There were also clearly significant positive effects from being present on social media.

Keywords: social media, communication, political communication, blogs.

Authors: Elin Folkesson (20978) and Cecilia Hagelberg (20975)

Tutors: Per Andersson and Jonas Colliander

Examiner: Björn Axelsson

Discussant: Therése Gedda (20343)

Presentation: 13.15, September 13, 2010 in room C606.

A big **thank you** goes out to the following people:

Per Andersson, for guidance and fabulous feedback.

Jonas Colliander, for sparring and help with killing our SPSS-demons.

All our interviewees, for information and time.

Bengt Johansson, for getting us started in an area in which we were beginners.

Magnus Söderlund, for his expertise about questionnaires.

Ronney Hagelberg, for a steady supply of books.

Christina Tufvesson, for coffee and chocolate.

Björn and Yvonne Folkesson, for sharp eyes and encouragement.

Ann Wenehed, for answering all our questions and generosity with her time.

Our friends and families, for support and ideas.

All our respondents.

And lastly, we'd like to thank each other. After four years together at SSE – woop woop!

Table of Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Problem Area.....	3
1.3 Purpose.....	5
1.4 Intended Contribution.....	5
1.5 Delimitations	5
1.6 Definitions	6
1.7 Disposition.....	7
2.0 METHOD	8
2.1 Choice of Subject	8
2.2 Choice of Scientific Approach.....	9
2.3 Interviews	9
2.4 A Brief Introduction to the Experiment.....	11
2.5 Pilot Study of the Blogs	11
2.6 Main Study.....	12
2.7 Study of Potential Signal Effects.....	15
2.7.1 Validity and Reliability of the Study	16
3.0 THEORY AND HYPOTHESES GENERATION	18
3.1 Tone in Communication	18
3.1.1 Personal vs. Private	19
3.1.2 Interactivity	19
3.1.3 Importance of the Sender	20
3.2 Politics as Brands and Advertising?	21
3.2.1 How Efficient are Blogs, Really?	22
3.2.2 Credibility	23
3.2.3 Attitude.....	24
3.2.4 Voting Intention	25
3.2.5 Intention to Comment the Blog	25
3.2.6 Intention to Seek Information.....	26
3.2.7 WOM – Intentions	27
3.3 Signal Effects.....	28

3.3.1 Presence on Blogs.....	28
4.0 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS	30
4.1 Manipulation Control	30
4.1.1 Credibility of the Blogs	30
4.1.2 Official Tone.....	30
4.1.3 Personal Tone	31
4.2 Main Study.....	31
4.2.1 Credibility	31
4.2.2 Attitude.....	32
4.2.3 Voting Intention	32
4.2.4 Intention to Comment the Blog	33
4.2.5 Intention to Seek Information	33
4.2.6 WOM-Recommend.....	34
4.2.7 WOM-Talk.....	34
4.3 Signal Effects.....	35
4.3.1 Innovative.....	35
4.3.2 New Thinking.....	35
4.3.3 Modern.....	35
4.3.4 Leading	36
4.3.5 Smart	36
4.4. Summary of Results of Hypothesis Testing	37
4.5 Multiple Linear Regression	38
4.5.1 Party X	38
4.5.2 A Kanjelin.....	39
5.0 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS	39
5.1 Credibility	40
5.2 Attitude.....	41
5.3 Voting Intention	43
5.4 Intention to Comment the Blog	43
5.5 Intention to Seek Information.....	43
5.6 WOM-Intentions.....	44
5.7 Signal Effects.....	45

5.8 Multiple Linear Regression	46
5.9 Criticism	46
5.10 Future Research.....	47
5.11 Management Implications.....	48
5.11.1 Choice of Tone.....	49
5.11.2 Blogs, One of Many Potential Platforms	49
5.11.3 The Dialogue, an Opportunity and a Risk.....	50
5.11.4 Concluding Remarks	50
6.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY	51
7.0 APPENDIX	58

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The 19th of September 2010 the people of Sweden will be going to the ballots to vote for the Swedish Parliament, county councils and municipal councils. Because of the upcoming election, political parties are engaging in intense campaign work, trying to communicate their beliefs and opinions to voters. Since the last election in 2006, a new way of campaigning has emerged – social media. Thanks to the internet, political parties have gained access to new channels to reach voters, and voters have gained access to new channels to reach the parties – for example through the interactivity of Facebook. However, social media and internet also pose challenges to the political parties, with the communication cycles becoming shorter, and an increasing difficulty for the parties to control the information being spread online, both by their own representatives and by others.

Despite the rapidly increasing use of and buzz about social media, there seems to be confusion regarding how to handle the phenomenon. “No one knows exactly how to work with social media regarding political parties in Sweden, everybody goes with their gut feeling.” (Gerdin 2010) Political parties are now realizing the increasing importance of social media, hiring people to work exclusively with social media. Despite this, there is an absence of research in the academic area, and also in the professional, with facts and experience lacking. When looking at different politicians’ presence on social media one notices that there seems to be different opinions regarding how to use this channel of communication. Some politicians are personal in their communication (like the party leader Göran Hägglund), some are more official (like the foreign minister Carl Bildt), some let colleagues be in charge of the communication (like the party leader Mona Sahlin) and some are more or less not present at all (like the minister Nyamko Sabuni). Even though there seems to be a very large buzz about social media, the praxes for using them seem to differ between politicians. In sum, some politicians are not active at all, while a majority has realized the importance of social media. However, even among the ones active on social media, strategies are very different. With this in mind, we found it important to do a study that to some extent can give guidelines regarding how to use social media in a political context.

1.1 Background

“In the long run, I believe that social media will change how we create politics.” (Brynolf 2010)

The rise of social media is by many seen as a paradigm shift, with extensive implications both for the way we communicate and for democracy (Ingemarsdotter 2010). Why then, is social media seen as such a change in communication? To explain the novelty of social media, one could compare it to mass media,

the communication form that has been predominant until today. With mass media, there is one single sender, who sends a message to multiple recipients, who have no possibility to answer through the same channel. TV is a good example of a mass medium. With social media, many communicate to many, and every single recipient of a message can also send messages through the same channels and on the same terms. The academic definition of social media is “channels of communication that allow users to communicate directly to each other through for example, text, image or sound.”¹

The political parties in Sweden have clearly realized the importance of this new way to communicate. Many of the individuals currently working with social media strategies for the political parties represented in the Swedish parliament state that they believe that social media will play an important role in the upcoming election (Henriksson 2010, Gerdin 2010, Gabrielsson, 2010). Some even argue that it will be essential for the electoral results (Gabrielsson 2010). This hypothesis has gained further support from journalists who during the fall of 2009 reported that “Social media was essential for the electoral outcome”² (an article referring to the previously held election in Norway) as well as having written that “This year’s election campaign will, more than ever before, take place on the internet.”³

Today, there is not a single party that has not got a fan site on Facebook, and many of the party leaders also have individual fan sites. Many politicians use Twitter as a way of communicating to voters and people who influence public opinion, with Göran Hägglund, the party leader Gudryn Schyman and the member of the Swedish Parliament, Fredrik Federley often mentioned as skilled Twitter-users (Gerdin 2010, Sundén 2010, Brynolf 2010). There are also several prominent political bloggers, like Carl Bildt, Fredrik Federley and the minister Birgitta Ohlsson. Many political parties have blog networks, like the Social Democrats’ S-blogger, the Centre Party’s centerpartiet.net, and the Green Party of Sweden’s Gröna blogger. All political parties have their own channels on YouTube, and frequently link to the video content in other contexts.

That social media represents a new way to communicate is today more or less an undisputed fact. However, since social media is a new phenomenon, there still is some uncertainty as to what channels are the most important ones in terms of communicating to voters. When asked to rank the five most important social media channels, the most common answers were blogs, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr (Brynolf 2010, Henriksson 2010, Gabrielsson 2010). Facebook is the largest channel, with more

¹ <http://www.ne.se/lang/sociala-medier>, retrieved 2010-08-18

² http://www.svd.se/nyheter/utrikes/sociala-medier-avgjorde-valet_3524735.svd, retrieved 2010-03-25

³ http://www.svd.se/naringsliv/it/sociala-medier-ny-pr-kanal_4030785.svd retrieved 2010-01-25

than three million users in Sweden today.⁴ Twitter is still a rather small medium in Sweden, with users often working within media and PR (Gelin 2010, Henriksson 2010). YouTube is a channel where political parties put content that they then link to from websites and blogs, and not so much a channel in its own right (Brynolf 2010). Flickr is still such a small medium that it cannot be compared to the likes of Facebook, and furthermore it primarily allows for photo content and little text.⁵ Regarding blogs, there are many types of blogs, with the more popular themes being photo, humor, interior design, music, children, fashion and politics.⁶ The first blogs started to appear in the mid 1990ies, when they more looked like online journals, not allowing for much interactivity. In the end of the 1990ies, the popularity of blogs increased rapidly, allowing for updates from mobile phones, and also for extensive interactivity, with possibilities to comment and link to different blogs in your own. According to a study made by the global media agency Universal McCann in 2008, almost 190 million people have started a blog.⁷

Despite the many channels available, blogs are by many perceived as most important when striving to influence public opinion and the news flow. As stated by many communication strategists, one competitive advantage with the blog compared to other forms of social media is that the writer has the possibility to write long posts, and not just a few sentences, which is a way of communicating that especially politicians are fond of (Gabrielsson 2010, Gerdin, 2010). Another benefit mentioned is that blogs engage and reach many (Henriksson 2010, Brynolf 2010). Furthermore, academics that have studied the outcome in the American election in 2004, have also stated that they believe blogs will become an almost standardized communication instrument in the future electoral campaigns. They also found that blogs clearly have an impact on how voters feel about politics as well as influence their opinions about politics (Lawson-Borders & Kirk 2005). Other scholars have showed that blogs have a positive effect on voters' political engagement and participation online through contributing to an increased confidence for the political candidates and parties communicating through blogs (Gil De Zuniga et al. 2009). With this in mind, we identified blogs as the most important social media channel for the political parties in their work with the electoral campaigns.

1.2 Problem Area

Within the field of political communication there already exist accepted theories regarding how to adapt the communication optimally to different contexts and goals. For awareness and knowledge, informative

⁴ <http://www.joinsimon.se/facebook-sverige-2010/>

⁵ www.flickr.com

⁶ <http://www.bloggtoppen.se/teman/>

⁷ <http://www.ne.se/lang/blogg>, retrieved 2010-08-17

messages through media is vital, but for the actual decision making situation, personal communication is more important (Chaffe & Mutz 1988), which is also confirmed by some studies of political campaigns (Asp 1986). In this context, personal communication refers to communication between people in a voter's immediate surroundings, like co-workers, family and friends. Despite the extensive research in the field of political communication, there is no research about whether these theories are applicable on social media. This was confirmed in our preparatory research, as illustrated by this quote; "Important academic research in this field is at this point in time, lacking." (Henriksson 2010) One possible explanation for this might be that the phenomenon is still very new. This partly implies that people actively working with social media strategies today, to a certain extent lack knowledge, since they do not have past experience to ground their strategies upon. Furthermore, today there are not many tools for analysis and evaluation available, which means that people working with social media, in addition to crafting strategies, often are questioned regarding the efficiency of these strategies and social media.

Despite the lack of academic knowledge, there are numerous consultants within the field of communication that provide the political social media strategists with guidelines for how to communicate and use social media in electoral campaigns. A majority of these consultants highlights the importance of being active and working interactively with social media, since they believe that this work will be of great importance for this year's election outcome in Sweden.⁸ However, there are also academics that instead question the relevance and importance of social media, and state that traditional election posters are of greater importance.⁹ Our preparatory research showed that many of the consultants have no academic proof for their recommendations regarding how to use social media, and that they instead base their recommendations on their gut feeling and experiences from work with other communication channels.

Academic research in the area of political communication within a social media context is yet unexplored, and there seem to be different opinions on how to actually use social media as well as a variety of praxes. We thus decided to apply some of the existing theories about political communication as well as advertising and marketing when exploring the use of social media. More specifically we are interested in what tone one should have when communicating through blogs, and what effects different tones have on certain marketing efficiency measures. This area of research is increasingly relevant since we today see many examples of politicians that communicate with a highly personal tone as well as politicians that phrase themselves in a strictly official way. There are even examples of politicians that

⁸See for instance <http://www.jmw.se/category/valrorelsen-2010/>

⁹<http://www.expressen.se/debatt/1.1848303/mer-krut-i-valaffischer-an-twitter-och-bloggar>, retrieved 2010-03-02

sometimes touch upon a private way of communicating. An explanation of this difference will follow below. A quantitative study of the effects is said to be of great interest among the people currently working with political social media strategies (Henriksson 2010, Ingemarsdotter 2010, Gabrielsson 2010, Westerberg 2010, Schiff 2010, Brynolf 2010), further motivating our study.

1.3 Purpose

The main purpose of this thesis is to examine and create further knowledge about how to communicate within a political context in a social media setting. Hopefully we will be able to come up with some recommendations regarding this matter. Thus, the aim is to provide guidelines to whether a personal tone or an official tone of communication has the most positive effects on a number of efficiency measures, when communicating with voters through blogs.

As a peripheral purpose, we strive to investigate if there are any additional effects in terms of signal effects based on the knowledge that a political party is active on social media. Can a voter perceive a political party as more innovative or modern solely based on knowing that this party is present on social media, even though this voter has not been exposed to the content of the message?

1.4 Intended Contribution

Social media is a rather novel, though increasingly important concept within the field of marketing. However, the phenomenon is to a large extent yet unexplored. As noted earlier, despite the extensive research in the field of political communication, there is no research applying these theories to social media, notwithstanding the wide-ranging use of them by political parties today. Ideally, this study will create new knowledge regarding the use of the social media in a political context through the application and use of traditional theories in this new context.

From a more practical point of view, we hope that this thesis will help users of social media to better understand how to explore and make use of social media, and blogs in particular. Moreover, given that social media is becoming a more frequently used marketing tool, we hope that our research will contribute to a better understanding of the limitations, risks but most importantly, the possibilities offered.

1.5 Delimitations

Firstly, this thesis will only analyze blogs and not other forms of social media. Therefore, the findings may not be directly applicable to other forms of social media. Blogs were chosen because of their unique function in a political setting, as argued above.

Secondly, we only look at the differential effects on efficiency measures as a result of a personal versus an official tone of communication. Another possibility could have been to look at the difference between a private and personal tone. However, a conclusion from our preparatory research is that the result of such a study would not have been of as much interest as the one pursued, since a great majority of politicians and strategists are very negative towards a private in communication. The discussion among communication consultants and other social media experts is currently mainly based on the comparison of personal and official tone – a private tone simply was not an option.

Thirdly, when choosing the measures of efficiency to study, we chose to look at attitude, credibility and different kinds of intentions, constituting the last steps of the hierarchy of effects, as well as potential signal effects. Thus, we do not analyse category interest nor brand knowledge, also important links in the hierarchy of effects. Brand knowledge, in this case, for the study specially created political party, Party X, would, due to its fictive nature, have been difficult to analyse. One could have looked more closely at the aspect of category interest; however, we argue that it is already prevalent in the case of political communication, since a great majority of Swedes is interested in politics, with 80.4% of the population voting in the 2006 election.¹⁰

We have furthermore chosen to study the Swedish political landscape, which in many ways is different compared to, for example, the American political landscape where voters first must register prior to actually voting. Thus, our results may not be directly applicable to other democratic systems, at least not in terms of voting intention.

Finally, given the difficulty of observing actual behaviour, we can, with our experimental approach, only estimate intentions and not real actions (in terms of WOM, and voting for instance). The actual voting behaviour is further made difficult to study since both the political party described as well as the person writing the posts are fictive.

