

Broadcasting Achievements

Swedish Parties Social Media Posting Practices in-between Elections

Jakob Svensson, Uta Russmann, Andaç Baran Cezayirlioğlu

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Rationale

Social media use during a non-election period

Focus has been to election periods

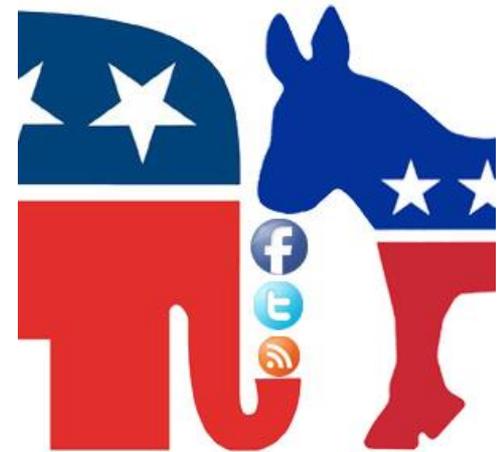
Does social media use drop substantially after election day?

(see Larsson 2011; Karlsson et al. 2012)

Accounts of the permanent campaign suggest otherwise

(see Blumenthal 1982; Doherty 2012)

Campaigning actors take a social media break after the climax of an election is understandable, but does this still hold true 18 months after an election?



Rationale

Cross platform comparison

Most studies also focus on only one platform at a time.

Parties today are present on many different social media platforms. But their presence is most often managed by one social media team (see Russmann 2014)

What are similarities and differences between the platforms used (here the most frequently used platforms in Sweden (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter)



RQs

RQ1

To what extent do parties use social media platforms in-between elections (compared to the 2014 elections)?

RQ2

For what purposes (mobilizing, broadcasting, image management)?

RQ3

Did parties use social media to interact/ deliberate with followers or not?



Setting



Sweden

Internet penetration in the country is high

Facebook most popular, 70% of all internet users visiting sometimes and 50% daily.

YouTube 82% (visiting sometimes, 18% daily)

Instagram 40 % (visiting sometimes, 23% daily)

Twitter 22% (visiting sometimes, 6% daily).

(<http://www.internetstatistik.se>, accessed May 15th 2016)

Party-based democracy (\neq candidate centered)

Hence we direct our attention to the posting practices of **political parties**



Setting

Three different parties

S= the **Social Democrats** (incumbent),

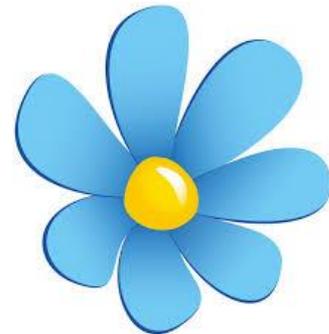
FI = the **Feminist Initiative** (underdog)

SD = the **Sweden Democrats** (populist right-wing).

Underdogs have different rationales for using social media (Lisi 2013; Larsson & Kalnes 2014)

More established political parties can rely to a greater extent on traditional media outlets

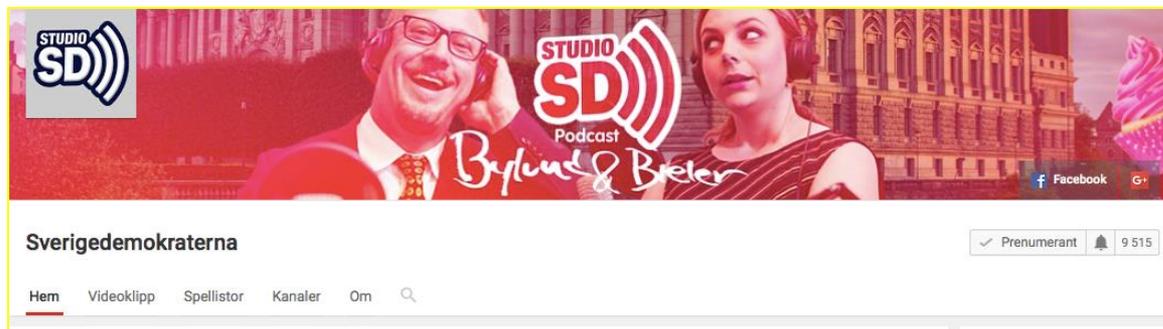
Anti-establishment and populist right-wing parties that are currently very successful



