Logics of the Icelandic Hybrid Media System

Snapchat and media-use before the 2016 and 2017 Althing elections

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Abstract

The increased importance of social media platforms and network media logic merging with traditional media logic are a trademark of modern hybrid systems of political communication. This article looks at this development through the media-use by politicians before the 2016 and 2017 parliamentary elections in Iceland. Aggregate results from candidate surveys on the use and perceived importance of different media forms are used to examine the role of the new platform Snapchat in relation to other media, and to highlight the dynamics of the hybrid media system in Iceland. The results show that Snapchat is exploited more by younger politicians and those already using social media platforms. However, in spite of this duality between old and new media, users of traditional platforms still use new media and vice versa. This points to the existance of a delicate operational balance between different media logics, that could change as younger politicians move more centre stage.

Keywords: hybrid media system; Iceland; Snapchat; media logic; political communication

Introduction

Political communication in Iceland has changed in the last two decades, from being a predominantly party political system to a market-oriented one. This change has not been much researched in Iceland, in spite of its importance for the political process. Different media platforms, old and new, create different types and styles of political communication, as politics adapt to both possibilities and limits of each platform in its quest to reach potential voters. Thus politics primarily conducted on social media are likely to differ from politics conducted primarily through traditional media, although in reality both media types are used interchangeably in a hybrid manner. These changes are still underway and are examined in this paper through an assessment of how parliamentary candidates made use of media during the 2016 and 2017 parliamentary elections. By focusing on the adoption of the latest social media, Snapchat,

and its relation to other platforms, the paper seeks to establish the relative importance of traditional and new media, their underlying logics, and explore the dynamics and character of the Icelandic condition, which has been classified as a hybrid media system (Guðmundsson, 2016).

Political communication in Iceland

In Iceland there is a parliamentary system with a unicameral parliament, the Althing, consisting of 63 representatives from six multi-member constituencies, elected using two-tier proportional representation. Before the parliamentary elections in 2016 the political landscape in Iceland was characterised by diminishing trust in major institutions, a decline in voter turnout, particularly among the young voters, and increased political fragmentation (Harðarson, 2016). This fragmentation can be seen in the increasing number of new parties that are challenging the hegemony of the four established parties that have historically dominated the political scene.[1] The number of parties that stood in the 2013, 2016 and 2017 elections was unusually high. Eleven parties stood in all six constituencies in 2013 and nine parties in 2016 and 2017 (Harðarson, 2008, 2016; Harðarson & Önnudóttir, 2018).

Changes in political communication in Iceland in the last two decades reflect Blumler and Kavanagh's (1999) description of a "third age of political communication" and Chadwick's (2013) conception of a "hybrid media system". Conflicting views on the role and impact of new media in political communication have been described as a dichotomy between an "equalization" and a "normalization", where the equalization hypothesis suggests an important fundamental transformation brought on by new media while the normalization hypothesis suggests a continuation of established social relations in a new technical environment (Gibson et al., 2008; Larsson & Moe, 2014; Larsson & Svensson, 2014; Lilleker et al., 2011; Schweitzer, 2008, 2011).

In approaching the normalization vs equalization hypothesis divide Gibson and McAllister (2015) introduced a longitudinal or cyclical approach, portraying these hypotheses as distinct phases of a development rather than static opposites. Referring to the period from the late 1990s up to 2010 and building on Australian data, they conclude:

> An early period of experimentation and equality was displaced by a move to the provision of increasingly recourse-hungry personalised sites which led to the dominance of major party candidates online. This latter trend was then challenged by the growing colonisation of alternative Web 2.0 spaces by minor parties. (McAllister, 2015: 541)

The suggestion is thus that minor parties, that presumably are underdogs with respect to communication gateways, manage to use disproportionately new media and technology in its initial phase, but major parties then take over as these platforms require more resources and organization. Hence, the equalization hypothesis worked in the early phase of online development, but as it developed the normalization hypothesis took over. Similarly, as the social media platforms emerged, a cyclical development reappears with equalizing effects for minor parties.

In an attempt to transcend the "either or" nature of this dichotomy, this study will take special notice of this cyclical approach but use Chadwick's thesis on the hybrid media

system as a theoretical framework. According to Chadwick (2013, 2017), traditional and new media exist side by side in a complex interactive fashion creating political communication characterized by hybridity.