1.6 Definitions

Blog: an online journal. A typical blog consists of regular written posts with views on currently interesting events and information, often with links to other related webpages, articles and blogs, and sometimes with images and/or videos. (Nationalencyklopedin 2010)

Facebook: a website for net-based community and networking, founded in 2004. To a large extent, Facebook consists of its users' profiles, which are linked together through different networks, through

¹⁰ <http://www.val.se/val/val2006/valnatt/R/rike/roster.html>, retrieved 2010-08-18

which the interactivity takes place. When counting the number of users, Facebook is one of the ten biggest websites in the world. (Nationalencyklopedin 2010)

Flickr: a website for uploading pictures and video clips for private or public use, founded in 2004. The site is also a community, where users can add friends, follow their uploads, and comment on their pictures. (Nationalencyklopedin 2010)

Interactivity: two- and multiple-way communication.

Mass media: a channel where one sender broadcasts a message to numerous recipients, which cannot respond through the same channel. Examples are TV and radio. (Nationalencyklopedin 2010)

Social media: channels of communication that allow users to communicate directly to each other through for example, text, image or sound. All users can send messages on the same terms and through the same channels. (Nationalencyklopedin 2010)

Tone: describes the tone of content and language of communication.

Twitter: a web based service for social networking, founded in 2006. It consists of micro blogs, on which the user can publish text messages, *tweets*, which cannot be longer than 140 characters. (Nationalencyklopedin 2010)

Word-of-mouth (WOM): The act of consumers providing information to other consumers. (WOMMA 2010)

Word-of-mouth marketing: Giving people a reason to talk about a company's products and services, and making it easier for that conversation to take place. (WOMMA 2010)

YouTube: a website for distribution and consumption of video clips, founded in 2005. The original thought behind YouTube was to give users a possibility to share video clips made by themselves, but the site rapidly developed towards containing professionally produced content, albeit added by private users. (Nationalencyklopedin, 2010)

1.7 Disposition

This thesis is divided into five main chapters. Following the introduction above, we will present the methodology used to carry out the experiment in the study. The initial work, experiment design, selection of respondents and execution of the pilot and main study as well as the study of signal effects

will also be presented here, as well as a discussion about the reliability of the study. In the third part, the theories chosen for the study will be presented in depth, and the hypotheses tested for will follow. In the fourth chapter the results and analysis of the study will be found. The thesis will be concluded in chapter five with a discussion about the results and their implications, a critical review of the paper and suggestions for further research within this field.

2.0 METHOD

2.1 Choice of Subject

When starting to work with this thesis, we realized that we both shared the interest of the rise of social media. We met with Per Andersson, professor at Stockholm School of Economics (SSE), to discuss potential research areas of interest. Early on, we had noticed an increasing focus in media on the upcoming Swedish election and the use of social media in the electoral campaign. We again met with Per Andersson, who confirmed that this would be a topic of interest to examine. We then contacted Brit Stakston, Social Media Strategist at JMW, Magnus Wallin, consultant at Informedia Communications and Daniel Nüüd, project leader at Attraction – three strategists in the area of social media. This was done to obtain some additional and more specific views concerning which research question to focus on. Based on the discussions with the above mentioned individuals, we chose to study the *tone* used in political communication in a social media setting.

When the choice of subject had been made, we contacted Staffan Rundberg, librarian at the Stockholm School of Economics Library, since we found it difficult to find academic research within the chosen area. He made several attempts to help us find academic literature connected to our research question and later reported that there did not seem to be any relating specifically to the tone in the political communication within the social media context, and little research regarding social media in general. However, he did raise the question of this being a result of SSE only having access to databases that were mainly within the area of economics and business, while our subject could be seen as more within media and communication. Because of this, we decided to also use the databases of Stockholm University, since that gave us the possibility to broaden our search to the areas of media, communication and political communication. However, despite doing thorough research in these databases, we could not find any academic research on our chosen subject. We thought this further motivated the need for research and started studying related theories within the area of communication, advertising, branding and word-of-mouth.

To further understand and gain insight into the world of social media, we participated in a seminar held by the communication firm JMW the 18th of February 2010 on the subject of “The Election and the Social Media”, and at a conference held by the consulting firm Disruptive Media the 25th of March 2010, exploring return of investments in social media. We also attended a seminar organized by the Trust for Legal Information, the 27th of April 2010, relating to the legal aspects of using the social media, and the consequences of authorities, companies, organizations and the public using social media, both as producers and consumers.

2.2 Choice of Scientific Approach

This thesis is of a deductive character, since our hypotheses were formulated based on *existing* theory within the fields of advertising, communication and branding (Christensen et al. 2001). Furthermore, we are analyzing the correlation between being exposed to two different tones of communication and the reactions that this elicits, which means that this thesis is of a causal character.

When writing the blogs, our aim was to make them look as real, existing blogs. For obvious reasons this was difficult, since we chose a fictive party and politician to avoid political convictions interfering with the results. However, based on our pre-study, the respondents did perceive both blogs as being similar to existing ones. Since respondents read the blogs in a real setting, in front of their own computers, with the setting being “synonymous with actual market conditions”, the experiment is of a field environment character (Malhotra 2004, p. 222).

Since we want to find conclusions that are possible to generalize, we chose a quantitative approach instead of the qualitative one. However, since there is little existing theory in our chosen area of research, we also conducted a number of interviews, which was a part of the preparatory work. Thus, even though a large number of in depth interviews might be typical for a qualitative thesis, this one is still of a clear quantitative nature.

2.3 Interviews

As stated before, early on in the process we realized that the academic literature covering important aspects of our chosen focus of study was very limited. In order to try and understand *how* and *why* politicians of today use social media as they do, we interviewed the strategists helping them. Another purpose with this was to get these strategists’ opinions regarding what would be of most interest for us to examine. We thus started contacting key persons working for the parties currently represented in the Swedish Parliament, persons working with social media strategies. As a complement, we also decided to contact a person working commercially with social media, as well as a professor at JMG (Department of

Journalism, Media and Communication), Gothenburg University. The reasons for choosing these interviewees were that we after doing thorough research, came to the conclusion that they are experts within their areas of expertise, and for those working for the political parties, they were the ones the most accountable for the success/failure of the work with social media. Below, a short presentation of interviewees will follow.

Person	Position	Party	Date
Simon Sundén	Digital director at Honesty	-	18/3-10
Bengt Johansson	Professor and prefect at JMG, researcher in political communication	-	20/4-10
Martin Gelin	Responsible for new media for the RedGreen alliance and editor for rodgron.se	RedGreen alliance	1/4-10
Hampus Brynolf	Election strategist responsible for social media	S	31/3-10
Tommy Gabrielsson	Press secretary responsible for new media	V	24/3-10
Johan Schiff	Web director	MP	30/4-10
Cina Gerdin	Communications manager	KD	19/3-10
Niki Westerberg	Editor	FP	24/3-10
Ulrika Ingemarsdotter	Project leader for social media	C	23/3-10
Pär Henriksson	Communications manager	M	31/3-10

The interviews were on average 60 minutes long. All interviews, except two, were held in person and were also recorded. We were both present during the interviews that were conducted in person. The recorded interviews were later transcribed, and the transliterated interviews were sent to the interviewees for approval. The two interviews not conducted in person but per telephone, could not have been done in person since the interviewee in one case, lived in Gothenburg, and in the second case, did not have time to meet with us. In total, we conducted ten interviews during a period of time starting in March and continuing on until the end of April. For an overview of the asked questions, see appendix.

2.4 A Brief Introduction to the Experiment

In order to facilitate for the reader and to enhance the understanding of the following descriptions of the experiment design and how the study was carried out, a brief introduction to the experiment will now follow. Note however that this simply is a brief introduction and that the experiment will be discussed more in depth below.

The main purpose of the thesis is, as stated earlier, to create knowledge about how to communicate within a political context in a social media setting, using blogs as the chosen medium. In order to test this, we created a fictive party named Party X, as well as a representative for the party called A Kanjelin. The fictive nature was preferred to enable us to avoid effects due to party-political sympathies. Two fictive blogs, belonging to Party X and A Kanjelin were created through the use of the publishing platform wordpress.com. In one of the blogs, the representative was called Anna Kanjelin, and the aim with this blog was to simulate a personal tone of communication in the posts written. In the second blog, the representative was instead called Annika Kanjelin, striving for an official tone of communication. The reason for the two different names was simply that we needed two different addresses for the blogs. (annakanjelin.wordpress.com, annikakanjelin.wordpress.com)

2.5 Pilot Study of the Blogs

In order to make sure that our chosen stimuli were credible, i.e. that the posts on the blogs were perceived as authentic, and that the stimuli delivered what we wished, i.e. a personal respectively an official tone, we firstly conducted a pilot study. For this study, we created two blogs, one of Anna Kanjelin and one of Annika Kanjelin, containing three posts each with, what we tried to formulate, vastly different tones. The creation of stimuli material was inspired by the stimuli created by Thorson & Rogers in their study about interactivity on blogs (Thorson & Rogers 2006). For the two different blogs, see appendix. When writing the posts for Anna's blog, striving for a personal tone, we carefully studied existing political blogs containing what could be characterized as personal posts, for instance Fredrik Federley's blog. Similarly, when formulating the posts for the official blog of Annika, we studied for instance Carl Bildt's blog. Thus, Anna's blog described thoughts and beliefs about personal and politically related issues in a very personal way whilst Annika's blog strictly focused on the factual questions, with an official tone.

We created two identical surveys at www.freeonlinesurvey.com, and placed the link to a questionnaire in the bottom of the last post in the two blogs. The questionnaire contained eleven questions regarding the reading experience, and the respondents were asked to give their opinion about statements like

“The blog was credible”, “The tone in the blog was personal” and “The tone in the blog was official”. The respondents graded their answers on a Likert scale ranging from 1-7, where 1 indicated that they did not agree at all and 7 signified that they agreed completely. The questionnaires consisted of structured questions with closed-ended answering spaces (Malhotra 2004). In total, a number of 40 respondents contributed with their ratings. The chosen sample of respondents was a so called “convenience sample”, (Malhotra 2004) consisting of students at SSE, friends from our networks on Facebook, and family members, who received the link through e-mail. We then compared the mean scores for the questions relating to the tone of the communication. These results indicated that our respondents had perceived a difference in tone since the mean score on “The tone in the blog was personal” was $\bar{x} = 5.15$ for the readers of Anna’s blog (personal) as compared to $\bar{x} = 3.45$ for the readers of Annika’s blog (official). Furthermore, the results indicated that the readers of Anna’s blog graded “The tone in the blog was official” as $\bar{x} = 1.65$ in comparison to the readers of Annika’s blog who graded this particular question $\bar{x} = 4.80$. Lastly, the readers tended to rate “The blog was credible” as $\bar{x} = 4.25$ for Anna’s blog, and $\bar{x} = 5.1$ for Annika’s. Thus, to conclude, our blogs fulfilled the above mentioned criteria of authenticity and perceived difference in tone.

2.6 Main Study

The stimuli in the main study were the two blogs that previously had been tested in the pilot study, and a survey was created using the program Qualtrics Survey Software, provided by SSE. In order to collect respondents, we sent out e-mails with a short description of the survey and the purpose of answering it. This e-mail was sent to students in their first and fourth year of studies at SSE, as well as to family and friends through the use of Facebook. We also tweeted the link to the survey on Twitter. In total, we collected 123 respondents for the blog with a personal tone while the blog with an official tone in total gained 100 respondents. The average age of our participants was 26.6 years, and of these, 18 % were working, 81 % were students and 1 % was retired. Furthermore, 49 % were female and 51 % were male. According to Malhotra (2004), our sample is a so called convenience sample, which is defined as “... a nonprobability sampling technique that attempts to obtain a sample of convenient elements. The selection of sampling units is left primarily to the interviewer.” (Malhotra 2004, p. 321) Some scholars argue that convenience samples are not representative for the population at large, however Söderlund (2010) points out that when testing *theory*, that theory is expressed in a universal way and is not valid or invalid for either randomly collected samples or samples collected any other way – and then it does not matter what sample you use to test your theory (Söderlund 2010).

The answers from the main survey were treated in SPSS and below follows a summary of the variables tested for:

Attitude: This variable was chosen since it is an important part of the hierarchy of effects (presented more in depth below), and the one immediately preceding buying (voting) intention. In order to measure the attitude towards the political Party X and A Kanjelin, the respondents were asked to rate the following variables; *good*, *like* and *positive*, which constitute three well known and tested parameters for estimating attitude (Söderlund 2001). These were added together to make an index called *attitude*, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.927 for Party X and 0.904 for A Kanjelin.

Credibility: This variable was chosen since it has a great impact on attitude (see below), and because of it often being mentioned as important in the world of politics. The respondents were further asked to rate the level of perceived credibility of Party X and A Kanjelin. This was done through the use of the three parameters of *credible* (Asp 1986), *convincing* (McKenzie & Lutz 1989) and *honest* (Rodgers 2005). These variables were then added together to create an index, called *credible*. This index had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.836 for Party X and 0.851 for A Kanjelin.

Voting Intention: the extent to which the blogs spur an intention among readers to vote for the party or its representative.

"Current research is very focused on buying intention, and has not really allowed for any other intentions, except for WOM-intentions, but we know that other intentions exist. We must thus leave existing theory and list important behaviors regarding a certain activity." (Söderlund 2010). To measure to what extent the blogs incited an intention to vote for Party X/Kanjelin, the readers of the blogs were asked to rate this will on two parameters; "*I want to vote for Party X/A Kanjelin.*" and "*It is probable that I will vote for Party X/A Kanjelin.*" These measures are recommended by Söderlund and Öhman (2003) and were also used by Thorson and Rogers (2006). Thus, we tested for both intentions-as-wants as well as intentions-as-expectations in order to increase the reliability (Söderlund & Öhman 2003). An index called voting intention was created, with a bivariate correlation of 0.905 for Party X and 0.930 for A Kanjelin.

Note that consequently throughout this study, when testing for intentions, we used both the intentions-as-wants as well as intentions-as-expectations.

Intention to comment the blog: the extent to which the blogs spur an intention among readers to comment the posts that they have read.

Since it is generally difficult to attain significant results concerning voting intentions, we decided, in consultation with Magnus Söderlund, to also measure to what extent the blogs elicited an intention to comment the blogs. Furthermore, since a great majority of our interviewees stated that interactivity is one of the main advantages of social media, we found it important to examine this variable. However, since there already exists studies about how interactivity of a blog affects the attitude towards the political candidate (Thorson & Rodgers 2006), we wanted to study what influences interactivity.

The readers were asked to rate the blogs on the parameters of *“I want to comment on the blog.”* and *“It is probable that I will comment on the blog.”* An index called commenting intention was created, with a bivariate correlation of 0.832 for Party X and 0.914 for A Kanjelin.

Intention to seek information: the extent to which the blogs spur an intention among readers to seek further information about the political party or its representative.

Again, in consultation with Magnus Söderlund, we decided to test for the intention to seek information due to the difficulty related to trying to measure voting intentions. The respondents were asked to rate the blogs on the two parameters of *“I want to seek more information about Party X/A Kanjelin.”* and *“It is probable that I will seek more information about Party X/A Kanjelin.”* An index called seeking info intention was created, with a bivariate correlation of 0.833 for Party X and 0.845 for A Kanjelin.

WOM-intentions in terms of recommendations: Again, since it is allegedly difficult to achieve any significant results for measures of voting intention, we decided to further test for the intention to recommend. We believe this is an important variable to measure since it has been argued that, in a political context, we tend to listen carefully to the recommendations of those in our close proximity. Researchers state, for instance, that the diffusion of *political attitudes* is based on interpersonal transmission of ideas and exposure to mass media, and furthermore that an important variable influencing voting intentions is interpersonal groups such as family, close friends and colleagues (Singh et al. 1995). The variable of WOM-intentions in terms of recommendations therefore seems to be an important variable to test for, since it has an indirect effect on other imperative variables.

For WOM-intention in the form of recommendation, readers of the blogs were asked to rate them on the two parameters of *“I want to recommend Party X/A Kanjelin to a friend.”* and *“It is probable I that will recommend Party X/A Kanjelin to a friend.”* An index called WOMRecommend was created, with a bivariate correlation of 0.835 for Party X and 0.910 for A Kanjelin.