Method

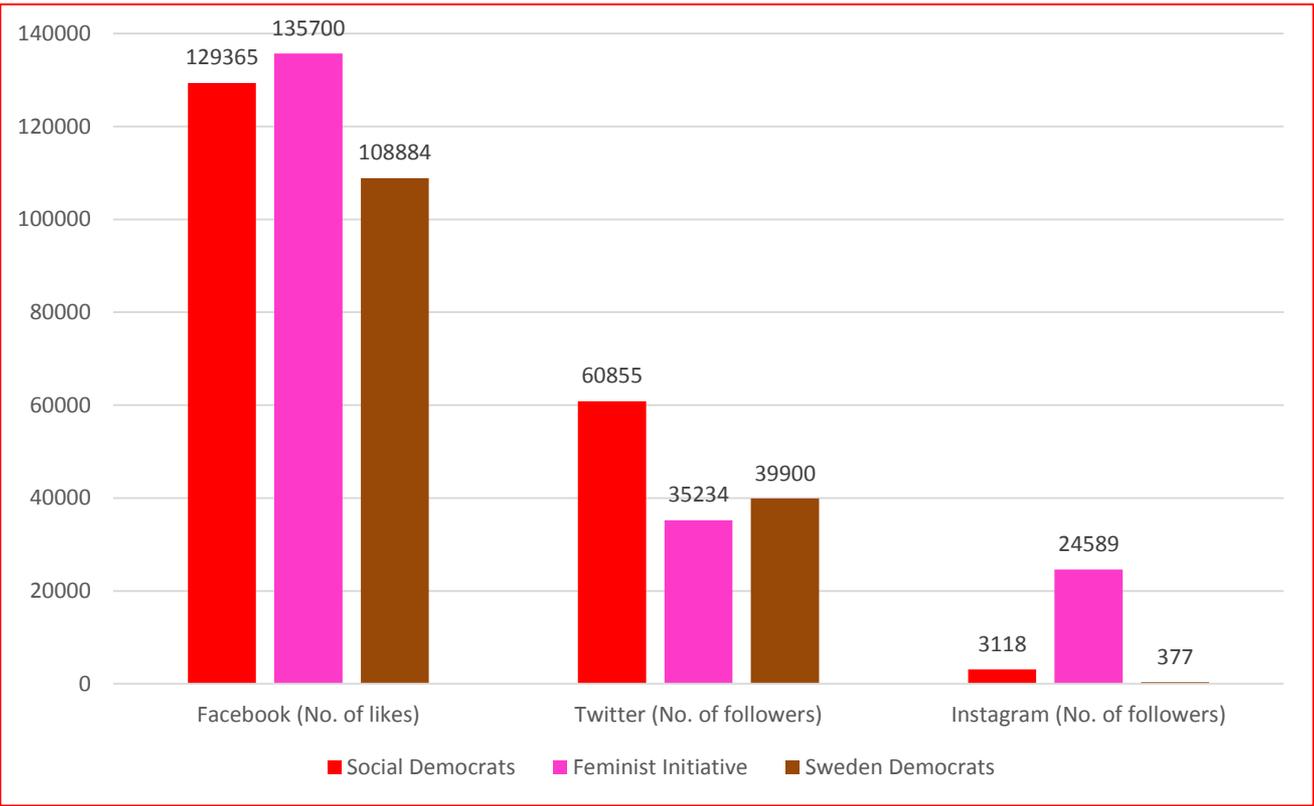
The data comes from a content analysis of the social media postings on the official Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (and YouTube) accounts of the three parties

For the sample we randomly selected two weeks: The second week of February 2016 (08.–14.02.2016) and the second week of March 2016 (07.03–13.03.2016).



Results

Size of Communities (13.03.2016)



RQ1 – comparison with 2014 elections

During 2014 elections

FI, the underdog – most active (no results for YouTube)

Parties did receive comments, shares, retweets and @replies, especially S and SD, FI was better in gathering followers than getting them to interact.