This study will also make use of Klinger and Svensson's (2014, 2018) analysis of media logic, or more correctly media logics in the plural, namely a blend of traditional media and network media logic. The term "media logic" was originally coined by Altheide and Snow (1979), and the later development of that thesis by Altheide (2014), and refers to a form of communication and a process through which media transmits information and where

> ... events, actions, and actors' performances reflect information technologies, specific media and formats that govern communication … A major point, then, is that media logic does not refer to just one logic for one medium, for example television, but it is a conceptual model of mediation (some people prefer mediatization). (Altheide, 2014: 22)

This concept of mediatization has been further developed (e.g. Hjarvard, 2013; Landerer, 2013; Smolak, 2017; Strömbäck, 2008; Strömbäck & Esser, 2014) with respect to the mediatization of politics. Strömbäck (2008) suggests that the concept is a process-oriented and multidimensional one, and can be seen as the degree to which politics are mediatized or the media politicized. He further identifies four dimensions or phases. The first two relate to the importance of media as a source of political information on the one hand and the independence of the media on the other. The third and fourth dimensions relate more directly to a dichotomy between political logic and media logic, i.e. to what extent content (third dimension) and political actors and organizations (fourth dimension) are guided by news media, its news values and news processes as opposed to political policy, decision-making and matters regarding an authoritative allocation of material and non-material values (Smolak, 2017; Strömbäck, 2008). At the same time as mediatization of politics has increased and the impact of a media logic has become more relevant, important developments in media technology and platforms have created a hybrid media system that calls for a distinction between network media logic and traditional media logic.

By looking at the theory of media logics as a way to uncover how, why and what politics seek to adapt to in media platforms, Klinger and Svenson (2014, 2018) demonstrate the simultaneous overlapping and distinctiveness of both network media (many-to-many) and traditional media (one-to-many) logics. They do so by focusing on three spheres of inherent communication norms and practices, i.e. production, distribution and usage. In all these aspects, the logic of the network or social media platforms on the one hand and traditional media platforms on the other are different, while at the same time they overlap and are continuously changing.

> But the overlapping does not make media logics undistinguishable, because of the very different *modi operandi* in both realms … It is the task of empirical studies to distinguish and measure the extent of mass media and network media logic in specific cases. (Klinger & Svensson, 2014: 1252)

Indeed, this overlapping and interaction of different media logics, this co-existence of different modi operandi, has in different countries formed a synthesis, a method of operation or pattern, a new modus operandi, which is of prime interest of empirical study.

The relative strength and interaction of different media logics can be indicative of important elements of political communication, for example the importance of the network and networking skills, the type of content, and content presentation. Traditional media logic is based on mass audience and information is subject to journalistic news values, while network logic relies more on communities of like-minded individuals and information with connective qualities that is shared through the logics of virality. In this sense there is a difference between information from traditional media that is popular and information that becomes viral (Bene, 2017; Klinger & Svensson, 2018; Larsson, 2017; Nahon & Hemsley, 2013). Empirically mapping out this landscape can thus give important information, as Klinger and Svenson rightly point out above. Chadwick suggests that although

> the logics of older media continue to be powerful in shaping politics, the opportunities for ordinary citizens to use the hybrid media system to influence the form and content of public discourse are, on the balance, greater than they were during the stultifying duopoly of broadcasting and newspaper logics. (Chadwick, 2013: 210)

Thus, one way of researching to what extent and in what way a hybrid media system manifests itself in the communications systems of an individual country is to examine the media use of candidates and their perception of the importance of different media, as these reflect the understanding and relevance of the underlying media logics. The importance of network logic is reflected in the use and estimated value of social media platforms and can be measured or operationalized as such. Thus the greater the use and importance of social media the greater the importance of network media logics in the system. Similarly, the greater the use and importance assigned to traditional media, the greater the importance of traditional media logic.