WOM-intentions in terms of talking: As a complement to the WOM-measure of recommendation, we also decided to test for the intention to talk. For WOM-intention in the form of talk, readers of the blogs were asked to rate them on the two parameters of *“I want to talk about Party X/A Kanjelin.”* and *“It is probable I will talk about Party X/A Kanjelin.”* An index called WOMTalk was created, with a bivariate correlation of 0.774 for Party X and 0.829 for A Kanjelin.

The reason for including both WOM-intentions in form of recommendations and talking is primarily to make a distinction between the two. Furthermore, WOM-intentions in the form of recommendations is a well established measure of WOM (Kocken & Skoghagen 2009), and WOM-intentions in the form of talk is a measure used in several studies (Kocken & Skoghagen 2009, Lethagen & Modig 2008, Fallenius & Karlsson 2007).

2.7 Study of Potential Signal Effects

As a peripheral purpose, we also wanted to study whether there could be any potential signal effects evoked by the simple *knowledge* of that the political party is active on social media. In order to examine this particular effect, we created two information squares with blue frames and black printing in an attempt to make them look authentic, describing the political Party X (see appendix). When designing the information squares, we cautiously studied other parties currently present in Sweden in order to assure the realism in the description of the fictional party. We wanted the party to be credible, but not too similar to a real political party of today so that respondents would believe that it was a text about a party they already had some knowledge about and experience of. The goal was to minimize the risk of political sympathies having an impact on the results. The texts both contained information regarding the number of members of the political party, as well as a short history and a detailed description of the party's communication strategy in the upcoming election. In one of the squares, the communication strategy described traditional media only, such as television and newspapers, while the other square, in addition to the part with the traditional media, also described social media channels used. Thus, the only difference between the two boxes was the part describing the social media.

A survey was again created using Qualtrics Survey Software. This survey contained in total five short questions regarding how the reader perceived the party, for instance the perceived level of modernity of the party and the perceived level of innovation. In total, 121 respondents participated, with 59 reading the information containing both traditional and mass media, and 62 reading information only about mass media. The respondents were again asked to rate their level of agreement with the statement on a scale ranging from 1-7. The variables tested for, *innovative, new thinking, modern, leading* and *smart*

were chosen since they had been recognized by some of our interviewees to be potential effects, as well as variables that in general have been acknowledged as important in a political campaign or else as common signal effects. An overview of these variables follows below:

1. **Innovative:** That being present on social media could mean that a political party is perceived as being *innovative*, is something argued by many of our interviewees (Gelin 2010, Gerdin 2010, Schiff 2010) and we therefore believed it would be an important variable to examine.
2. **New Thinking:** As a way to further examine which associations our respondents had for Party X, we asked them to rate the level of *new thinking* (Granlund & Grönros, 2007) they believed Party X represented.
3. **Modern:** Furthermore, again related to associations and potential signal effects evoked by the knowledge of Party X being present on social media the respondents rated the perceived level of *modernity* (Granlund & Grönros 2007) of Party X.
4. **Leading:** In line with the above arguing about potential signal effects, we also chose to ask our respondents to grade Party X on the parameter of being *leading* (Kocken & Skoghagen 2009).
5. **Smart:** Lastly, the respondents also had to decide whether they believed Party X was *smart* (Granlund & Grönros 2007).

The results were statistically analyzed using the statistical software SPSS, and we conducted independent samples t-tests to examine the differences. The link for the survey was e-mailed to friends and family on Facebook, as well as third year students at SSE.

We wish to make the reader aware of the fact that we only tested the potential signal effects for the political party, in this case Party X, and not the party's representatives. The reason for this is that, in general, single individuals do not usually use traditional media as a way to communicate in an election due to the high costs associated with using it. Furthermore, the Swedish political landscape is more about factual questions and less about individuals (Sundén 2010). Thus, we decided that it would be more realistic to only test for the political party.

2.7.1 Validity and Reliability of the Study

Reliability

Reliability concerns how credible the measurement itself is (Söderlund 2001). This implies that one should attain similar results if the same experiment was to be carried out again (Malhotra 2004). To test

whether the measurement is reliable, one wishes to test that the used measures are internally consistent. By using established multiple questions measures from previous research, that all yielded high Cronbach's alphas, the internal consistency in our study is considered satisfactory. Questions that were added or slightly modified, for instance regarding intentions, were discussed and approved by our tutors, and were created in consultation with Magnus Söderlund, to ensure that they measured what we wanted them to measure.

The questionnaires and blogs were written in Swedish, simply since the study was addressed to Swedes. We believe that this further safeguards against random errors due to not understanding the questions. We also let a number of friends and family members assess the difficulty in understanding the questions by having them read through our survey and discussing potential problems before e-mailing it to our respondents. The questionnaire was also rather short, and not very time consuming. We believe this ought to benefit the reliability of the study as interruptions, fatigue and disturbance could be minimized.

Validity

Validity is an estimation of how well you measure what you actually intend to measure. Thus, the notion of validity further looks at to what extent the study is free from systematic errors (Söderlund 2001). The reliability of the experiment is dependent on its external and internal validity, which often is conflicting implying that one have to consider the tradeoff between the internal and external validity (Malhotra 2004).

The internal validity refers to whether the manipulation of the independent variable actually caused the effects on the dependent variable (Malhotra 2004). We believe that since the questionnaires were randomly distributed, and since all respondents were given the same information regarding the study, potential differences between respondent groups should have been neutralized. Furthermore, by having created a fictional political party and representative, we further hope to have eliminated the risk of political sympathies. What we could not control however, is when and where the respondents answered the questionnaire, which might have had an impact upon the result. However, we argue that the other controls as mentioned above still certify a high level of internal validity.

The external validity on the other hand, refers to the extent to which the causal relationships found can be generalized. Given that our survey was created in a "natural environment"; on the internet, and created through an established and well known blog portal, and explicitly designed to resemble existing blogs, we believe that it increased the generalizability and also satisfied the criteria of external validity. What one should notice, is that our respondents did not actually have a choice regarding which blog to

read, and how to assimilate the information, in this case on a blog in particular. This could potentially reduce the generalizability, since it would have been preferable to invite only respondents that on a regular basis optionally chose to read blogs to take part in the study. However, we still believe that the execution of the study safeguards a sufficient level of external validity.

3.0 THEORY AND HYPOTHESES GENERATION

Below, the theories used to generate our hypotheses will be presented. This chapter begins with a brief discussion of some of the important aspects that are, sometimes unique to social media, and sometimes simply of high relevance to fully understand the phenomenon. Since social media to many is such a novel area, we wish to start off by giving the reader an overview of relevant theory – to get a general understanding of the area. Following this, the theories used to generate our hypotheses will be presented.

3.1 Tone in Communication

“I believe a personal tone will generate the best result.” (Westerberg 2010)

The ultimate goal of political communication is to convince voters to vote for a certain party or person. It is widely accepted that a meeting taking place between two people in real life; personal influence, is most effective regarding influencing the actual voting decision (Gelin 2010, Lazarsfeld et al. 1968, Klapper 1964). Messages sent through media, even though they might be of a persuasive nature, are more effective for increasing awareness and knowledge, and not that effective in influencing voting intention and behavior (Johansson 1998, Chaffe & Mutz 1988). According to Johansson (2010), “You get the information through the media, but decisions are influenced by people in your surroundings.” However, politicians use channels of communication like TV, print and social media, with the goal of trying to persuade people to vote for them, simply because a personal meeting with all voters is not possible. Some scholars suggest that mass media messages that closely resemble communication between two persons may increase credibility and persuasiveness of the message sent (Beninger 1987), which is why we argue that a personal tone is preferable. Furthermore, a personal tone is more effective when striving to create a relationship with the recipient, and a great majority of all our interviewees stated that a personal tone elicits the most positive responses (Westerberg 2010, Brynolf 2010, Ingemarsdotter 2010).

It is important to mention that the strategists from the two largest political parties, Moderaterna and the Social Democrats, voiced the opinion that a personal tone might not always be the recommendation for

everyone. Pär Henriksson (Moderaterna) stated that there are more regulations that ministers in government have to follow, which might limit the freedom they have in their communication. He also claimed that ministers in the Swedish Government cannot push their own agenda to the same extent as politicians currently in opposition, since the ministers in the Government have to be responsible for the entire Government's decisions which include decisions made by ministers from other political parties. This would mean that politicians belonging to the parties currently in power should be personal to a less extent than politicians currently in opposition – they cannot voice their own personal opinions to the same extent. Brynolf (the Social Democrats) stated that a prime minister should not be on Twitter, for example, claiming that he did not find it appropriate that a prime minister spends two hours of his or her day on Twitter, and since the leader of the Social Democrats, Mona Sahlin is being presented as a prime minister candidate, neither should she. There thus seems to be a difference in the attitude towards tone regarding what “level” the politician is on, if he or she is a minister or for example running for the Swedish Parliament. However, in general, a great majority of all our interviewees seemed to favor a personal tone (Gerdin 2010; Brynolf 2010; Gelin 2010; Westerberg 2010; Sundén 2010; Ingemarsdotter 2010).

3.1.1 Personal vs. Private

“Be personal, but not private” (Stakston 2010¹¹)

There is an important distinction to be made between a *personal* and *private* tone. When asked about the difference in tone of these two tones of communication, Gerdin (2010) stated that to tell readers about one's marital problems would be a private matter, but when Göran Hägglund posts on Twitter that he “went for a run through the city before participating in the morning news program on TV4”, he is keeping the tone personal. The importance of being personal but not private was emphasized in many of our interviews (Brynolf 2010, Gerdin 2010, Westerberg 2010). Despite it being potentially difficult to make a clear distinction between the two tones, this was not perceived as being a problem by the people we interviewed, and there seemed to be a general opinion that politicians are skilled at making this distinction. There was also a general belief that politicians in general are good at realizing that a private tone is no good (Gerdin 2010).

3.1.2 Interactivity

“I believe that is the purpose with the social media, the dialogue. It is most important to get to know the politician.” (Westerberg 2010)

¹¹ <http://www.jmw.se/category/valrorelsen-2010> retrieved 2010-07-14

“It is the dialogue that is the new thing, what is actually the contribution is the possibility to have a dialogue.” (Brynolf 2010)

Today, many marketers agree that advertising clutter poses a major problem (Rosengren 2008). The term clutter is generally used to denote “the high level of marketing messages surrounding most consumers” (Rosengren 2008, p. 28), and has furthermore been defined as “the perceived excess of advertising messages within a medium” (Ibid.). Researchers have found that clutter reduces attention, processing and memory for advertising and as the number of advertising messages increases, so do consumers’ ad avoiding behaviors (Rosengren 2008). As a consequence, many researchers today advocate a modern form of marketing, grounded on the principles of interaction, relationship creation and increased transparency (Christensen et al. 2008, Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004). With this in mind, social media could offer strategists a new way to achieve interactivity.

3.1.3 Importance of the Sender

“I think that if you are to work with social media as a politician or as a company, the most important thing is that there is a personal sender of everything.” (Gabrielsson 2010)

Finally, one also has to be aware of the importance of who is the sender of the messages, in our case authors of the blogs. There was total consensus among the strategists we interviewed regarding that it is vital that there can be no confusion whatsoever regarding who is the sender of a message. This can be illustrated by when Maud Olofsson of the Centre Party sent her press secretary to chat with readers on Aftonbladet.se, in her name. The people chatting were under the impression that it was Maud Olofsson who was behind the keyboard, since all her posts were signed with her name.¹² When this became known, Maud Olofsson and her press secretary had to publicly apologize, and the chat became known as the “fake chat”, even though all opinions presented by the press secretary were those of Maud Olofsson. As stated by Brynolf, this is “no good” (2010). According to our interviewees, it is perfectly fine that politicians have employees that write in their name, as long as this is obvious to the reader (Brynolf 2010). This often seems to be the choice of politicians with an official tone in their communication. An example of this can be found on the Facebook pages of Mona Sahlin and Maria Wetterstrand, where it is stated that the pages are updated by “people in Mona Sahlin’s immediate presence” and “Maria’s closest co-workers”. Thus, irrespective of whether politicians choose a personal or an official tone it is absolutely vital that there can be no misunderstandings regarding who is the sender of the messages.

¹² <http://www.dn.se/kultur-noje/maud-olofsson-lurade-aftonbladet-1.780109>, retrieved 2010-06-17
<http://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/article968835.ab>, retrieved 2010-06-17

3.2 Politics as Brands and Advertising?

"... it is a creation of brands that you get yourself into, as soon as you register for an account, and you have to understand that." (Gelin 2010)

As previously discussed, there is very little existing theory about social media in political communication. However, political communication is a phenomenon that in itself is *not* new. The channels of communication have however changed over time, going from a focus on for example campaign posters and election movies shown in cinemas, to online advertising and TV-commercials. Today, we see a strong development towards TV-advertising (Johansson 2010).

What *has* changed fundamentally is that there has been an increasing professionalization regarding political communication and campaign work (Negrine et al. 2007). When representatives for the Social Democrats hired American consultants in 1994, this was frowned upon by many, but today it is accepted (Johansson 2010). This increasing professionalization, combined with the increased importance of media and how political parties and their representatives appear in the media has led us to conclude that political parties and politicians to a large extent are seen as brands, and that communicating through social media is a way to maintain and enhance these brands.

"... I'm in Göran Hägglund's 'deciding meetings', that is, his directorate, I'm in that group because I'm also responsible for the brand." (Gerdin 2010)

Furthermore, researchers also state that: "And as more and more skills and techniques already developed in the area of business and commerce (e.g. marketing techniques, news media management, advertising etc.) and entertainment are progressively invading the area of politics, it makes sense to consider the continuous overlap between commerce and culture, commerce and politics." (Negrine et al. 2007, p. 23) Researchers furthermore state that: "There has been a substantial growth in the application of marketing and consumer behavior concepts and techniques in politics." (Singh et al. 1995)

Moreover, Smith concludes in his article *Conceptualizing and Testing Brand Personality in British Politics* that: "It is axiomatic that political parties are organizations in which politicians seek to exchange ideas and promises for electoral support, thus the steady stream of papers accepting political parties and or politicians as brands." (Kavanagh 1995, Kotler & Kotler 1999, White & de Chernatony 2002, Needham 2005, Smith 2009, p. 211) Smith continues with defining politics as: "a mutable, credence brand" (Smith

2009, p. 222). An article published in Svenska Dagbladet in 2010 further supports this view: “In today’s political climate, it has become more important with a winning political brand personality”.¹³

With this in mind, we looked to the field of branding, and found theory highly relevant for our chosen area. Furthermore, seeing political parties and politicians as brands, advertising theory also becomes interesting for analyzing political communication, which would be the advertising of politicians and political parties. This was also confirmed in our interviews.

“The role of social media in a political campaign is to a large extent marketing, if you say anything else, you lie a little.” (Brynolf 2010)

Even though there are important differences between commercial brands and politics and politicians as brands, for instance that parties differ from other brands in the complexity of their range of product offerings, and that the voters apart from many consumers, have to accept all or none of a party’s policies (Smith 2009) we still chose to apply this approach to further examine the effects.

3.2.1 How Efficient are Blogs, Really?

“Even if there is only a limited number of Swedes who read blogs on a daily basis, they are still extremely influential in the public opinion forming and in shaping the news flow.” (Gelin 2010)

Blogs are a phenomenon that has been around for quite some time now, and political blogs are more or less completely accepted as an important way of communicating with voters. As previously mentioned, blogs give politicians their own channel of communication, and they also give politicians the possibility to communicate through longer messages, than for example Facebook and Twitter. Blogs are considered to be a form of advertising, with content hoped to influence election outcomes (Thorson & Rodgers 2006).

To examine the impacts of blogs, we chose to look at some of the more established measures of efficiency. According to Dahlén & Lange (2003), their hierarchy of effects is applicable to all marketing communication, since it is based on other, well established models like Kotler’s Awareness-Knowledge-Liking-Preference-Conviction-Purchase-model as well as the AIDA-model (Awareness, Interest, Desire and Action) and DAGMAR (Defining Advertising Goals for Measured Advertising Results). We believe it is a model that quite extensively covers many others. It is presented below:

Category interest → brand knowledge → brand attitude → buying intention

¹³ http://www.svd.se/kulturnoje/understrecktet/valjarens-magkansla-avgor-valet_4975425.svd retrieved 2010-07-11

We have chosen to replace buying intention with voting intention, since this often is the ultimate goal with most political advertising. A parallel can be drawn to that a buy often is the ultimate goal with all marketing communication.