Little interaction of deliberative nature

(see Larsson; Russmann; Svensson)



Val 2014

RQ1 – comparison with 2014 elections

Postings by political parties

Political party	Facebook (for two weeks)	Twitter (for two weeks)	Instagram (for two weeks)	YouTube (for one year)	<i>Total</i>
Social Democrats	14	255	7	12	288
Feminist Initiative	16	61	12	8	97
Sweden Democrats	15	4	0	54	73
<i>Total</i>	45	320	19	74	458

Less used than 2014 elections

Facebook is the most frequently used social media among the population and followers - the parties themselves focused on Twitter profiles.

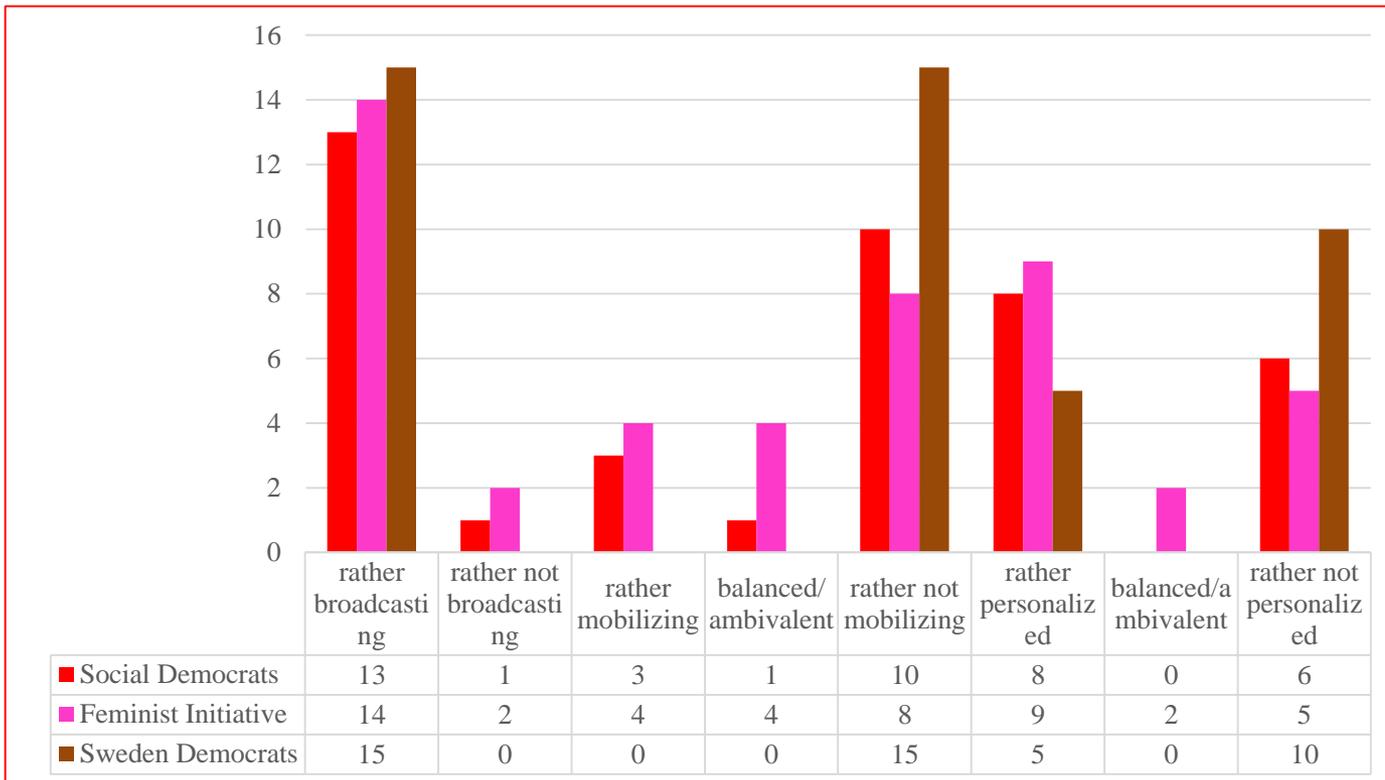
Dominated by S on Twitter

Decline of FI (compared to election)