Studying the Icelandic case is in itself important in light of a relative dearth of research on political communication in the country, but it also provides an interesting case because of the dynamics of a hybrid media system, where both candidates and party organizations systematically target political messages to different audiences through a variety of media channels (Chadwick et al., 2016). A number of studies have been conducted on the use of social media in election campaigns in Scandinavia, many of them involving the use of Twitter (Jungherr, 2016), but only very few studies include Iceland (Bergsson 2014; Guðmundsson, 2014, 2016) According to one of these studies, a comparative qualitative study on political communication strategies in Iceland and Norway, communication experts of the major political parties in both countries were already in 2013 organizing in a hybrid manner with an integrated use of old and new media and emphasizing a "holistic communication strategy" (Guðmundsson, 2014). Similarities thus have been established in the development of political communication in Iceland and some other Nordic countries. Even though the Icelandic media market is small and somewhat different from other Scandinavian countries, important similarities have also been established. Iceland has been classified as by and large falling into Hallin and Mancini's Democratic Corporatist Model (Harðarson, 2008) and Icelandic journalists share a professional vision with their Scandinavian colleagues (Ahva et al., 2017). Newspaper traditions in Iceland and widespread social media and telecommunication use is comparable to other Scandinavian countries (Post and Telecom Administration, 2016), suggesting that political communication and different types of media logic in Iceland might serve as an indication for larger societies, particularly Scandinavia.

Furthermore, Iceland provides a good case because developments leading up to the early elections in 2016 and 2017 reflect an interdependence of old and new media, which has radically changed the traditional news cycle, creating what Chadwick (2013) defined as "news assemblages", a news-making process or coverage that is strongly influenced by timely interventions and interaction with elite or non-elite actors outside of newsrooms. The Panama papers scandal in 2016 and a perceived cover-up in 2017 of information regarding methods used to reinstate the civil rights of sex offenders, both primary issues in the downfall of the respective coalitions, were highlighted on the political agenda through interaction between traditional media outlets and virality in social media (Harðarson, 2008, 2016; Harðarson & Önnudóttir, 2018).

Thus, the power to control the political agenda has shifted somewhat away from politicians and journalists in the new and evolving hybrid system. But at the same time there are more possibilities and features available to politicians in the toolbox of political communication, and the question becomes how candidates and parties exploit new affordances. The hybrid system is dynamic and in a continuous flux as new technology, platforms and features emerge and older ones disappear. One such change was the emergence of a new social media platform, Snapchat. The aim of this paper is to examine the way in which the dynamics of the Icelandic hybrid media system play out in the continuous negotiation between network and traditional media logic by posing two research questions:

1. To what extent has network media logic of social media platforms overtaken traditional media logic in the Icelandic hybrid media system?

2. How is a new popular social media platform, Snapchat, integrated into the Icelandic hybrid media system?

The first research question draws attention to the characteristics of the Icelandic hybrid media system itself and the general media use of political candidates, as well as divisions between candidates and to what extent one can talk about "hybrid media politicians" and whether these are more likely to be found among younger candidates (Blach-Ørsten et al., 2017). The second question focuses more on the dynamics of the system and adaption to new social media platforms. In what follows, four hypotheses will be developed through an elaboration on the literature and issues raised by the two research questions

Hypotheses

Earlier research shows that Facebook and to a lesser extent Twitter are important in Icelandic political communication (Bergsson, 2014; Guðmundsson, 2016;) but no systematic studies have been conducted on the newer social medium, Snapchat. This medium has gained enormous momentum since its introduction in 2012, in particular among younger voters – the very people that seem to have lost interest in electoral politics and who abstain from voting.

Snapchat has been discussed as a means for candidates to target the youth vote. This discussion was prominent in the international media during the Democratic Party primary campaign in the US between Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders (Heilpern, 2016; Jamieson, 2016; Moon & Fares, 2015). Similarly, Snapchat was seen as important in