We will not look at *category interest*, arguing that political blogs are rarely a way to reach people not interested in politics, but rather a way to communicate to people that already have this category interest. Often, to read a blog, internet users actively search for it themselves, thus somehow already being aware of the blog's existence, and having an interest in finding it. Furthermore, there is, as mentioned above, a large interest in politics in Sweden, with 80.4 % of the population voting in the 2006 election.¹⁴ Thus, we conclude that category interest is already prevalent. We believe that there are two major reasons for not discussing *brand knowledge*, one relating to reality and one to our study. Firstly, we argue that despite perhaps not having in-depth knowledge about the politics of the different parties, most readers of political blogs possess some knowledge about the political party and its brand, thus having some brand knowledge. We are aware of the fact that readers of political blogs might be lacking knowledge about a certain politician, but we argue that all politicians to some extent are judged after what political party they represent. This would mean that assumptions made about a particular political party based on knowledge about that brand also to a certain extent extend to the representatives of that party. Secondly, in this study, we chose to use a fictive party/representative, to avoid political sympathies influencing respondents' answers. An effect of this is that knowledge about the party/representative was difficult to measure – how can you have an opinion about something you know nothing about?

3.2.2 Credibility

Credibility is one of the most important aspects of a persuasive message, and can quite often influence the outcome of it (Choi & Rifon 2003, Perloff 1993). The credibility of a source is vital for a message to attain the desired effect, and is directly related to consumer attitudes.¹⁵ Advertisements that *lack* credibility are often both ignored and sometimes avoided by consumers. Thus, for an advertisement to lead to purchase intention, it must be seen as credible by the consumer (Thorson 1996). That a message is perceived as credible would thus mean a greater chance of the receiver accepting it, in our case the voter. Scholars have suggested that an increased personalization of mass media, implying designing mass mediated communications that strongly bear a resemblance to interpersonal communication, may increase the credibility and persuasiveness of the message (Beninger 1987).

¹⁴ <http://www.val.se/val/val2006/valnatt/R/rike/roster.html>, retrieved 2010-08-18

¹⁵ http://www.allbusiness.com/marketing_advertising/3506827-1.html, retrieved 2010-06-16

Based on the above, we would like to argue that a personal blog leads to higher acceptance, higher credibility and more positive responses than an official blog, thus formulating the following hypotheses:

H1 a: A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher credibility for the party than a blog with an official tone.

H1 b: A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher credibility for the representative than a blog with an official tone.

3.2.3 Attitude

As argued above, credibility is vital for brand attitude. Thus, simply put, since we argue that a personal tone leads to higher credibility, a personal tone would also lead to a better brand attitude, since credibility has a direct influence on attitude.

In addition to the relationship between credibility and attitude, Fishbein & Ajzen (1975), argue that the effects of a given communication depend on the extent to which it is attended to, comprehended and accepted. Attitude, and more specifically attitude change, can be divided into opinion change, perception change, affect change and action change (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975), and these four factors are directly influenced by attention, comprehension and acceptance of the message. Message comprehension is vital for message acceptance to take place, but message comprehension *only* is not a guarantee that acceptance will take place. However, the higher the comprehension, the higher the probability of the message being accepted. With this in mind, we argue that a tone of communication that is easily understood has a higher chance of being accepted which would lead to a better attitude towards the sender of the message. Furthermore, we also argue that a personal tone is perceived as easier to understand, since the language is more colloquial and the content is less fact-based.

Hedquist (2002) argues that recipients of a message must be able to identify themselves with the sender for a trustful relation to be established. One way for this identification to take place is for the receiver of the message to feel that he or she is in the same situation as the sender, that they to some extent share the same everyday life (Hedquist 2002). If this sense of identification takes place, the sender is perceived as being more credible. As argued above, credibility is vital for attitude – which means that a message that enables the receiver to feel identification with the sender in extension leads to more positive attitude towards the sender. We argue that a message with a personal tone leads to a greater sense of identification, since the reader of the blogs perceive the sender as being a person of “flesh and blood”, with the same problems as everyone else. These arguments lead us to the following hypotheses:

H2 a: A blog with a personal tone will lead to a more positive attitude towards the party than a blog with an official tone.

H2 b: A blog with a personal tone will lead to a more positive attitude towards the representative than a blog with an official tone.

3.2.4 Voting Intention

There is a clear connection between attitude to the brand and buying intentions (Söderlund & Öhman 2003, Notani 1998). As argued above, we believe that buying intentions can be replaced with voting intentions (as confirmed by Jonas Colliander), and that the same connection still holds. It is important to notice that voting intention is not the same thing as actually voting, but for obvious reasons, it would be very difficult for us to observe voting behaviour. Furthermore, scholars argue that even though there is no certainty that intentions lead to actual behaviour, there are numerous factors indicating that this it does (Jones & Sasser 1995).

Since we argue that a blog with a personal tone leads to higher credibility and thus more positive attitude, we come to the following hypotheses:

H3 a: A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher voting intention for the party than a blog with official tone.

H3 b: A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher voting intention for the representative than a blog with official tone.

3.2.5 Intention to Comment the Blog

The ultimate goal of political communication is to influence the outcome of elections. However, one must take into account that reading a blog is only a part of all the information voters take in and process prior to an election. With this in mind, it might be that even though voters are influenced by blogs, they do not themselves think that the content of a blog has a direct impact on the voting intention. After having consulted with Jonas Colliander and Magnus Söderlund, we thus decided to include the intention to comment the blog. Furthermore, since interactivity is seen as one of the most important advantages of social media (Gabrielsson 2010, Gerdin 2010), we want to examine what tone leads to the highest intention to comment on the blog posts – what blog leads to the highest grade of interactivity.

Since a great majority of our interviewees argues that a personal tone in communication is preferable to an official one, combined with the fact that interactivity was also mentioned as one of the biggest advantages with social media, we argue that a personal tone will elicit a higher intention to interact.

Anything else would contradict the statements made by our interviewees, since they would not recommend a tone of communication which would not be the most effective way to achieve what they think is one of the biggest advantages of social media. Since commenting a blog is a form of interaction, this would imply that a personal tone would lead to a higher intention to comment the blog than what an official tone would. The fact that so many of our interviewees were advocates for the personal tone, combined with the fact that both Jonas Colliander and Magnus Söderlund recommended us to examine the intention to comment the blog, meant that we decided to study the following hypotheses:

H4 a: A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher intention to comment for the party than a blog with official tone.

H4 b: A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher intention to comment for the representative than a blog with official tone.

3.2.6 Intention to Seek Information

We argue that voting is a high-involvement decision (Rossiter & Percy 1991). High-involvement decisions occur when the choice of brand is perceived to be so risky that consumers find it being worth to process advertising information on a more detailed level (Rossiter & Percy 1991). With high-involvement decisions, consumers need to be sure of their decision prior to purchase (voting), as opposed to when buying low-involvement products, like laundry detergent. This implies that much information processing takes place amongst voters before the day of the election. Voters listen to information from many different sources, often for a substantial amount of time, before they make their decision regarding for whom to vote.¹⁶ With this in mind, we find it important to examine to what extent a blog generates will amongst its readers to seek more information about the party or the politician. Furthermore, Bickart and Schindler (2001) argue that online discussion information is more powerful than information generated by marketers in stimulating product interest and information search. Since we argue that a blog with a personal tone to a greater extent resembles the interpersonal communication found in online discussions, we come to the following hypotheses:

H5 a: A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher intention to seek information about the party than a blog with an official tone.

H5 b: A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher intention to seek information about the representative than a blog with an official tone.

¹⁶ [http://www.bt.se/ledare/kronikorer/valkomna-veliga-valjare\(1968003\).gm](http://www.bt.se/ledare/kronikorer/valkomna-veliga-valjare(1968003).gm), retrieved 2010-06-16

3.2.7 WOM – Intentions

WOM has been defined as an “oral, person-to-person communication between a receiver and a communicator whom the receiver perceives as noncommercial, regarding a brand, a product or a service” (Arndt 1967, p. 293). It is a widely accepted truth that the people surrounding us in our daily lives are significant sources of influence and indeed, “personal contact seems to be most effective in causing changes in opinion and behavior” (Brooks 1957, p. 155). Since a personal meeting is most effective to convince someone and since we tend to trust people in our near proximity (Johansson 2010), a blog that elicits WOM in the form of recommendation and talk must be a desirable result.

According to scholars, the advent of the internet has brought about a word-of-mouth revolution (Dellarocas 2003). Online, millions of individuals on a daily basis search for, interact and engage in a mass-mediated exchange of opinions and information. The Internet has encouraged political parties’ use of the web to motivate their voters and communicate with them, as well as getting the voters to talk about politics (Thorson & Rogers 2010). Social networks, web forums, rating sites, user reviews and blogs have further shown to affect not only our opinions, but also our purchase behavior (Godes & Mayzlin 2004, Reigner 2007). Thus, online WOM has become an increasingly interesting and usable tool for marketers (Sen & Lerman 2007) as well as for politicians.

Previous research has also shown that WOM affects the receiver on several important variables, for instance attitudes (Herr 1991) and brand awareness (Sheth 1971). Apart from analyzing the voting intentions, we decided to examine the WOM-intentions. We believe that *how* the tone of communication stimulates WOM-intentions is of great interest to examine further.

Scholars argue that to achieve forwarding of advertising messages, the message itself has to stimulate the receiver’s fantasy and in that way create incitement for distribution. A message that simply contains strict information would not be enough to create this desirable effect (Dobele 2007). In accordance with this reasoning, we would like to argue that a personal communication to a larger extent creates incitements for distribution, since the more formal communication strictly focuses on conveying information and nothing but formal information. We are furthermore interested in examining both the intentions of *talking about*, as well as *recommending* the party and the candidate. This leads us to the formulation of the hypotheses as of below:

H6 a: A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher WOM-intention in terms of recommendations for the party than a blog with an official tone.

H6 b: A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher WOM-intention in terms of recommendations for the representative than a blog with an official tone.

H7 a: A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher WOM-intention in terms of talking for the party than a blog with an official tone.

H7 b: A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher WOM-intention in terms of talking for the representative than a blog with an official tone.

3.3 Signal Effects

"The medium is the message", a theory presented by McLuhan (Dahlén 2005), has been considered the starting point for studies concerning choice of media since it illustrates the potential contextual effects that different medias could create. Several studies confirm the relationship between the choice of media and its effects on important variables such as brand attitude, purchase intention and recall (De Pelsmacker, Gueens & Anckaert 2002). Furthermore, researchers have also studied the phenomenon of signals as a mechanism for credibly communicating brand associations (Ambler & Hollier 2002, Kirmani & Rao 2000). According to Kirmani & Rao (2000), consumers are often unable to individually acquire and process all information regarding products that are available in the market, and therefore to a large extent rely on marketing signals in their decision making process. Through the use of signals, brands can enhance their brand associations which according to the hierarchy of effects earlier presented, also leads to a more favourable brand attitude. According to Keller (1993), strong, favourable and unique brand associations contribute to the brand by building a strong image used to position, differentiate and to create positive brand attitudes towards the brand. We are therefore interested in investigating which signal effects there might be when a political party actively uses the social media channels to communicate. Thus, it is the differential effect of the simple knowledge that the political party is represented on social media that we want to isolate and further examine.

3.3.1 Presence on Blogs

In accordance with the theory of "the medium is the message", being present in the social media sphere and on blogs in general, would signal that the political party is an innovator, finding new ways of communicating and meeting its voters independent of time as well as of potential geographical boundaries, and also being open to new ideas and forms of communication. This premise was further supported by our interviewees (Gerdin 2010, Gelin 2010, Schiff 2010). As argued above, we will only test for Party X, since individual politicians rarely have the budget to use mass media, and thus we cannot compare individuals on social media with individuals in mass media, since they basically don't exist.

Based on the above arguing, we present the following hypotheses:

H8 : Being present on social media will make the party be perceived as more innovative compared to not being present on social media.

Apart from analyzing the potential signal effect of being perceived as innovative, we decided to also test whether the knowledge among respondents that the party was present on the social media also had an impact on the perceived level of *new thinking* (Granlund & Grönros 2007). Again, we would like to argue that using a rather new medium such as social media, would imply that the respondents perceived party X to be more new thinking.

H9: Being present on social media will make the party be perceived as more new thinking compared to not being present on social media.

Furthermore, we were interested in examining whether the knowledge of the party's presence on social media could signal a level of *modernity* (Granlund & Grönros, 2007). As one of our interviewees stated: "If a party would have chosen to not be present at all on the Internet, and would have claimed that 'social media is just tomfoolery' they would have appeared to be old fashioned, outdated..." (Brynolf 2010). In line with this arguing though we formulated the following hypothesis:

H10: Being present on social media will make the party be perceived as more modern compared to not being present on social media.

Yet another variable that we were interested in for further examination was the perceived level of being *leading* (Kocken & Skoghagen 2009). Given the above, arguing that being present on social media would imply that the party is perceived as more modern, we also believe that using the new media would generate higher means in terms of perceived level of leading, in line with the above presented argumentation.

H11: Being present on social media will make the party be perceived as more leading compared to not being present on social media.

Lastly, the respondents were also asked to grade the political party X on the perceived level of *smartness* (Granlund & Grönros 2007). Using a creative media such as social media in their political campaign, as a complement to only using traditional media, we believe would generate a higher mean value on the variable *smart*.

H12: Being present on social media will make the party be perceived as smarter compared to not being present on social media.

4.0 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In this section we will present the results of our study. Important to notice is that we, in an attempt to make the study even more meticulous, tested all hypotheses in the main study for both the political party, Party X, and the political representative, A Kanjelin separately to see whether there would be any differences in outcome depending on the sender. Thus, the results presented below will firstly treat the outcome for Party X, and then followed by the results for A Kanjelin.

4.1 Manipulation Control

Before the execution of the main study, we wanted to make sure that the results of the main study really were an effect of what we wanted to examine. To ensure this, we let the respondents of the pre-study answer questions about whether they perceived the different blogs to be of a personal or an official tone, as described above. This was examined with the help of independent samples t-tests, which showed that there were significant differences between the average means for the questions regarding tone.

4.1.1 Credibility of the Blogs

A further step in the process of ensuring that the results of the main study were an effect of what we wanted to examine, was to make sure that the blogs not only were perceived to convey the desired tone, but also were perceived as resembling “real” political blogs. To make certain that this was accomplished, respondents of the pre-study were asked to rate the blogs regarding credibility, on a scale from one to seven. The average mean for the blog with a personal tone was $\bar{x} = 4.25$, while the average mean for the blog with an official tone was $\bar{x} = 5.1$. After a consultation with Jonas Colliander, this was deemed as being more than satisfactory – the blogs were perceived as being “real”.

4.1.2 Official Tone

As stated before, we also tested for perceived differences in tone. The average mean for the official tone among readers of the official blog was $\bar{x} = 4.80$, on scale from one to seven. The mean for the official tone was much lower among the readers of the personal blog, with the average mean being $\bar{x} = 1.65$. The difference was clearly significant. See table below.

4.1.3 Personal Tone

The average mean for the personal tone amongst readers of the official blog was $\bar{x} = 3.45$. The mean for the personal blog was $\bar{x} = 5.15$, with an again, clearly significant difference. Below is a table summarizing the results.

	Official blog	Personal blog	Mean Difference	Significance
Official tone	4.80	1.65	3.15	0.00
Personal tone	3.45	5.15	1.70	0.001

4.2 Main Study

Below follow the results of the main study. Hypothesis 1 concerns differences in *credibility* of the blogs due to the discrepancy in tone while hypothesis 2 is about the *attitude*. Hypotheses 3-7 cover different *intentions*. More specifically, we chose to test the *intention to vote* (hypothesis 3), *intention to comment* the blog (hypothesis 4) and *intention to seek further information* (hypothesis 5). We also chose to test *WOM-intentions in terms of recommending* Party X and A Kanjelin (hypothesis 6) and *WOM-intentions to talk* about Party X and A Kanjelin (hypothesis 7). Lastly, hypotheses 8-12 cover the potential signal effects that may arise due to the simple knowledge about the political party's presence on social media.