Non-use of SD

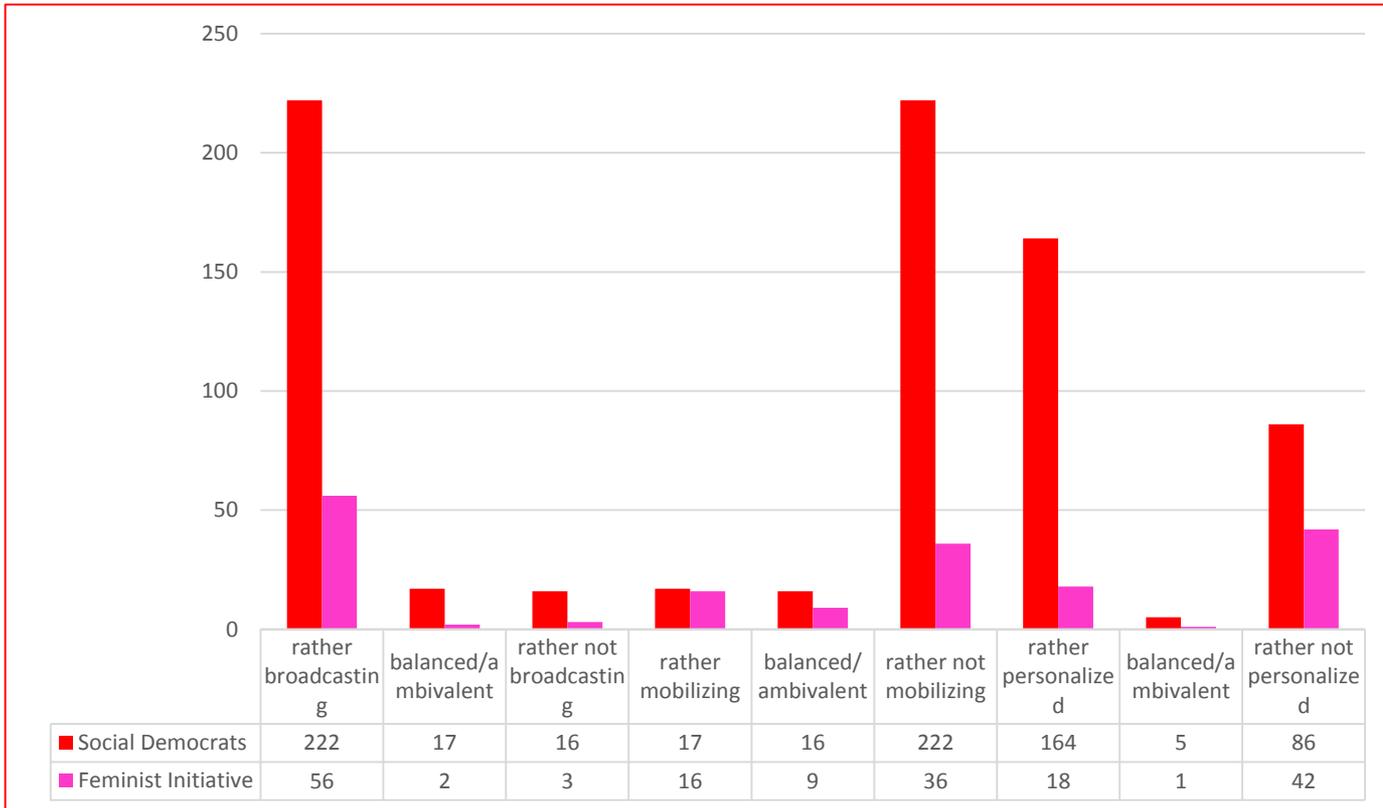
RQ2 – For what purposes?

Rather used for broadcasting and not mobilizing



Facebook

RQ2 – For what purposes?



Twitter

RQ3 – Did parties interact with followers?