targeting the youth vote in the first round of the French presidential elections in April 2017 (Davies, 2017). In Iceland, this discussion was, however, limited during the 2016 and the 2017 Althing elections. The state broadcasting company, Ríkisútvarpið (RUV), did have a Snapchat account and offered political leaders the opportunity to use it one day at a time. Considering the fragmentation of politics and media, the political apathy of young voters, the awareness of the targeting possibilities of different media, including social media, and the popularity of Snapchat in Iceland, the use of this new social medium in political communication and its interaction with other media is an important and interesting research topic. According to the Icelandic research company Market and Media Research (MMR) some 52 per cent of Icelanders over 18 years old used Snapchat regularly in 2016, a figure that had risen to 67 per cent in 2018 (MMR, 2018). Only Facebook is a social medium used regularly by more people, but both Instagram and Twitter are much less used (Figure 1).
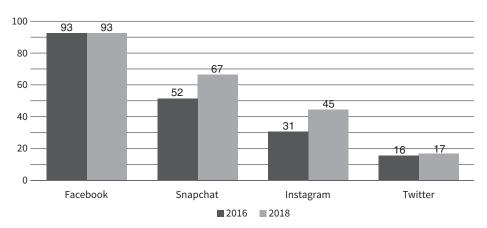
Figure 1. Social media use in 2016 and 2018 (per cent)

Comment: Proportion of Icelanders over 18 years old that use different social media.

Source: Market and Media Research, 2018.

Although it has been established that political candidates use Facebook extensively and much more than, for example, Twitter and Instagram (Bergsson, 2014; Guðmundsson, 2016), it cannot be inferred that their use of social media is simply a reflection of the popularity of these media with the public. Karlsen and Enjolras (2016) have pointed out that the success of individual candidates in hybrid media systems in most European countries, is dependent on their "digital hybrid competence", as they seldom have a professional US-style campaign organization built around them. Blach-Ørsten and colleagues (2017) also found a variance in Twitter use among Danish parliamentary candidates, where young candidates had higher Twitter presence than older ones. Mastering the use of a social medium takes time and using more established and better-known media might therefore be a more rational choice for candidates and party organizations than experimenting with newer media such as Snapchat. As Snapchat is a medium primarily popular among young people, it seems likely that young politicians/candidates would be more familiar with it and find it easier to use. Furthermore, in view of the need to target young voters, and in light of the characteristics emphasized by the theory

of a hybrid media system it could be expected that candidates would seek to integrate this new social medium decisively into their respective social media communication strategies, or at least that they would use it to a similar degree as other social media, e.g. Twitter and Instagram. Facebook stands apart as it has a unique position in terms of its almost universal use. In this light, a series of hypotheses were generated:

> H1: Political candidates in Iceland used Snapchat to the same or similar degree as they did Twitter and Instagram during the 2016 and 2017 election campaign.

> H2: Young candidates used Snapchat and new media more than older candidates.

In light of Gibson's and McAllister's (2015) suggestion of a cyclical development with respect to the normalization and innovative hypothesis, referred to above, it must be assumed that the development of Web 2.0, or social media platforms, has continued to develop and their use and utility have become more dependent on resources. As suggested in a study of media use in the 2013 Icelandic elections, these resources might not necessarily be in the access to the platforms as such, but in the know-how, analysis and content creation needed to use these platforms effectively (Guðmundsson, 2016). As the hybrid system has matured in the last few years and thereby the use of social media, one can expect cyclical development and normalization to characterize political communication in the field of social media. An introduction of a new social media platform, like Snapchat, into a field of somewhat similar platforms should be easier for parties and candidates already with resources in the field than for parties and candidates with limited resources. In that light a third hypothesis was arrived at:

> H3: Established political parties, with greater resources, and the candidates of these parties, standing in the 2016 and 2017 Althing elections considered it more important and were more efficient in adding Snapchat to their hybrid or "holistic communication" strategies than candidates of parties with less tradition, experience and electoral resources.

Following hypotheses 1 and 2, it can be expected that the political forces that made use of Snapchat are also making extensive use of other media, especially social media, but also traditional media. This relates to the fact that the hybrid media approach calls for an integrated use of different media and that both individual candidates and party organizations display a varying degree of skills and conscientiousness regarding the use of multiple media outlets. In this way it is likely that "Cyber campaigning" (Hansen & Kosiara-Pedersen, 2014) and network skills and consciousness regarding the use of one social medium would increase the likelihood of using another. Furthermore, the interactive nature of the hybrid system calls for a combination of use, not just of new media but of old and new media as well. Hence, the fourth and final hypothesis, is put forth in two parts:

> H4: Those candidates who:
> a) Used Snapchat in the 2016 and 2017 Althing election campaign also extensively used other social media; and
> b) Candidates that used "new media" in the 2016 and 2017 elections also used considerably traditional media outlets.