All hypotheses were examined by making comparisons of the average mean values through independent samples t-tests. Hypotheses with a significance level above 5 % were rejected.

To examine whether there was a statistical relation between the intentions (to vote, recommend and comment) and the other variables chosen, we did a linear regression analysis.

4.2.1 Credibility

When measuring credibility, the readers of the blogs were asked to rate the blogs on the three parameters of *credible*, *convincing* and *honest*. These three variables were then added together to create an index, called *credible*. This index had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.836 for Party X and 0.851 for A Kanjelin.

The t-test showed significant differences both for Party X and A Kanjelin. However, the mean was higher for the official blog, which was surprising, since this goes against theory and also the info we gathered in the interviews.

	Official blog	Personal blog	Mean Difference	Significance
Party X	4.18	3.09	1.09	0.00
A Kanjelin	4.08	3.47	0.61	0.002

H1 a: A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher credibility for the party than a blog with an official tone. **REJECTED.**

H1 b: A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher credibility for the representative than a blog with an official tone. **REJECTED.**

4.2.2 Attitude

For attitude, respondents were asked to rate the blogs on the three parameters of *good*, *like* and *positive*. These were added together to make an index called *attitude*, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.927 for Party X and 0.904 for A Kanjelin.

There were significant differences both for Party X and A Kanjelin, with the mean being higher for the blog with an official tone, which again was surprising, since it goes against theory and also the information gathered in interviews.

	Official blog	Personal blog	Mean Difference	Significance
Party X	3.79	2.79	1.00	0.00
A Kanjelin	3.76	3.28	0.48	0.014

H2 a: A blog with a personal tone will lead to a more positive attitude towards the party than a blog with an official tone. **REJECTED.**

H2 b: A blog with a personal tone will lead to a more positive attitude towards the representative than a blog with an official tone. **REJECTED.**

4.2.3 Voting Intention

To measure to what extent the blogs incited an intention to vote for Party X/A Kanjelin, the readers of the blogs were asked to rate this will on two parameters: "*I want to vote for Party X/A Kanjelin.*" and "*It is probable I will vote for Party X/A Kanjelin.*" An index called *voting intention* was created, with a bivariate correlation of 0.905 for Party X and 0.930 for A Kanjelin.

The average means were higher for the official blog than the personal blog, with significant differences. Our hypotheses were thus dismissed.

	Official blog	Personal blog	Mean Difference	Significance
Party X	2.40	1.59	0.81	0.00
A Kanjelin	2.32	1.59	0.73	0.00

H3 a: A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher voting intention for the party than a blog with an official tone. **REJECTED.**

H3 b: A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher voting intention for the representative than a blog with an official tone. **REJECTED.**

4.2.4 Intention to Comment the Blog

To measure to what extent the blogs elicited an intention to comment on the blogs, readers were asked to rate the blogs on the parameters of: *"I want to comment on the blog."* and *"It is probable that I will comment on the blog."* An index called commenting intention was created, with a bivariate correlation of 0.832 for Party X and 0.914 for A Kanjelin.

There was however *no* significant differences between the blogs, and the hypotheses were rejected.

	Official blog	Personal blog	Mean Difference	Significance
Party X	2.05	2.06	0.01	0.946
A Kanjelin	2.06	1.99	0.07	0.716

H4 a: A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher intention to comment for the party than a blog with an official tone. **REJECTED.**

H4 b: A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher intention to comment for the representative than a blog with an official tone. **REJECTED.**

4.2.5 Intention to Seek Information

The readers of the blogs were also asked to rate the blogs on the two parameters of: *"I want to seek more information about Party X/A Kanjelin."* and *"It is probable I will seek more information about Party X/A Kanjelin."* An index called *seeking info intention* was created, with a bivariate correlation of 0.833 for Party X and 0.845 for A Kanjelin.

Again, the average means were higher for the blog with the official tone, and the differences were significant.

	Official blog	Personal blog	Mean Difference	Significance
Party X	3.37	2.84	0.53	0.028
A Kanjelin	3.07	2.48	0.59	0.011

H5 a: A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher intention to seek information about the party than a blog with an official tone. **REJECTED.**

H5 b: A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher intention to seek information about the representative than a blog with an official tone. **REJECTED.**

4.2.6 WOM-Recommend

For WOM-intention in the form of recommendation, readers of the blogs were asked to rate them on the two parameters of: *"I want to recommend Party X/A Kanjelin to a friend."* and *"It is probable I will recommend Party X/A Kanjelin to a friend."* An index called WOMRecommend was created, with a bivariate correlation of 0.835 for Party X and 0.910 for A Kanjelin.

There were significant differences, but again with the higher mean for the official blog.

	Official blog	Personal blog	Mean Difference	Significance
Party X	2.52	1.79	0.73	0.00
A Kanjelin	2.34	1.80	0.54	0.002

H6 a: A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher WOM-intention in terms of recommendations for the party than a blog with an official tone. **REJECTED.**

H6 b: A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher WOM-intention in terms of recommendations for the representative than a blog with an official tone. **REJECTED.**

4.2.7 WOM-Talk

For WOM-intention in the form of talk, readers of the blogs were asked to rate them on the two parameters of: *"I want to talk about Party X/A Kanjelin."* and *"It is probable I will talk about Party X/A Kanjelin."* An index called WOMTalk was created, with a bivariate correlation of 0.774 for Party X and 0.829 for A Kanjelin.

In this case there were *no* significant differences, and the hypotheses were thus rejected.

	Official blog	Personal blog	Mean Difference	Significance
Party X	2.82	2.58	0.24	0.25
A Kanjelin	2.53	2.29	0.24	0.258

H7 a: A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher WOM-intention in terms of talking for the party than a blog with an official tone. **REJECTED.**

H7 b: A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher WOM-intention in terms of talking for the representative than a blog with an official tone. **REJECTED.**

4.3 Signal Effects

For the study focusing on signal effects, there were two groups of respondents, one that read information about Party X being present in traditional media, and one that read that Party X was present in traditional media *and* on social media. The respondents in the two groups were then asked to rate Party X on the parameters of *innovative*, *new thinking*, *modern*, *leading* and *smart*. The scale went from 1 to 7. The group that had read the information box with information about Party X being present in traditional media consisted of 62 respondents, and the group that read information that also treated social media consisted of 59 respondents. Interesting to notice is that the significance level was 0.00 in all cases except for one, where it was 0.001, thus showing very significant differences.

4.3.1 Innovative

There was a significant difference, with the mean being higher for social media than traditional media, thus confirming theory and our hypothesis.

	Traditional media	Traditional and social media	Mean Difference	Significance
Party X	2.23	3.93	1.70	0.00

H8: Being present on social media will make the party be perceived as more innovative compared to not being present on social media. ACCEPTED.

4.3.2 New Thinking

There was a significant difference, with the mean being higher for social media than traditional media.

	Traditional media	Traditional and social media	Mean Difference	Significance
Party X	2.18	3.97	1.79	0.00

H9: Being present on social media will make the party be perceived as more new thinking compared to not being present on social media. ACCEPTED.

4.3.3 Modern

There was a significant difference, with the mean being higher for social media than traditional media.

	Traditional media	Traditional and social media	Mean Difference	Significance
Party X	2.61	5.14	2.53	0.00

H10: Being present on social media will make the party be perceived as more modern compared to not being present on social media. ACCEPTED.

4.3.4 Leading

There was a significant difference, with the mean being higher for social media than traditional media.

	Traditional media	Traditional and social media	Mean Difference	Significance
Party X	2.98	4.05	1.07	0.00

H11: Being present on social media will make the party be perceived as more leading compared to not being present on social media. ACCEPTED.

4.3.5 Smart

There was a significant difference, with the mean being higher for social media than traditional media.

	Traditional media	Traditional and social media	Mean Difference	Significance
Party X	3.37	4.22	0.85	0.001

H12: Being present on social media will make the party be perceived as smarter compared to not being present on social media. ACCEPTED.

4.4. Summary of Results of Hypothesis Testing

No.	Hypothesis	Result
H1a	A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher credibility for the party than a blog with an official tone.	REJECTED
H1b	A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher credibility for the representative than a blog with an official tone.	REJECTED
H2a	A blog with a personal tone will lead to a more positive attitude towards the party than a blog with an official tone.	REJECTED
H2b	A blog with a personal tone will lead to a more positive attitude towards the representative than a blog with an official tone.	REJECTED
H3a	A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher voting intention for the party than a blog with an official tone.	REJECTED
H3b	A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher voting intention for the representative than a blog with an official tone.	REJECTED
H4a	A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher intention to comment for the party than a blog with an official tone.	REJECTED
H4b	A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher intention to comment for the representative than a blog with an official tone.	REJECTED
H5a	A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher intention to seek information about the party than a blog with an official tone.	REJECTED
H5b	A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher intention to seek information about the representative than a blog with an official tone.	REJECTED
H6a	A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher WOM-intention in terms of recommendations for the party than a blog with an official tone.	REJECTED
H6b	A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher WOM-intention in terms of recommendations for the representative than a blog with an official tone.	REJECTED
H7a	A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher WOM-intention in terms of talking for the party than a blog with an official tone.	REJECTED
H7b	A blog with a personal tone will lead to higher WOM-intention in terms of talking for the representative than a blog with an official tone.	REJECTED
H8	Being present on social media will make the party be perceived as more innovative compared to not being present on social media.	ACCEPTED
H9	Being present on social media will make the party be perceived as more new thinking compared to not being present on social media.	ACCEPTED
H10	Being present on social media will make the party be perceived as more modern compared to not being present on social media.	ACCEPTED
H11	Being present on social media will make the party be perceived as more leading compared to not being present on social media.	ACCEPTED
H12	Being present on social media will make the party be perceived as smarter compared to not being present on social media.	ACCEPTED

4.5 Multiple Linear Regression

To measure the impact of blogs, three of the intentions mentioned above were studied, namely intention to vote, intention to seek information and intention to comment the blog. To examine whether there is a statistical relationship between the three intentions chosen and credibility of the party/representative, willingness to recommend the party/representative and willingness to talk about the party/representative, a multiple linear regression was carried out, for Party X and A Kanjelin separately. The dependent variables were thus intention to vote, intention to seek information and intention to comment on the blog. The independent variables were credibility, WOM-recommend, and WOM-talk.

4.5.1 Party X

Party X	Credibility β -value	WOMRecom β -value	WOMTalk β -value	Adjusted R ²
Voting Intention	0.522	0.717	0.461	0.533
Seek Info Intention	0.413	0.549	0.538	0.363
Comment Intention	-0.011	0.195	0.287	0.091

From the regression we can see that voting intention to 53.3 percent is explained by the independent variables, showing a strong causal relationship. Credibility (β : 0.522, significance: 0.00), WOM-recommend (β : 0.717, significance: 0.00) and WOM-talk (β : 0.461, significance: 0.00) all have a significant unique influence on voting intention.

The intention to seek information is to 36.3 percent explained by the independent variables, showing a still strong, but somewhat weaker causal relationship than between voting intention and the independent variables. Credibility (β : 0.413, significance: 0.000), WOM-recommend (β : 0.549, significance 0.000) and WOM-talk (β : 0.538, significance: 0.000) all have a significant and unique effect on the intention to seek information.

The intention to comment the blog is to 9.1 percent explained by the independent variables, showing a rather low causal relationship. Credibility (β :-0.011, significance: 0.438) showed no significant influence on the intention to comment. WOM-recommend (β : 0.195, significance: 0.002) and WOM-talk (β : 0.287, significance: 0.000) had a perhaps not important, but still significant impact on the intention to comment.

4.5.2 A Kanjelin

Kanjelin	Credibility β -value	WOMRecom β -value	WOMTalk β -value	Adjusted R ²
Voting Intention	0.539	0.789	0.542	0.645
Seek Info Intention	0.415	0.572	0.635	0.445
Comment Intention	0.003	0.349	0.379	0.189

From the regression we can see that voting intention for A Kanjelin, the representative, to 64.5 percent is explained by the independent variables, showing a strong causal relationship. Credibility (β : 0.539, significance: 0.00), WOM-recommend (β : 0.789, significance: 0.00) and WOM-talk (β : 0.542, significance: 0.00) all had a significant unique influence on voting intention.

The intention to seek information is to 44.5 percent explained by the independent variables, also showing a strong, but slightly weaker causal relationship than between voting intention and the independent variables. Credibility (β : 0.415, significance: 0.000), WOM-recommend (β : 0.572, significance 0.000) and WOM-talk (β : 0.445, significance: 0.000) all have significant and unique effects on the intention to seek information.

The intention to comment the blog is to 18.9 percent explained by the independent variables, showing a rather low causal relationship. Credibility (β : 0.003, significance: 0.483) showed no significant influence on the intention to comment. WOM-recommend (β : 0.349, significance: 0.000) and WOM-talk (β : 0.379, significance: 0.000) had a perhaps not important, but still significant impact on the intention to comment.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

As might be noted from the table summarizing the results, presented above, apart from the results regarding hypotheses 4 and 7, a significant difference could be ascertained between the ratings of the different variables depending on the differences in tone in the two blogs. That there would be perceived differences regarding for instance the credibility of Party X and A Kanjelin depending on the tone of the messages in the blogs, was in itself expected. What did come as a bit of a surprise was that the ratings, without exceptions, consequently were more favorable for the official blog. Thus, our respondents seemed to favor an official tone which not only goes against the presented theories regarding communication and political strategy, but also is not in line with what a great majority of our interviewees believed. That we had to reject all our proposed hypotheses about tone could potentially

have been a great disappointment if we, based on the results, did not have anything new to contribute with. However, our study shows that differences in tone actually do have an effect on important efficiency variables such as credibility, attitude, intentions to vote, etc., in addition to showing that an official tone is preferable to a personal tone of communication. Furthermore, we were able to statistically ensure the validation of these results, which we believe gives our material some importance, and that our study sheds light on how to actually communicate on social media, more specifically blogs. Furthermore, we were also interested in analyzing whether there would be any differences in outcomes depending on the sender, Party X and A Kanjelin. However, there were only small differences in the average mean ratings and again, an official tone was consequently preferred throughout the study.

Since all hypotheses regarding tone were rejected, there is no support in the earlier presented theories for the outcomes and results of this study. As illustrated by the table summarizing the above, the average mean for *attitude*, *credibility*, *voting intention*, *intention to seek information* and *WOM-intention to recommend* both A Kanjelin and Party X were higher for the readers of the official blog. What theories could then instead be used to explain the fondness of an official tone in a political communication in a social media context? We will now try to give the reader a more in-depth discussion of the results.

5.1 Credibility

We have argued that credibility is one of the most important aspects of a persuasive message, and that it quite often can influence the outcome of it (Choi & Rifon 2003, Perloff 1993). Credibility is focal for a message to attain the desired effect, and is also directly related to consumer attitudes.¹⁷ Since some academics argue that mass mediated communication that strongly resemble interpersonal communication, may increase the credibility and persuasiveness of the message (Beninger 1987), we argued that a personal tone would lead to a higher perceived credibility amongst the readers of the blog. However, these hypotheses were rejected both for Party X and A Kanjelin.

One possible explanation could be found in the field of psychology. Research shows that one basic principle that governs persuasion is *authority*, implying that we tend to listen to the advice of authority figures and experts to help us decide how to behave, in particular when we are feeling unsure about a decision (Cialdini & Goldstein 2002). Furthermore, research shows that we tend to listen more to experts than people not very well informed (Dahlén & Lange 2003). As a consequence, since it can be argued that the official blog could be perceived as more expert-like than a personal blog, we believe one could also argue that it therefore is more persuasive and thus eliciting higher average means for the variable

¹⁷ http://www.allbusiness.com/marketing_advertising/3506827-1.html, retrieved 2010-06-16

credibility. This theory becomes extra important when looking at the Swedish political landscape, since it to a great extent is defined by facts, and to a lesser extent, person (Sundén 2010). This is underlined by Johansson (2010), who states that: “If we are to believe the political scientists, it is factual question oriented.” In sum, since fact-based questions are important in the Swedish political landscape, voters tend to believe people who they perceive to know these questions well. This could be an explanation to the fact that an official tone got a higher mean on the scale of credibility – a politician who communicates with an official tone is perceived as being more of an expert.