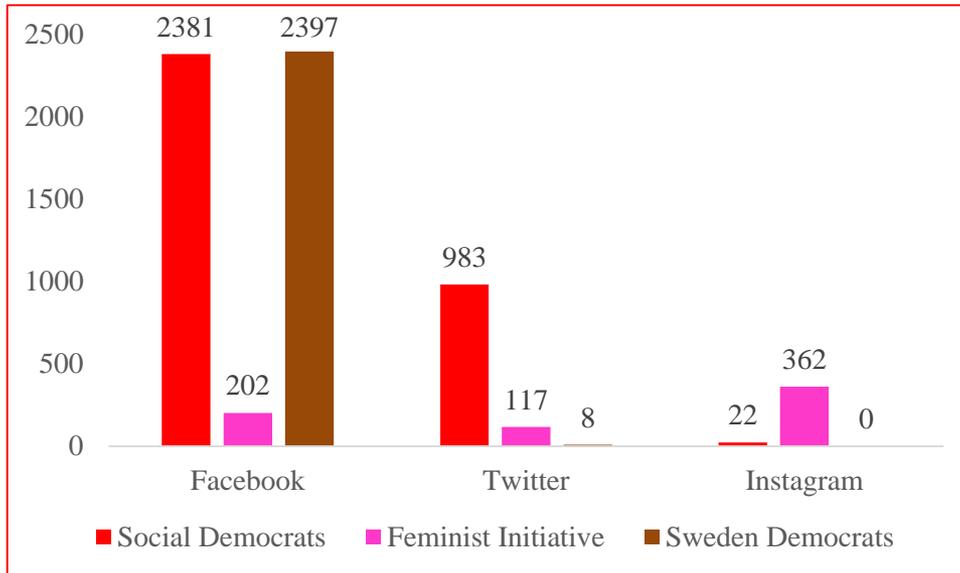
Did parties' postings attracted any follower comments?
(up to) three comments (if available, sometimes labelled *top comments*).

Did parties respond to the follower comments?

The deliberative nature of this interaction. Deliberative nature is defined in terms of giving relevant and substantive information about political issues (which is required for deliberative discussion) or are participants only referring to trivia, nonsense or giving plain encouragement for the political actor (so-called intrinsic or non-intrinsic values). Also coded for emoticons



RQ3 – Did parties interact with followers?



Number of Follower Comments
(08 -14.02.2016 and 07.03-13.03.2016)

Comments with	Facebook		Twitter			Instagram		
	intrinsic value to politics	no intrinsic value to politics	intrinsic value to politics	no intrinsic value to politics	emoticons only	intrinsic value to politics	no intrinsic value to politics	emoticons only
Social Democrats	79	21	86	13	1	44	38	18
Feminist Initiative	56	44	90	8	2	29	50	21
Sweden Democrats	100	0	100	0	0	0	0	0

Deliberative Potential of Followers' Comments

RQ3 – Did parties interact with followers?

Parties comments /captions were generally of intrinsic value

However, although followers generally gave some input, parties did not engage in two-way interaction with them.



The image shows a Facebook post from the account 'sverigedemokraterna'. The post features a background image of a large, ornate building at dusk, with the text 'SD' in large white letters at the bottom. The main text of the post is a quote: "Sverige har de mest vinklade medierna i hela den Europeiska unionen." - Nigel Farage, Ukip. Below the quote, there is a list of comments from various users, including 'lasseljungh', 'tontagson', 'isac_ge', 'germswed', 'berylliumboy', 'solna_maria', 'magnushellberg', 'slaktaren_ivan', and '_wulfen_'. The post has 433 likes and was posted 5 days ago.

“ Sverige har de mest vinklade medierna i hela den Europeiska unionen. ”
- Nigel Farage, Ukip

SD

sverigedemokraterna #Sverige #efa16

lasseljungh Så sant så tontagson Yes

isac_ge Snälla vinn 2018 jag kommer bli så glad så det är sjukt!

germswed Heja Sverige och SD 🇸🇪 🇪🇺

berylliumboy Källor på det uttalandet? 😊

solna_maria 😊

magnushellberg Kanske inte värre än USA förstås. Vänstervridna propaganda outlets.

slaktaren_ivan Stämmer så bra.

wulfen Kan alltid bli värre, Tänk på Nord Korea? Ganska bra här. Bespottad, hotad, av med jobbet. Men inte dödad . . . än

Conclusion

- Parties post little on their social media accounts in-between elections
- When they post, they do it for broadcasting purposes
- Twitter is best for this and this is also more interesting for the incumbents (here S)
- Underdog (FI) pool their resources to elections, SD hardly visible
- There were attempts of broadcast information of intrinsic value (\neq during the 2014 elections – exception Instagram)
- However little interaction was sparked

Thank You for Listening!



Contact info: jakob.svensson@mah.se