Methods and measurements

To put the hypotheses to the test a descriptive comparative study was conducted in the form of web surveys among candidates in all six constituencies about two weeks before and after the 2016 and 2017 parliamentary elections. The questions were one component of a more extensive survey focused on political communication conducted during the election campaigns, closing just over a week after the elections. Two questions were asked, one on which media candidates used the most to convey themselves and their politics and the other on which medium they thought the most important.

Question 1) Please indicate how much or little you have used/intend to use the following communication channels in your campaign for the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Question 2) In principle, how important or unimportant do you think the following media gateways are for getting your beliefs/policies acro**ss** in the upcoming elections?

These were questions with predetermined options to be answered on a five-point Likert-scale: a lot; quite a lot; little; very little; not at all. The options dealt with were: Facebook; Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat; personal blog; radio; television; local media; traditional online news media. In this paper the first five − Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and personal blog − are referred to as "new media". The other media, national newspapers, local media, television, radio, and internet-based news media are referred to as "traditional media" as these are subject to journalistic scrutiny. Two more variables need explicit definition. The former is the age of candidates, which is measured in five brackets, 18-30; 31-40; 41-50; 51-60; 61 and older. When referring to "younger" candidates in the text, those would typically be in the youngest two groups. The latter variable is "established parties", which refers to the four parties that traditionally have formed the backbone of the Icelandic party system (see also footnote 1). Conversely, "new and smaller parties" are all other parties that stood in the 2016 and 2017 elections, which are: Bright Future Party, Peoples Party, Centre Party, Pirate Party and Regeneration Party, in addition to some even smaller parties that only stood in some of the six constituencies.

The target population were the top five to seven candidates leading on all party lists for the 2016 and 2017 elections, thereby including all politicians that could reasonably be said to have had a theoretical chance of acquiring a parliamentary seat or a substitute parliamentary seat. In total, 12 parties stood in the 2016 elections and 11 in 2017, but in both cases only nine presented a list in all six constituencies. The 2016 survey was delivered to 367 candidates, and the 2017 survey to 336. The question on media use was answered by 216 candidates or a little less than 59 per cent in 2016 and 195 candidates (58%) in 2017.

The question on importance of media outlets was answered by 175 candidates or 47.7 per cent in 2016 and by 180 or 53.5 per cent of the target population in 2017. It should be stressed that the survey was not a sample survey, but a census that included the entire target population of political candidates. As there was only one year between the two elections, the only apparent distinction between the electioneering of parties and candidates was that there was shorter time for preparation in the 2017 elections. An initial comparison between the two survey results showed the same or very similar trends and the results were thus merged, as such a merger would not conceal any tendencies. The elections of 2016 and 2017 and the respective candidate surveys can thus be seen to reflect political communication and media use during a period of political turmoil in a

hybrid media environment. Merging the data sets therefore provides more comprehensive and statistically reliable information about political communications during this period.

The division of respondents in both surveys between parties, sex and age was relatively even and there is no reason to expect that the respondents would answer in a different manner than the non-respondents. The Research Centre at the University of Akureyri administered the survey.

Results

In the 2016/2017 elections, candidates seem to have made smaller use of Snapchat than other popular social media, and much less than print and web-based traditional internet media. Figure 2 shows the dominant use of Facebook by candidates for political communication. In terms of social media, Twitter comes second and Snapchat in third place. Traditional media was used extensively, especially newspapers, local media and web-based traditional news media. These three types of traditional media have a relatively low entry threshold for political candidates, as they more readily publish articles by candidates and pick up their newsworthy comments than is the case with broadcast media, which has a more rigid and segmented structure in their programming. At the same time, it is an important finding that candidates consider traditional media more important than social media, with the notable exception of Facebook, which is the only media gateway where there is some parity between use and perceived importance (Figure 2).
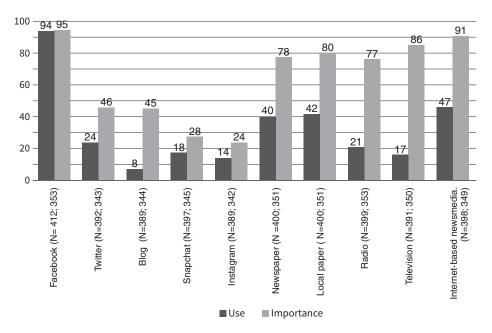
Figure 2. *Media use and estimated importance*

Comment: Proportion of candidates in the 2016/2017 Althing elections who said they used "quite a lot or a lot" different media gateways and who said different gateways were "important or very important" for political communication.