Two important components of credibility is source competence and source trustworthiness (Callison 2001). We have now discussed source competence, which leads us to source trustworthiness. Source trustworthiness is about the integrity of a source – if it is telling the truth or being honest (Callison 2001). As mentioned above, the political landscape in Sweden is centered around facts and to a lesser extent people. When discussing tone, it is difficult to separate tone and content, and a person using an official tone must thus also have a somewhat official content. This would mean that a person communicating with an official tone, thus being very clear regarding his or her political standpoints, would be perceived as more trustworthy. This could be illustrated by the fact that Mona Sahlin for a long time has been rated lower on the scale of credibility, especially when compared to Fredrik Reinfeldt. Regarding who is the best at representing Sweden abroad and in Europe, Fredrik Reinfeldt scored higher than Mona Sahlin even among people who labeled themselves as Social Democrats.¹⁸ Mona Sahlin has been criticized for being vague regarding what her political goals are, and not having enough facts and concrete arguments backing up her arguments.¹⁹ This has led to her being perceived as having a “lingering, lacking trustworthiness”.²⁰ Thus, Mona Sahlin is not clear about what her political goals are, which leads to her being perceived as less trustworthy, and less credible.

5.2 Attitude

As argued above, a personal tone would lead to a more positive attitude toward both Party X and A Kanjelin. The reasons for this were that a personal tone would lead to higher understanding of the message sent, and also for the message being accepted, which would lead to a more positive attitude (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975). Furthermore, we also argued that a personal tone would lead to the highest grade of identification which is needed for a trustful relationship to be established – and in extension a

¹⁸ <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/valet2010/reinfeldt-slar-sahlin-med-6-0-1.961211>, retrieved 2010-08-21

¹⁹ <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/valet2010/retorisk-profil-mona-sahlin-1.901853>, retrieved 2010-08-21

²⁰ <http://www.dn.se/ledare/huvudledare/installid-fornylse-1.1086360>, retrieved 2010-08-21

more positive attitude towards the sender of the message. These hypotheses were however dismissed, with the official tone leading to higher scores on the scale of attitude.

Since credibility is one of the building blocks for attitude, the reasons explaining why the official blog elicited more positive responses are also relevant for attitude. In addition to the arguments explaining credibility, there are some directly related to attitude. Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) argue that attributes (of a person or brand) that are perceived as being important are more polarized than unimportant ones, thus they are evaluated more positively or more negatively. Since the Swedish political landscape is centered around facts and not individuals, a blog with the attributes of being informative and fact-oriented would likely elicit a stronger attitude amongst respondents, since it is in possession of an attribute deemed important by many Swedes. Since the official blog in our study did not contain any blog posts of strong opinions, but more neutral ones underlining the importance of a certain issue or informing about a current political event, it is probable that it was positively evaluated by a majority of respondents. It is quite possible that the results for the official blog had been different if the blog had contained strong opinions, thus obviously representing an existing political party.

Another explanation to why the official blog elicited the highest scores can be found in the field of advertising. As argued above, political parties and politicians can be seen as brands, and the messages they send out resemble advertising to a large extent. Blogs can be seen as a form of advertising, with the content hoped to influence election outcomes (Thorson & Rodgers 2006). Advertising does not always have to be accepted by the recipient to be effective; it only needs to be accepted in high-involvement decisions (Percy & Elliot 2009). As mentioned above, high-involvement decisions occur when the choice of brand is perceived to be so risky that consumers find it being worth to process advertising information on a more detailed level (Rossiter & Percy 1991). With high-involvement decisions, consumers need to be sure of their decision prior to purchase (voting), as opposed to when buying low-involvement products, like laundry detergent. Because of this, for high-involvement decisions, the message, or parts of it, must be accepted as true (Percy & Elliot 2009). Even though many Swedish voters decide for whom to vote very close to the election, we argue that voting is a high-involvement decision. When you compare voting to typically low-involvement decisions, which for example are laundry detergent and toothpaste, it becomes rather obvious that voting is high-involvement. Since voting is a high-involvement decision, we argue that voters want rather extensive information prior to voting. This could explain why the official blog elicited a better attitude amongst respondents – it provided the information wanted by respondents because of the high-involvement decision.

5.3 Voting Intention

There is a clear connection between attitude to the brand and buying intentions (Söderlund & Öhman 2003, Notani 1998). As argued above, buying intentions can be replaced with voting intentions, and the same connection still holds. We argued that a blog with a personal tone leads to higher credibility and thus more positive attitude, and we furthermore proposed the hypothesis that a blog with a personal tone would lead to a higher intention to vote than a blog with an official tone, a hypothesis which was rejected. Since voting intention is a result of attitude which in turn is a result of credibility, the arguments given to explain why the official tone elicited the most positive results for attitude and credibility are also relevant to explain why the official tone got the best responses for voting intention. This conclusion gains further support from a study of voting intention. The authors of the study state that voting for a particular candidate can be predicted from voting intentions, and more importantly, voting intentions can in turn be determined by the voter's *attitude* toward the candidate and his or her overall perception of what relevant referents think he or she should do (Singh et al. 1995). Thus, the attitude variable has been proven also in other studies to be of great importance for the outcome of voting intention. Since an official tone was preferable for attaining higher mean scores on the variable of attitude, accordingly one could expect the same result in terms of voting intention.

5.4 Intention to Comment the Blog

The intention to comment the blog was defined as the extent to which the blogs spur an intention among readers to comment the posts that they have read. This variable was chosen in consultation with Magnus Söderlund, partly due to the difficulty associated with attaining significant results regarding the intention to vote, and partly also due to the great importance of interactivity, being one of the main benefits with social media. We argued that, in line with the reasoning of our interviewees, a personal tone would elicit a higher intention to interact. Yet again, we had to reject the proposed hypotheses for Party X as well as for A Kanjelin. However, that we rejected these hypotheses was a result of no significant differences, not that the official tone scored a higher average mean. Adhering to the school of Fisher (1926) we believe that we cannot say anything about results that are not significant at a five percent level, and will thus not analyze this further, even though the view of the five percent significant level has been criticized by some scholars.

5.5 Intention to Seek Information

Again, in consultation with Magnus Söderlund, we decided to test for the intention to seek information due to the difficulty related to trying to measure voting intentions.

We have previously argued that a personal tone would lead to a higher intention to seek information. Firstly, voting was defined as a high-involvement decision, implying that voters prior to an actual election would process a lot of information. Secondly, we hypothesized that a personal tone would gain higher mean values in terms of the variable of intention to seek information than an official tone, since a personal tone in a blog to a greater extent resembles the interpersonal communication found in online discussions. However, the intention to comment the blogs was higher for both the political party and the representative when the tone in the blog was official, rather than personal. Thus, our hypotheses were rejected. Since these results again go against our presented theories, it is, naturally, rather challenging to explain the outcomes. However, Stebbins (2009) presents a theory that could to some extent contribute with arguments supporting the results. According to Stebbins (2009), two different kinds of information search usages could be identified. One kind is related to self fulfillment, implying that the user exploits the information to improve his/her knowledge in a particular field in order to become an expert. The search for information in this case then becomes a part in the primary self fulfillment process. The other kind of information use is connected to the social sphere, and is a surveillance of the ongoing activities in order to make the participant more updated with the particular context he/she is living and acting within. Thus, one kind of information search is oriented towards the individual's self fulfillment process while the other kind of information search is socially oriented. We believe that one could argue, in line with the theories presented by Stebbins, that an official tone to a greater extent than a personal tone, requires a more thorough exploration in the sense that an individual must spend more time *understanding* the context before actually being able to *take part* in the particular context. Blog posts written with an official tone thus demand more of the reader to be able to participate in the context. This would mean that our respondents are encouraged to seek further information when the tone is official than when being personal, since they want to further understand what appears to be a more complicated context.

5.6 WOM-Intentions

Since it is allegedly difficult to achieve significant results for measures of intentions to vote, we decided to further test for the intention to recommend and talk, as previously discussed. We argued that these are important variables to measure since we tend to listen carefully to those in our close proximity. For the WOM-intention in terms of talk as well as the WOM-intention in form of recommendations, our hypotheses were rejected for both political party and their representative. The hypotheses regarding WOM-talk were rejected because of the significance level, and in according to what is argued above, we

will not analyze them further. An official tone is preferable if striving to create intentions of WOM in terms of recommending.

One possible model of explanation for the outcomes could be that the credibility of the source is crucial for the resulting WOM effects (Cheung et al. 2009, Harmon et al. 1982, Sternthal et al. 1978, Wiener 1986) which in our case would be the WOM-intentions to recommend. Arguments that are credible and reliable have a greater impact on people than arguments that are not, which has been proven valid for electronic WOM (Cheung et al. 2009). Thus, one could potentially argue that an official tone to a greater extent is being perceived as credible and therefore elicits higher WOM-intentions than a personal tone. This reasoning is in line with what has been discussed above, namely that you attain persuasiveness more effectively through expertise.

To conclude, in order to stimulate WOM-intentions in terms of recommendation, one should strive for an official tone and strong arguments implying that the content and source is being perceived as credible.

5.7 Signal Effects

In the study about signal effects, we tested whether being present on social media meant that Party X would be perceived as being more *innovative*, *new thinking*, *modern*, *leading* and *smart*. All our hypotheses were confirmed, with Party X scoring higher on all these parameters among the respondents that got information about Party X being present on social media. This might not be very surprising, since more or less all our interviewees were very clear about their strong beliefs that being present on social media will lead to certain signal effects. However, since little academic research exist within this area, we believe it is important with an academic study, in this case confirming the general belief among practitioners.

What is interesting to discuss, however, is what signal effects are desirable and which are not. Is it always desirable for a political party to be perceived as innovative or new thinking? While these words do have a positive connotation for many, they are not necessarily always positive in themselves. The problem of what signal effects are desirable is closely linked to the issue of target group segmentation. Being present on social media might be a good strategy when targeting first-time voters for example, but less effective when targeting senior citizens who are less active on internet in general. These senior citizens could possibly perceive a political party that is spending resources on social media as being less serious and less reliable than a political party that to a larger extent uses the conventional channels, like

newspaper ads and face-to-face meetings. To some extent, this can be illustrated by Twitter, which according to our interviewees is a channel where you do not reach very many people, but that has a lot of creators of public opinion (Brynolf 2010, Gelin 2010, Gabrielsson 2010), which is why it is important to be active on Twitter. However, a party spending resources on being present on Twitter could possibly be perceived as elitist by voters, since this is a channel where today, very few voters are present.

5.8 Multiple Linear Regression

Based on well known efficiency measures and earlier research, we proposed a model where voting intention, intention to seek information and intention to comment were dependent on credibility, WOM-recommend and WOM-talk. We examined to what extent these three intentions could be explained by the independent variables, both for Party X and A Kanjelin.

For Party X, there was rather strong support for our model, with a R^2 of 0.533. The same goes for A Kanjelin, where R^2 was 0.645. Interestingly, the R^2 decreased significantly when using the model to analyze intention to seek information and intention to comment (the sole exception being intention to seek information about A Kanjelin, where the R^2 was an acceptable 0.445). Since voting intention is the measure we were most interested in, and since the model worked less good when looking at the other two intentions which we were less interested in, we will here only discuss voting intention.

When looking at voting intention for Party X, credibility, WOM-recommend and WOM-talk were all significant. Given that voting intention is a desirable goal for all political parties and politicians, these results are interesting to consider. WOM-recommend had a β -value of 0.717, thus having a rather large influence over voting intention, and making it very interesting for political parties to achieve voting intention. When looking at voting intention for A Kanjelin, one can notice that again, credibility, WOM-recommend and WOM-talk were all significant. Here, we can also observe the same phenomenon as for Party X, namely that WOM-recommend had a high influence on voting intention with a β -value of 0.789. Important to notice is that for Party X, none of the independent variables had a β -value below 0.46, meaning that they all had a large influence on voting intention. The same can be found in the case of A Kanjelin, where none of the independent variables had a β -value below 0.53, thus also having a large influence on voting intention. In sum, the variables we chose to look at all had an important influence on voting intention, which was a very satisfactory result.

5.9 Criticism

In the study we conducted, both the main study and the side study about signal effects, we used a fictive party and representative. We then asked questions about intentions to vote for the

party/representative, attitude towards the party/representative, etc. The answers might have been influenced by the fact that the respondents knew very little about Party X and A Kanjelin – they were asked to give their opinion about a party and representative, which they knew almost nothing about. While this was done to avoid political sympathies to infer with the answers, it would perhaps have been more interesting to do the study about an existing party, and then trying to eliminate possible political sympathies influencing the answers. This was however deemed as too complicated for this thesis, and after consulting with Per Andersson and Jonas Colliander, the solution chosen was considered satisfactory.

When designing the blog posts, we meticulously studied existing blogs, to try to make our fictive ones as realistic as possible. Even so, one problem raised in some of our interviews was that the lines between private and personal, and personal and official vary between people. This is something we perceived to be a problem primarily for the blog with the personal tone, since we did not want to touch upon what we considered to be private. We designed our blog posts according to what our interviewees told us, and also according to existing blogs, to give them a personal and not private tone. However, it is not possible to ensure that all respondents perceived the blogs as personal but not private. Since this is a problem politicians also are faced with when using social media, we did not perceive it as reducing the reliability and value of our study. It should further be noticed that the fictive blogs created within the scope of this thesis only contains three posts each, as a way to stimulate respondents to actually read all material published. A real blog however, normally contains numerous posts, as well as comments and links to other blogs and medial messages which we unfortunately, within the scope of this thesis, were not able to provide our respondents with.

Finally, one problem encountered when writing this thesis, was, as mentioned above, the fact that there is very little existing research in the area of social media in a political context, and in the area of social media in general. Though we argue that there are theories from other academic areas that also apply to our chosen area, our theoretical framework would perhaps have been improved with theories more explicitly about our chosen area of research. This is a problem always encountered when choosing new areas of research, but since we argue that our chosen area is of such importance and interest, we decided to pursue it nonetheless.

5.10 Future Research

It would be interesting to further examine how social media could be used internally as a channel to mobilize people already politically active. A number of our interviewees stated that social media has

great potential as an internal communication channel, and it could therefore have been interesting to examine how to explore this potential, again since the phenomenon is still very new and to a large extent is driven by gut feeling among the strategists today responsible for social media.

Another question raised during the work with this thesis was if different tones should be used depending on the political representative's position within the party. As discussed above, how a prime minister candidate should use social media might differ from how a local politician could exploit this channel of communication. How the sender of a message effects which tone one should optimally choose in the communication thus would be an interesting topic for further research.

A challenging but interesting suggestion for further research is also to examine how to effectively measure the success of social media in general, more specifically what value for example, a fan on Facebook actually has for the political party and/or its representatives. It could also be an interesting case to study how to measure the value a loyal blog reader has for a political party and/or its representative.

Furthermore, since our study was performed prior to the election in Sweden and since many believe that social media would play an important (some even argue vital) role for the outcome, it would be an interesting topic for future research to analyze what role social media actually played in the end – a post election evaluation of the role of social media.

Lastly, one should remember that the results in this study relate to a Swedish population. Thus, whilst it is representative for Swedish voters, it is important to remember that the results may not be directly applicable to other democratic nations and systems, where registrations prior to voting could for instance violate intentions. With this in mind, it would be very interesting to do a similar study in the United States for example, where the voting system is different, and the political landscape is more influenced by individuals than political parties.

5.11 Management Implications

In short, the results presented in this study show that an official tone is preferable when striving to influence the credibility, the attitude and different kinds of intentions towards a political party as well as for its representative in a social media setting. We believe that this study could be helpful to those actively working with social media strategies as well as political campaigning, and below we present some practical implications and considerations.

5.11.1 Choice of Tone

In our study, we came to the conclusion that an official tone to a great extent was to prefer to a personal tone. Since we independent of the variable tested, got the same result, we feel it is rather straight forward to present recommendations regarding how to communicate. Something we find interesting as well as surprising is that our results and recommendations are in opposition to what is assumed to be “the right way”, namely being personal. We found that the focus on the factual question seemed to be important – a conclusion that finds further support when comparing our academic study with reality, and looking at the current prime minister candidate – Mona Sahlin of the Social Democrats. She has received substantial criticism for not being clear about her goals as a politician, and not taking clear stands in several important questions. Because of this, she has been said to have a “lingering, lacking, credibility”.²¹

To summarize, we would therefore like to conclude with a recommendation of keeping the tone official rather than personal, while focusing on the factual question.

5.11.2 Blogs, One of Many Potential Platforms

We have previously argued that blogs were chosen as the form of social media to study since they were deemed to have significant benefits related to their role in political communication. One should not forget that there today are several other channels of communication available online, and one should also evaluate which medium suits the party and the representative the best (in terms of what kind of forum interests the targeted user the most, where do they feel comfortable?) as well as trying to understand where the political party’s voters and other potential targets are active. If wanting to reach out to creators of public opinions for instance, Twitter has been cited the most recommended channel whereas Facebook is utilized mostly as an online telephone directory.

This study shows that there are signal effects related to being present on social media since the simple knowledge of that the political party is present on social media increased the perceived level of innovativeness, new thinking, modern, leading and smartness. Thus, being present in this kind of forum comes with advantages.

²¹ <http://www.dn.se/ledare/huvudledare/installd-fornylse-1.1086360>, retrieved 2010-08-28

5.11.3 The Dialogue, an Opportunity and a Risk

Today, creating a blog is at no charge, an opportunity for everyone who wishes to express themselves in a public forum. At first glance, one might wonder why political parties should not be visible in such a forum, since the entrance barriers are notably low and there may seem to be nothing at risk. What one should bear in mind though is that being present on social media and on blogs, means being present in yet another channel, and demands meeting voters in another forum. As strategists surely evaluate the importance and costs of sending representatives to a local political rally in a period close to the election, they should also evaluate whether they have the resources needed in order to, not only activate and start a blog, but also the resources demanded to keep the blog updated, and most importantly, being interactive. Voters that ask questions will expect answers. If no answers are given, it might hurt the attitude, credibility as well as other important efficiency measures, which is a risk that one needs to carefully consider.

However, among the benefits worth mentioning again is the possibility to counter criticism and negative statements. It's a fact that whether the political party chooses to be active on social media or not, discussions will take place in this forum, and if not being active, one loses a valuable opportunity to meet the voters in a forum that stands impervious of time and geographical boundaries as well as the possibility to reduce negative WOM spreading.

To sum up, there are great advantages with social media, but one should not forget about the risks associated with the phenomenon either.

5.11.4 Concluding Remarks

It has been argued that we now face a paradigm shift within the world of marketing and communication, towards a more transparent, interactive way of communicating. The rapid growth of social media and the use of it by companies, individuals and political parties is a sign of this evolution. However, we are in the beginning of the process and still have a lot to learn and discover. We hope and believe that our study to some extent has contributed to the understanding of the phenomenon and that we have created further knowledge about how to communicate within a political context in a social media setting. We would like to sum up this discussion and conclude with an earlier presented quotation;

“In the long run, I believe that the social media will change how we create politics.” (Brynolf 2010)

6.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Printed sources

Articles

Ambler, T. & Hollier, E. (2004), "The Waste in Advertising is the Part That Works". *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 44, Issue 2, p. 375-389.

Arndt, J. (1967), "Role of Product-Related Conversations in the Diffusion of a New Product". *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 4, Issue 3, p. 291-295.

Beninger, J. (1987), "Personalization of Mass Media and the Growth of Pseudo Community". *Communication Research*, Vol. 14, Issue 3, p. 352-371.

Bickart, B. & Schindler, M. (2001), "Internet Forums as Influential Sources of Consumer Information". *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, Vol. 15, Issue 3, p. 31-40.

Brooks, Robert C. (1957), "Word-of-mouth Advertising in Selling New Products". *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 22, Issue 1, p. 154-161.

Capelos, T. (2010), "Feeling the Issue: How Citizens' Affective Reactions and Leadership Perceptions Shape Policy Evaluations". *Journal of Political Marketing*, Vol. 9, Issue 1, p. 9-33.

Cheung, M., Luo, S., Chen, H. (2009), "Credibility of Electronic Word-of-Mouth: Informational and Normative Determinants of On-Line Consumer Recommendations". *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, Vol. 13 Issue 4, p. 9-38.

Choi, S. & Rifon, N. (2002), "Antecedents and consequences of web advertising credibility: a study of consumer response to banner ads". *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, Vol. 3, Issue 1, p. 12-24.

Christensen, L.T., Torp, S., & Firat, F.A. (2008), "The Organization of Integrated Communications: Towards Flexible Integration". *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 42, Issue 3/4 p. 423-452.

Cialdini, B. & Goldstein, N. (2002), "The Science and Practice of Persuasion". *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Quarterly*, Vol. 43, Issue 2, p. 40-50.

Dahlén, M. (2005), "The Medium as a Contextual Cue – Effects of a Creative Media Choice". *Journal of Advertising*. Vol 34, Issue 3, p. 89-98.

Dean, D. & Croft, R. (2009), "Reason and Choice: A Conceptual Study of Consumer Decision Making and Electoral Behavior". *Journal of Political Marketing*, Vol 8, Issue 2, p. 130-146.

Dellarocas, C. (2003), "The Digitalization of Word of Mouth: Promise and Challenges of Online Feedback Mechanisms". *Management Science*, Vol 49, Issue 10, p. 1407-1424.

- De Palsmacker, P., Geuens, M., Anckaert, P. (2002), "Media Context and Advertising Effectiveness: The Role of Context Appreciation and Context/Ad Similarity". *Journal of Advertising*, Vol 31, Issue 2, p. 49-61.
- Dobele, A., Lindgreen A., Beverland, M., Vanhamme, J., Van Wijk, R. (2007), "Why pass on Viral Messages? Because they Connect Emotionally", *Business Horizons*, Vol. 50, Issue 4, p. 291- 304.
- Godes, D., Mayzlin, D. (2004), "Using Online Conversations to Study Word of Mouth Communication". *Marketing Science*, Vol. 23, Issue 4, p. 545-560.
- Gil De Zuniga, H., Puig-I-Abril, E., Rojas, H. (2009), "Weblogs, traditional Sources Online and Political Participation : An Assessment of How the Internet is Changing the Political Environment". *New Media Society*, Vol. 11, Issue 4, p. 553-574.
- Granlund, D. & Grenros, M. (2007), "*Gerillareklam – överraskande effektiv - en jämförelse mellan gerillareklam och traditionell reklam*". Examensuppsats, Institutionen för marknadsföring och strategi, Handelshögskolan i Stockholm.
- Gueorguieva, V. (2008), "Voters, MySpace and YouTube: The Impact of Alternative Communication Channels on 2006 Election Cycle and Beyond". *Social Science Computer Review*, Vol 26, Issue 3, p. 288-300.
- Harmon, R. & Coney, K. (1982), "The Persuasive Effects of Source Credibility in Buy and Lease Situations". *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 19, Issue 2, 255-260.
- Herr, P.M, Kardes, F.R., Kim, J. (1991), "Effects of word-of-mouth and product attribute information on persuasion: an accessibility-diagnostics perspective". *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 17, Issue 4, p. 454-462.
- Jones, T. & Sasser, E. (1995), "Why Satisfied Customers Defect". *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 73, Issue 6, p. 87-100.
- Keller, K. L. (1993), "Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity". *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 57, Issue 1, p. 1-22.
- Lawson-Borders, G. & Kirk, R. (2005), "Blogs in Campaign Communication". *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 49, Issue 4, p. 548-559.
- Needham, C. (2005), "Brand leaders: Clinton, Blair and the limitations of the permanent campaign". *Political Studies*, Vol. 53, Issue 2, p. 343-361.
- Notani, A. (1998), "Moderators of perceived behavioral control's predictiveness in the theory of planned behaviour: a meta-analysis". *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, Vol. 7, Issue 3, p. 247-271.
- Prahalad, C.K. & Ramaswamy, V. (2004), "Co-creation experiences: The Next Practice in Value Creation". *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, Vol 18, Issue 3, p. 5-14.

- Reigner, C. (2007), "Word of Mouth on the Web: The Impact of Web 2.0 on Consumer Purchase Decisions". *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 47, Issue 4, p. 436-447.
- Rosengren, S. (2008), "Publicity vs. Advertising in a Cluttered Environment Effects on Attention and Brand Identification". *Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising*, Vol. 30, Issue 2, p. 27-35.
- Rossiter, J., Percy, L., Donovan, R. (1991), "A Better Advertising Planning Grid". *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 31, Issue 5, p. 11-21.
- Sen, S. & Lerman, D. (2007), "Why are you telling me this? An Examination into Negative Consumer Reviews on the Web". *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, Vol. 21, Issue 4, p. 76-94.
- Sheth, J.N. (1971), "Word of mouth in low risk innovations". *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 11, Issue 3, p. 15-18.
- Singh, K., Leong, S., Tan, C., Wong, K. (1995), "A Theory of Reasoned Action Perspective of Voting Behavior: Model and Empirical Test". *Psychology and Marketing*, Vol. 12, Issue 1 p. 37-52.
- Smith, G. (2009), "Conceptualizing and Testing Brand Personality in British Politics". *Journal of Political Marketing*, Vol. 8, Issue 3, p. 209-232.
- Stebbins, R. (2009), "Leisure and Its Relationship to Library and Information Science: Bridging the Gap". *Library trends*, Vol. 57, Issue 4, p. 618-631.
- Sternthal, B., Phillips, L., Dholakia, R. (1978), "The Persuasive Effects of Source Credibility: A situational Analysis". *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 42, Issue 3, p. 285-315.
- Söderlund, M. & Öhman, N. (2003), "Behavioral intentions in satisfaction research revisited". *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior*, Vol. 16, p. 53-66.
- Thorson K. & Rodgers S. (2006), "Relationships between blogs as EWOM and interactivity, perceived interactivity, and parasocial interaction". *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, Vol. 6, Issue 2, p. 34-44.
- Wiener, J. & Mowen, J. (1986), "Source credibility: On the independent effects of trust and expertise". *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 13, Issue 1, p. 306-310.
- White, J. & de Chernatony, L. (2002), "New Labor: A study of the creation, development and demise of a political brand". *Journal of Political Marketing*, Vol. 1, Issue 2/3, p.42-52.

Books

- Asp, K. (1986), *Mäktiga massmedier. Studier i politisk opinionsbildning*. Stockholm, Akademilitteratur.
- Chaffe, S. & Mutz, D. (1988), *Comparing Mediated and Interpersonal Communication*, in Hawkins, R., Wiemann, J., Pingree, S., *Advancing Communication Science: Merging Mass and Interpersonal Processes*. Newbury Park, Sage.

Christensen, L., Engdahl, N., Grääs, C., Haglund, L. (2001), *Marknadsundersökning – En Handbok*. Lund, Studentlitteratur.

Dahlén, M. & Lange, F. (2003), *Optimal marknadskommunikation*. Malmö, Liber Ekonomi.

Johansson, B. (1998), *Nyheter mitt ibland oss: kommunala nyheter, personlig erfarenhet och lokal opinionsbildning*. Göteborg, Göteborg Inst. för journalistik och masskommunikation.

Kavanagh, D. (1995), *Election Campaigning: The New Marketing of Politics*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Kotler, P. & Kotler, N. (1999), *Generating Effective Candidates, Campaigns and Causes*. In B.I Newman (Ed.), *Handbook of Political Marketing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Klapper, J. (1968), *The Effects of Mass Communication*, The Free Press.

Lazarsfeld, P., Berelson, B., Gaudet, H. (1968), *The People's Choice*, New York, Columbia University Press.

Malhotra, N.K. (2004), *Marketing Research: An Applied Orientation*, 4th Edition, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Mayhew, L. (1997), *The New Public – Professional Communication and the Means of Social Influence*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Pallant, J., (2007), *SPSS Survival Manual: A Step by Step Guide to Data Analysis Using SPSS for Windows*. Berkshire, Open University Press.

Percy, L. & Elliot, R. (2009), *Strategic Advertising Management*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Perloff, R. (1993), *The Dynamics of Persuasion*, New Jersey, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Söderlund, M. (2001), *Den lojala kunden*, Liber Ekonomi, Malmö.

Söderlund, M. (2010), *Experiment med människor*. Liber AB, Malmö.

Thorson, E. (1996), *Advertising*, in Salwen, M.B., Stacks, D.W., *An integrated approach to communication theory and research*. New Jersey, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Öhman, N. (2010), *Considering Intentions*, Stockholm, EFI, the Economic Research Institute.

Internet Sources

Aftonbladet, 2007-10-09, *Maud Olofsson lurade läsarna*,

<http://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/article968835.ab>, retrieved 2010-06-17

Aftonbladet, 2010-01-11, *En ryska som städade trappen – det är arbetslinjen*,

<http://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/article6410200.ab>, retrieved 2010-07-06

All Business, 2005-01-01, *An Examination of Advertising Credibility and Skepticism in Five Different Media Using the Persuasion Knowledge Model*,
http://www.allbusiness.com/marketing_advertising/3506827-1.html, retrieved 2010-06-16

Carl Bildt:

Alla dessa dagar, <http://carlbildt.wordpress.com/>

Bloggtoppen:

<http://www.bloggtoppen.se/teman/>

Borås Tidning, 2010-06-14, *Välkomna veliga väljare*, [http://www.bt.se/ledare/kronikorer/valkomna-veliga-valjare\(1968003\).gm](http://www.bt.se/ledare/kronikorer/valkomna-veliga-valjare(1968003).gm), retrieved 2010-06-16

Dagens Media, 2010-02-26, *Edvard Unsgaard byter jobb*,
<http://www.dagensmedia.se/karriar/article129407.ece>, retrieved 2010-07-06

Dagens Nyheter, 2007-10-09, *Maud Olofsson lurade Aftonbladet*, <http://www.dn.se/kultur-noje/maud-olofsson-lurade-aftonbladet-1.780109>, retrieved 2010-06-17

Dagens Nyheter, 2009-07-01, *Retorisk profil: Mona Sahlin*,
<http://www.dn.se/nyheter/valet2010/retorisk-profil-mona-sahlin-1.901853>, retrieved 2010-08-21.

Dagens Nyheter, 2009-09-25, *Reinfeldt slår Sahlin med 6-0*,
<http://www.dn.se/nyheter/valet2010/reinfeldt-slar-sahlin-med-6-0-1.961211>, retrieved 2010-08-21.

Dagens Nyheter, 2010-05-02, *Inställd förnyelse*, <http://www.dn.se/ledare/huvudledare/installd-fornynelse-1.1086360>, retrieved 2010-08-21.