The findings indicate that Snapchat was moderately used in the election campaigns, as 18 per cent used it quite a lot or a lot. The candidates' own assessment of the importance

of Snapchat supports that conclusion. Some 28 per cent believed Snapchat to be an important or very important medium while 38 per cent thought it unimportant or very unimportant and 34 per cent neither important nor unimportant. By contrast, some 24 per cent of candidates used Twitter quite a lot or a lot and only 14 per cent used Instagram much. However, almost one-half (46%) of candidates believed Twitter to be important but only 24 per cent thought Instagram important. Facebook is a category of its own as some 94 per cent of the candidates used Facebook a lot and 95 per cent considered it important or very important, whereas around 77 per cent or more of candidates believed traditional media, newspapers, local media, radio and television to be important or very important (Figure 2). Internet news media stands out among traditional media as some 91 per cent of candidates consider it important.

These findings, partly at least, support Hypothesis 1, which suggested that politicians "used Snapchat to the same or similar degree as they did Twitter and Instagram". Snapchat was used considerably more than Instagram but less than Twitter. It also emerges that the use by politicians of social media does not mirror the popularity of these media, and in particular that the popularity of Instagram (45%) and Snapchat (67%) among the public is not reflected in their political use. Twitter use, on the other hand, is considerably higher among politicians (24%) than with the public (17%), suggesting that Twitter is a medium used by the political/journalistic elite, as has been observed in other countries (Ausserhofer & Maireder, 2013; Blach-Ørsten et al., 2017). However, the finding that Snapchat was used much more than Instagram demonstrates that this new platform plays an important role in the communication strategy of a considerable number of candidates and is integrated into their mix of social media use and attempts to exploit the network media logic.

Snapchat, new media platforms and age

Age is a predicting factor for the use of Snapchat and other "new media" (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and personal blogs). Younger candidates used Snapchat much more than older ones (Figure 3).
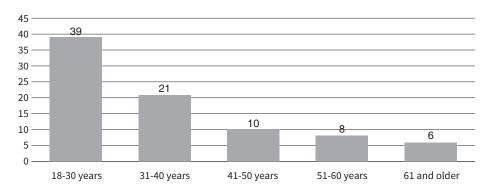
Figure 3. Age and Snapchat

Comment: Percentage of candidates in each age bracket that said they used Snapchat quite a lot or a lot.

Younger candidates are more likely to be digital natives who make more use of "new media" than older candidates. This is confirmed in a multiple linear regression conducted to predict the use of "new media" by candidates based on age and also whether their party was an established or a new party (see below).

Table 1. *Coefficients for a model where age of candidates and type of party are independent variables and the use of new media the dependent variable*

Coefficients, Model 1 - Dependent variable: New media					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Signifi-cance
	B	Standard Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2 942	0.131		22 402	0
b. What age are you?	0.196	0.028	0.344	7 086	0
Established or new party	-0.004	0.069	-0.002	-0.051	0.959

A significant regression equation was found (F (1,377) = 50.516, p= < .000) with an R^2 of 0.118. The predicted new media use of candidates is equal to 2.942 - .004 (type of party) + 0.196 (age), where age is coded or measured in five age groups and the type of party is coded as an established party =1 and a new party =2. Use of new media platforms increased 0.196 units for each age category and - 0.004 according to the type of party. Age was thus a significant predictor for the use of new media platforms, while type of party was not (see also Table 1). Hypothesis 2, which stated that young candidates use Snapchat and new media more than older candidates is thus strongly supported by the data.

Parties with and without resources

Hypothesis 3 expected the established four parties and their candidates to adopt Snapchat and other new media more quickly than others and believe it to be more important. As the regression analyses reported above state, this hypothesis is refuted, as party type does not significantly predict the use of new media platforms.

Both the established four parties and most of the newer and smaller parties use Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat (in addition to other media). This combination or hybridization of the use of different social media platforms is also the case when traditional media and new media outlets are compared, and reflects how candidates are using a combination of network media logic and traditional media logic.