Expressen, 2010-01-18, *Mer krut i valaffischer än twitter och bloggar*,
<http://www.expressen.se/debatt/1.1848303/mer-krut-i-valaffischer-an-twitter-och-bloggar>, retrieved 2010-03-02

Fredrik Federley:

<http://federley.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.hanky.se/Federley>

<http://finest.se/federley>

Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Belief, Attitude, Intention, and Behavior: An Introduction to Theory and Research*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley. Available online at:
<http://www.people.umass.edu/aizen/f&a1975.html>

Flickr:

www.flickr.com

Göran Hägglund:

<http://twitter.com/goranhagglund>

JMW Kommunikation:

<http://www.jmw.se/category/valrorelsen-2010/>

Nationalencyklopedin:

www.ne.se

Negrine, R., Mancini, P., Holtz-Bacha, C., Papathanassopoulos, S. (2007), *Political Communication in the Era of Professionalisation*. Bristol: Intellect Ltd. Available online at:

http://books.google.se/books?id=uB9jdgiHdjAC&pg=PA7&lpg=PA7&dq=%22Political+Communication+in+the+Era+of+Professionalisation%22&source=bl&ots=mqueLJcK6N&sig=GXE7JpqY6CfXT4uz1_IcU3jYY7o&hl=sv&ei=7SV5TL3DJsnqOJ_1_ZUG&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CBUQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=%22Political%20Communication%20in%20the%20Era%20of%20Professionalisation%22&f=false

Birgitta Ohlsson:

<http://www.birgitta.nu/blogg>

Simon Sundén, 2010-03-17, *Facebook Sverige 2010 – 1,2 miljoner nya medlemmar på 10 månader*,

<http://www.joinsimon.se/facebook-sverige-2010>, retrieved 2010-04-17

Svenska Dagbladet, 2009-09-15, *Sociala medier avgjorde valet*,

http://www.svd.se/nyheter/utrikes/sociala-medier-avgjorde-valet_3524735.svd, retrieved 2010-03-25

Svenska Dagbladet, 2010-01-08, Sociala medier ny PR-kanal, http://www.svd.se/naringsliv/it/sociala-medier-ny-pr-kanal_4030785.svd,

retrieved 2010-01-25

Svenska Dagbladet, 2010-07-10, *Väljarens magkänsla avgör valet*,

http://www.svd.se/kulturnoje/understrecket/valjarens-magkansla-avgor-valet_4975425.svd, retrieved 2010-07-11

Valmyndigheten, <http://www.val.se/val/val2006/valnatt/R/rike/roster.html>, 2010-08-13

WOMMA:

<http://womma.org/wom101/>

Oral References

Hampus Brynolf, Interview, Election strategist responsible for social media S, Stockholm, 2010-03-31

Tommy Gabrielsson, Interview, Press Secretetary responsible for new media V, Stockholm, 2010-03-24

Martin Gelin, Interview, Responsible for new media for the RedGreen alliance and editor for rodgron.se, Stockholm, 2010-04-01

Cina Gerdin, Interview, Communications manager KD, Stockholm, 2010- 03-19

Pär Henriksson, Interview, Communications manager M, Stockholm, 2010-03-31

Ulrika Ingemarsdotter, Interview, Project Leader for Social Media C, Stockholm, 2010-03-23

Simon Sundén, Interview, Digital Director at Honesty, Stockholm, 2010-03-18

Niki Westerberg, Interview, Editor FP, Stockholm, 2010-03-24

Bengt Johansson, Telephone Interview, Professor and prefect at JMG, researcher in political communication, 2010-04-20

Johan Schiff, Telephone Interview, Web Director MP, 2010-04-30

Other

Brit Stakston, Social Media Strategist at JMW, **Magnus Wallin**, consultant at Informedia Communications, **Daniel Nüüd**, project leader at Attraction and Magnus Söderlund, e-mail conversations.

Social+Cash – Social Media Conference organized by Disruptive Media, Stockholm 2010-03-25, www.disruptivemedia.se

The Election and the Social Media – Breakfast Seminar organized by JMW, Stockholm 2010-02-18

Sociala medier inom juridiken – Seminar organized by Stiftelsen för rättsinformation, Stockholm, 2010-04-27

Hedquist, R. (2002). *Trovärdighet: en förutsättning för förtroende*. Stockholm, Styrelsen för psykologiskt försvar.

7.0 APPENDIX

Appendix 1 – Interview Questions and Interviewees

The following list of questions is not a complete overview of all the questions we asked. For all interviewees, we had a number of questions that was specific for that person and the party he/she represented. However, due to these questions being quite specific, we chose not to include them here. The list below consists of the questions we asked all interviewees, and does include a large majority of our questions.

Can you tell us a bit about yourself and your professional background?

Can you tell us a bit about how your party works with social media? How many work with social media today?

What do you define as the five most important channels for social media?

How would you define social media?

Do you think that people representing your party has understood what social media really is, and the advantages with it?

Is social media most important for internal or external communication?

Is there an interplay between social media and traditional media? If so, how can you use it?

How important do you think that the interactivity aspect of social media is?

What do you see as the biggest advantage with social media? Biggest disadvantage?

What risks do you see with social media?

Do you see social media as important as traditional media?

What is worse, to be on social media and not doing it well, or not being there at all?

Have you done any target group segmentation for social media? If so, what target groups do you have?

How do you measure the effects of social media?

Why did you start using social media in the electoral campaign? Was Barack Obama an inspiration?

Do you think there is a difference between how for example ministers and politicians lower down in the hierarchy should use social media?

How important is it that the messages sent is written by the person it is supposed to be from? Does it work to have someone else writing your blog posts/tweets/status updates for you?

Do you have official/written guidelines for how your representatives should use social media?

Do you think that there was more control before the rise of social media? Meaning that information was checked more before it became news?

How important do you think that social media will be in the upcoming election?

How important do you think that social media will be in the next election (2014)?

Do you think that there are signal effects just because a political party is present on social media?

What tone do you think is the best when you communicate on social media? Do you have any facts that support your opinion in this question?

Do you think that there might be a backlash if you're very personal in your communication?

Our thought with our thesis is to examine what tone to use in communication on social media. Do you have another issue that you would find it interesting to read a thesis about?

Interviewees

As part of the research process for this thesis, we contacted key individuals currently working with social media. We have contacted these people because they are experts in our chosen area of study. The majority is currently working with social media and often having the ultimate responsibility for this channel, but one is from the academic field, being a professor in communication. Below follows a short description of their backgrounds.

- Simon Sundén, digital director at Honesty

As the digital director and one of six partners of Honesty, Simon Sundén is responsible for digital concepts and for generating traffic to different campaigns. Previously, he has been working for Iconvert, analyzing the web as well as having worked for Online Services. Concerning Simon Sundén's role in the political field it is worth mentioning that he has been a highly appreciated lecturer, given lectures to Moderaterna, the Centre Party and the Social Democrats, regarding social media. He was also involved in the creation of the Social Democrat's launch of their new website and blog portal.

- Bengt Johansson, professor and prefect at JMG, Researcher in Political Communication

Bengt Johansson has a background within the field of political science. At JMG, the institution for Journalism, Media and Communication at Gothenburg University, he gives lectures concerning political communication, media and PR. His focus is on democracy and the distribution of power. Currently, he is doing research within the field of propaganda, electoral campaigns and campaign posters.

- Martin Gelin, responsible for new media for the RedGreen alliance and director for rodgron.se

Martin Gelin is a journalist, and has previously been working for Svenska Dagbladet, Sydsvenskan and Aftonbladet. His focus has been on the USA and he closely followed Howard Dean during the primary election in 2004 and thereafter followed Barack Obama's campaign during a period of two years.

- Hampus Brynolf, election strategist responsible for social media

Hampus Brynolf has been working for Forum för Levande Historia as communications strategist responsible for all channels including the web, social media, press and marketing. Parallel to his work for Forum, he also worked voluntarily with a number of political projects, including for instance the creation of makthavarna.se and the Almedal's blog before taking on the challenges as election strategist for the Social Democrats.

- Tommy Gabrielsson, press secretary responsible for new media

Tommy Gabrielsson is the only one responsible for all central functions for social media within the Left Party, including the party's channel on Twitter, their Facebook page, Lars Ohly's fan page on Facebook and v-blogs on Wordpress. He is also responsible for the education of Members of Parliament regarding the new tools available. Previously he has been working as administrative secretary for the Left Party and he is also CEO of Bywire.

- Johan Schiff, web director

Johan Schiff is web director for the main webpage for Swedish Green Party. He has previously worked as EU-assistant and as a IT-coordinator for Studieförbundet.

- Cina Gerdin, communications manager

Cina Gerdin is a journalist who has previously been working as media manager within different kinds of media including Aftonbladet, Public Service, Sveriges Television and Utbildningsradion. She has been working as communication manager for KD for one and a half years.

- Niki Westerberg, editor

Niki Westerberg has studied marketing and economics at IHM and has previously been working with marketing for Sparbanken where her focus was on the intranet. She started as press secretary at Folkpartiet 2001, and was appointed editor in connection with the start of the electoral campaign, after having worked two years for SOS Barnbyar.

- Ulrika Ingemarsdotter, project leader for social media

Ulrika has a master of science from Stockholm University where she studied Swedish, journalism and rhetoric. She is responsible for the social media for the Centre Party, and has previously also been working as web editor for the party.

- Pär Henriksson, communication manager

Pär Henriksson started as communication manager for Moderaterna in 2006. Previously, he has been working as a consultant for JKL, and with communication for Svenskt Näringsliv. He has a background within the field of political science and has also studied marketing communication at Berghs. Political communication has been his main focus during all years as a professional.

Appendix 2 – the Blogs

Personal tone

Parti X – riksdagsledamot Anna Kanjelin's blogg

På denna blogg kan du följa mitt arbete som riksdagsledamot för Parti X.



[Hem](#) [Om mig](#)

Fix it!

Posted on [april 24, 2010](#) by [Anna Kanjelin](#)

Gah. Har haft alldeles för mycket att göra på sistone, det känns som om jag bara sprungit runt mellan olika saker och gjort dem halvdant i stället för att göra en sak riktigt bra. När det inte varit riksdagsarbete så har jag försökt ägna mig åt planering (Almedalsveckan bokades in igår!), skriva på en debattartikel om rutavdraget och få tag på hantverkare som ska renovera vårt badrum. Till råga på allt fyller D år på tisdag, och jag har ingen present än! Tips mottages tacksamt! Upplevelse? Resa? Kläder? Fint vin?

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | [Kommentera](#)

Senaste inlägg

- [Fix it!](#)
- [Plock](#)
- [Isolering](#)

Arkiv

- [april 2010](#)

Kategorier

- [Uncategorized](#)

Meta

- [Registrera](#)
- [Logga in](#)

Official Tone

Parti X – riksdagsledamot Annika Kanjelin's blogg

På denna blogg kan du följa mitt arbete som riksdagsledamot för Parti X.



Kvotering till styrelser kan bli valfråga

Posted on april 24, 2010 by Annika Kanjelin

I mitt senaste inlägg skrev jag om valets knäckfråga, jobbpolitiken. Efter en givande debatt idag står det klart att en annan viktig fråga inför årets val kan komma att bli huruvida Sverige bör lagstifta om könskvotering till Sveriges styrelser. I Norge infördes en regel om kvotering i aktiebolagslagen. Vartdera könet ska vara representerat till minst 40% i styrelser med minst 10 ledamöter. För mindre styrelser föreslås specifika antal. I Norge är straffet för företag som inte sköter sig tvångslikvidering, men idag framkom att den svenska utredningen istället föreslår en straffavgift på 150.000 kronor. Detta förslag har kritiserats då man argumenterat att syndare kan köpa sig fria. Klart för Parti X är att alla våra partimedlemmar önskar se fler kvinnliga styrelseledamöter under nästa mandatperiod. Vägen dit diskuteras på nästa partikongress.

Senaste inlägg

- [Kvotering till styrelser kan bli valfråga](#)
- [Valets knäckfråga](#)
- [Kalendariet för Almedalsveckan äntligen klart](#)

Arkiv

- [april 2010](#)

Kategorier

- [Uncategorized](#)

Meta

– [Besöksstatistik](#)

Appendix 3 – Signal Effects

Parti X grundades 1927, och har idag cirka 68 000 medlemmar. Partiet har suttit i riksdagen sedan 1928; det första valet efter dess grundande. Den nuvarande partiledaren har innehaft sin post i fem år. Då det är riksdagsval den 19 september i år satsar Parti X, liksom alla riksdagspartier, på kommunikation för att nå ut till existerande och potentiella väljare.

Mer exakt finns partiet i dessa kanaler:

Dags- och kvällstidningar: Parti X annonserar i Dagens Nyheter, Svenska Dagbladet, Expressen och Aftonbladet. Annonser kommer även synas i regionala tidningar som Sydsvenskan, Dalademokraten osv.

Valaffischer: Valaffischer med partiets olika riksdagskandidater kommer sättas upp i de flesta svenska städer.

Utomhusreklam: Parti X kommer använda reklampelare på gatorna, reklamskyltar i t-banan, osv.

Flygblad: Representanter för partiet kommer att stå på gator och torg och dela ut flygblad till förbipasserande.

PR: Parti Xs nuvarande riksdagsledamöter, och andra framträdande politiker inom partiet kommer att delta i debatter i radio och TV, skriva debattinlägg, bli intervjuade i

Parti X grundades 1927, och har idag cirka 68 000 medlemmar. Partiet har suttit i riksdagen sedan 1928; det första valet efter dess grundande. Den nuvarande partiledaren har innehaft sin post i fem år. Då det är riksdagsval den 19 september i år satsar Parti X, likt alla riksdagspartier, på kommunikation för att nå ut till existerande och potentiella väljare.

Mer exakt finns partiet i dessa kanaler:

Dags- och kvällstidningar: Parti X annonserar i Dagens Nyheter, Svenska Dagbladet, Expressen och Aftonbladet. Annonser kommer även synas i regionala tidningar som Sydsvenskan, Dalademokraten osv.

Valaffischer: Valaffischer med partiets olika riksdagskandidater kommer sättas upp i de flesta svenska städer.

Utomhusreklam: Parti X kommer använda reklampelare på gatorna, reklamskyltar i t-banan, osv.

Flygblad: Representanter för partiet kommer att stå på gator och torg och dela ut flygblad till förbipasserande.

PR: Parti X:s nuvarande riksdagsledamöter, och andra framträdande politiker inom partiet kommer att delta i debatter i radio och TV, skriva debattinlägg, bli intervjuade i tidningar osv.

Övrigt: Partiet kommer att ha en dörrknackningskampanj i flera städer i Sverige, och kommer även att ha telefonkampanjer, då partiet ringer runt till svenska väljare.

Sociala medier: Med sociala medier avses hemsidor och forum på nätet där det förekommer social interaktion och där användarna själva genererar delar av innehållet. I årets valrörelse kommer väljarna även att kunna följa parti X på:

- Facebook

Parti X kommer att ha en fansida på Facebook, som regelbundet uppdateras av partiets representanter. Flera av Parti X:s framstående politiker finns även på Facebook.

- Twitter

Parti X har en officiell Twitterkanal, och flera av dess politiker har egna Twitterkonton.

- Bloggar

Flera av partiets representanter bloggar, och Parti X har en samlingssida för dessa bloggar, där alla bloggarna finns listade på samma hemsida.

- YouTube

Partiet har en kanal på YouTube.

Appendix 4 – Questionnaire for Signal Effects

Vad är din uppfattning om Parti X?
1 = stämmer inte alls, 7 = stämmer mycket väl

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Innovativt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nytänkande	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Modernt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ledande	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Smart	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<< >>

Appendix 5 – Questionnaire for Main Study

The respondents read the questions in the same order as they are presented here. After the message reminding them that the questions from that point on were about A Kanjelin, the exact same questions were repeated again, only about A Kanjelin instead of Party X.

Vad är din uppfattning om Parti X?
1 = stämmer inte alls, 7 = stämmer mycket väl

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Trovärdigt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Övertygande	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ärligt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bra	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tycker om	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positivt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Innovativt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Modernt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nytänkande	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

>>



Handelshögskolan i Stockholm

Hur väl stämmer följande påståenden in?
1 = stämmer inte alls, 7 = stämmer mycket väl

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Jag skulle vilja rekommendera Parti X till en vän.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jag skulle vilja prata om Parti X.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Det är sannolikt att jag skulle rekommendera Parti X till en vän.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Det är sannolikt att jag kommer att prata om Parti X.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

>>



Handelshögskolan i Stockholm

Hur väl stämmer följande påståenden in?
1 = stämmer inte alls, 7 = stämmer mycket väl

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Jag skulle vilja rösta på Parti X.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Det är sannolikt att jag skulle rösta på Parti X.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jag skulle vilja söka mer information om Parti X.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Det är sannolikt att jag skulle söka mer information om Parti X.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jag skulle vilja kommentera bloggen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Det är sannolikt att jag skulle kommentera bloggen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

>>



Handelshögskolan i Stockholm

Observera att frågorna från och med nu inte längre gäller Parti X, utan A. Kanjelin.

>>