The results also show that although media use varied somewhat between parties, each party used the same or a very similar proportion of the overall media use of each platform. It is not the difference between the parties' use of traditional media and new media that stands out, but the relative similarity.

Hypothesis 3, according to which the established parties would adopt Snapchat and new media more readily than new/small parties, is not supported by the data. However, the data suggest that irrespective of what resources the parties/candidates might have, Snapchat is used by individual candidates/parties in conjunction with other media out-

lets, thus creating different media-use combinations for each party. What these different media-use combinations have in common is that they all include multiple media types and outlets demonstrating hybrid media use.

Hybridity of media use

This hybridity of media-use was the subject of Hypothesis 4, which suggested on the one hand that those who used Snapchat in the 2016 and 2017 elections also used other social media extensively, and on the other hand those that used new media also used traditional media.

Table 2 shows a Pearson's 2-tailed bivariate correlation between the use of different media-outlets, with a significant correlation found only between Snapchat-use and the use of Twitter (R= 0.368) and Instagram (R=0.589). The use of Facebook is so widespread that its significance registers relatively low in the table. However, Snapchat use is not a good predictor for the use of media other than Twitter and Instagram. Thereby, the former part of Hypothesis 4 does indeed receive direct support in the data. What also emerges is a significant correlation between the uses of a variety of other media outlets, in particular traditional media. Thus, by looking at significant correlations with R > 0.3 (bolded in Table 2), two groups emerge. One that uses social media (except Facebook, which everybody uses) and one that uses traditional media. The use of one traditional media outlet predicts the use of all other traditional outlets and the use of national newspapers and (traditional) Internet-based news media also significantly predicts – though the relationship is not as strong − the use of Facebook, Twitter and blogs.

The second part of Hypothesis 4, which suggested that those who used new media would also use traditional media, also receives support in the data. There was a somewhat less significant correlation found between the use of traditional media and new media (R= 0.262), demonstrating that those who use new media also use traditional media and vice versa.

Discussion

The hybrid nature of political communication in Iceland is clearly indicated by the patterns of media use of candidates, and the integration of Snapchat into political communication, presented in the findings above. The data support three of the four hypotheses, but the third one, which suggested that established parties would use Snapchat and new media more than new and small parties, is refuted.

A relatively quick adoption of Snapchat, intense use of Facebook and an apparent group of young candidates that use social media and an older group that does less so, point to dynamic changes in political communication and the type of media logic at play. However, this does not mean that network media logic has in some sense become dominant. On the contrary, traditional media is very important and, in a way, still dominates in the complex relationship of hybridity between old and new media. Apart from the special position of Facebook, the importance of traditional media is strongly supported in the opinions of the candidates themselves and that is also in line with findings in other Scandinavian systems such as Denmark (Blach-Ørsten et al., 2017; Jensen et al., 2016). Furthermore, the data show that candidates make equal use of platforms that

Table 2. Pearson's 2-tailed bivariate correlation matrix between the uses of candidates of different media outlets before the 2016/2017 Althing elections

	Facebook	Twitter	Blog	Snapchat	Instagram	National newspaper	Local media	Radio	Television	Internet-based media
Facebook	1	0.174**	0.106*	0.143**	0.140**	0.197**	0.193**	0.136**	0.117*	0.223**
Twitter	0.174**	1	0.146**	0.368**	0.381**	0.161**	-0,063	0.130*	0.116*	0.151**
Blog	0.106*	0.146**	1	0.058	0.083	0.290**	0.151**	0.289**	0.229**	0.240**
Snapchat	0.143**	0.368**	0.058	1	0.589**	0.052	0.083	0.03	0.045	0.099
Instagram	0.140**	0.381**	0.083	0.589**	1	0.064	0.055	0.064	0.075	0.123*
National newspaper	0.197**	0.161**	0.290**	0.052	0.064	1	0.386**	0.547**	0.512**	0.526**
Local media	0.193**	-0,063	0.151**	0.083	0.055	0.386**	1	0.333**	0.364**	0.400**
Radio	0.136**	0.130*	0.289**	0.03	0.064	0.547**	0.333**	1	0.806**	0.542**
Television	0.117*	0.116*	0.229**	0.045	0.075	0.512**	0.364**	0.806**	1	0.512**
Internet-based media	0.223**	0.151**	0.240**	0.099	0.123*	0.526**	0.400**	0.542**	0.512**	1

build on traditional and network media logics. Considering the time that has elapsed since social media became commonplace, particularly Facebook with its almost universal use, it seems that the interdependence and hybridity of different media logics has reached a balance, a new modus operandi, within the hybrid system. The way in which the introduction of Snapchat correlates with the use of other social media platforms and not with traditional media and the relatively short time span in which Snapchat was integrated into the social media communication strategies of (younger) candidates underlines a duality between network and traditional logics in terms of differences in production, distribution and usage (Klinger & Svenson, 2014). At the same time the two coexist in this somewhat transient new modus operandi. Traditional media logic seems to have retained major importance in the election campaigns of 2016 and 2017, but is strongly affected by the network logic underlying the social media platforms. Thus, the empirical data presented here can be seen as a response to or continuation of Klinger's and Svenson's (2014) suggestion that different types of media logic need to be distinguished and measured in special cases. The Icelandic case suggests that with younger generations of candidates moving more centre stage, this new modus operandi and balance between different logics may shift at any time, which in turn can influence not only the nature of political communication but also politics more generally and the type of politicians that are successful. Concerns that might arise relate, for example, to a possible impact on the relations between party and candidates as social media have a potential to highlight individual candidates and make them more independent from the central party organizations (Enli & Skogerbø, 2013; Karlsen, 2011; Karlsen & Enjolras, 2016). Also, network logic and virality might change the types of issues that become important on the political agenda.

The findings establish that differences in media use patterns do not unfold along the lines of established resourceful parties on the one hand and new small parties with smaller resources on the other. The higher the number of relevant communication channels and inputs, the more complicated it becomes to create and carry out a successful political communication strategy, and the need for expert methods and skills becomes greater. This complexity in turn draws attention to resources and suggests a revisit of the dichotomy of the normalization vs. innovation hypothesis. Gibson and McAllister (2015), referring to the period from the late 1990s until 2010, suggested a longitudinal approach to these hypotheses suggesting a cyclical process, where initial equalization stemming from the web was followed by normalization as more communication resources were needed. Then, in turn, equalization reappeared as the social media, or Web 2.0 technology, began to spread around 2010. The Icelandic data explored here refers to a stage where social media have become commonplace and developed well beyond their initial phase. The present findings, as indeed tentative findings from the 2013 elections (Guðmundsson, 2016), point to a continuation of Gibson's and McAllister's thesis of a cyclical development where the new and minor parties have been denied possible initial equalizing effects of social media by normalization.

Indeed, one might suggest that this old dichotomy does reappear in a slightly different form with the following question: Do established and more resourceful parties conduct their hybrid media communication strategies in a more "professionalized" or expedient and successful manner than smaller, newer and less resourceful parties? A question that cannot be answered with the available data. A party or candidate may use new media

extensively, be it Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter or Facebook, but in an amateurish way, thus sharing the fate of Father McKenzie in the famous Beatles song about Eleanor Rigby of "writing the words of a sermon that no one will hear". In the fragmented media environment of today, using a media outlet for a political purpose does not in itself constitute successful communication.

This study has shown that the media use of political candidates seeks to exploit both network and traditional media logics and that a new medium quickly enters a diverse mix of media use that makes up a communication strategy of a party or candidate. That in turn shifts the focus from particular media types and media logics to the combination and interaction of all relevant media and media logics. The question that needs to be addressed in further research is how successful are the different parties (candidates) in producing and implementing hybrid media strategies? Is there something that might be called a "post-hybrid normalization" created by increased complexity of the hybrid system and the need for professional knowledge, access to big data and marketing research? Assuming that age of candidates and their "digital hybrid competencies" (Karlsen & Enjolras, 2016) are evenly spread between all parties, these affordances would typically be more readily available to established and resourceful parties that thus can successfully discover communication combinations that work.

Note

1. These four parties have ideological counterparts in European political traditions, and include: the Independence Party (a conservative party); the Progressive Party (an agrarian/centre party); the Alliance (a social democratic party); and the Left-green Party (a left-socialist party).

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