TURUN
YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU

THE PLATFORMIZATION OF POLITICS

Intimacy, conflict, and vulnerability in the age of data-driven media

Julius Hokkanen

TURUN YLIOPISTON JULKAISUJA – ANNALES UNIVERSITATIS TURKUENSIS
SARJA – SER. B OSA – TOM. 725 | HUMANIORA | TURKU 2025

TURUN
YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU

THE PLATFORMIZATION OF POLITICS

Intimacy, conflict, and vulnerability in the age of data-driven media

Julius Hokkanen

TURUN YLIOPISTON JULKAISUJA – ANNALES UNIVERSITATIS TURKUENSIS
SARJA – SER. B OSA – TOM. 725 | HUMANIORA | TURKU 2025

University of Turku

Faculty of Humanities
School of History, Culture and Arts Studies
Gender Studies
Doctoral Programme in History, Culture and Arts Studies (Juno)

Supervised by

Professor Anu Koivunen
University of Turku

Professor Susanna Paasonen
University of Turku

Professor Johanna Kantola (2020–2022)
University of Helsinki

Reviewed by

Professor Tuija Saresma
University of Eastern Finland

Docent Mona Mannevuo, PhD
University of Helsinki

Opponent

Professor Tuija Saresma
University of Eastern Finland

ISBN 978-952-02-0205-7 (PRINT)
ISBN 978-952-02-0206-4 (PDF)
ISSN 0082-6987 (Print)
ISSN 2343-3191 (Online)
Painosalama, Turku, Finland 2025

UNIVERSITY OF TURKU
Faculty of Humanities
School of History, Culture and Arts Studies
Gender Studies
JULIUS HOKKANEN: The platformization of politics: Intimacy, conflict, and vulnerability in the age of data-driven media
Doctoral Dissertation, 158 pp.
Doctoral Programme in History, Culture and Arts Studies (Juno)
May 2025

ABSTRACT

The relationship between politics and social media platforms has drawn a considerable amount of public and scientific interest. On one hand, platforms have appeared as emancipatory spaces with the potential to foster political participation. On the other, their commercial and data-driven nature is believed to play a major role in the decay of Western democracies. The dissertation contributes to the debate by studying the platformization of politics through Finnish political actors' experiences of social media use. With the conceptual focus on platformization, the dissertation distances itself from perspectives that address platforms as primarily strategic tools for gaining visibility, winning elections, or mobilizing collective action. Instead, it examines the ways in which platforms have become mundane and infrastructural facilitators of political agency. In this sense, platformization paves the way for various experiences, practices, and imaginations about direction and future democracies in this new era of media. It also creates a space to consider how politics should ideally be practiced and, more broadly, to reflect on the meaning of "the political."

The dissertation approaches the platformization of politics through a methodological lens of digital everyday life. This lens was adopted as a framework in the research project *Intimacy in Data-Driven Culture*, in which the research for the dissertation was conducted. The approach focuses on political actors' engagements with platforms and emphasizes the relevance of actors' everyday practices and emotions instead of treating particular social media uses as inherently more political than others. In doing so, the dissertation leans toward a feminist understanding of politics where private experiences taking place outside of formal institutions are also regarded as political. This is why the research material involves political actors whose online experiences stem from very different social locations: members of parliament, young and aspiring politicians, and gender minority social media users. The research material consists of 52 interviews and 28 media diaries.

This report summarizes three research articles. Article I studies young politicians' lives on platforms by considering the relationship between platforms' "social media logic" and the politicians' own agency. It discusses whether politics is becoming "deeply mediatized" under platform power. Article II examines the experiences of Finnish gender minority social media users. It proposes that by blurring the boundaries between public and private matters, platforms engender

political agency and, more generally, broaden what it means to act as a political person. Article III studies MPs and young politicians. It focuses on how participants understand and navigate political conflicts and differences in their everyday social media use. The article proposes that platforms operate as agonistic rather than deliberative spaces for political engagement. As such, they demand an increasing amount of emotional management.

The findings of the research articles are discussed in this summarizing report through three aspects of platformizing politics: intimacy, conflict, and vulnerability. These aspects address, first, the increasing relevance of platforms in shaping everyday political practices with and around media; second, the friction between consensus-driven Finnish political culture and the pervasive visibility of political conflict on social media; and third, the ways in which platforms, despite their egalitarian promises, can amplify and obscure – and in some cases even help to mitigate – gendered injustices of the social world. The dissertation concludes that platformization both challenges and cherishes contemporary Finnish democracy: While maintaining a critical stance on tech giants' power and the political media cultures fostered by data-driven systems, the dissertation emphasizes the variety of outcomes when new media technologies meet with individual desires and the political world.

KEYWORDS: social media, politics, activism, political agency, platformization, datafication, mediatization, emotion, affect, politicians, gender minorities, intimacy, agonism, vulnerability

TURUN YLIOPISTO
Humanistinen tiedekunta
Historian, kulttuurin ja taiteiden tutkimuksen laitos
Sukupuolentutkimus
Julius Hokkanen: Politiikan alustoituminen: Intiimiys, konflikti ja haavoittuvuus dataistuneen median aikakaudella
Väitöskirja, 158 s.
Historian, kulttuurin ja taiteiden tutkimuksen tohtoriohjelma (Juno)
Toukokuu 2025

TIIVISTELMÄ

Sosiaalinen media politiikan areenana on kerännyt huomattavan määrän julkista huomiota ja akateemista kiinnostusta. Yhtäältä alustojen on katsottu edistävän poliittista osallistumista. Toisaalta niiden kaupallista luonnetta ja datavetoista toimintamallia on pidetty eräänä syynä läntisten demokratioiden rappeutumiselle. Tutkielma osallistuu keskusteluihin tarkastelemalla suomalaisten poliittisten toimijoiden sosiaalisen median käyttöön liittyviä kokemuksia. Se tuottaa tietoa niin kutsutusta politiikan alustoitumisesta ja erottuu siten näkökulmista, jotka painottavat alustojen erityistä roolia mediassa tehtävän näkyvyystyön välineinä. Alustoituminen kutsuu tarkastelemaan sosiaalisen median asemaa poliittisen toiminnan arkisena osana ja sitä mahdollistavana taustarakenteena. Tällöin se tuottaa hyvin erilaisia kokemuksia, käytäntöjä ja kuvitelmia demokratioiden suunnasta ja tulevaisuudesta. Alustoituminen ohjaa politiikassa toimivia pohtimaan, millainen toiminta on uuden median ajassa toivottua ja hyväksyttävää. Lisäksi se saattaa puntaroimaan laajemmin ”politiikan” ja ”poliittisen” merkitystä ja luonnetta.

Tutkielmassa alustoitumista tarkastellaan digitaaliseksi arjeksi nimetyn tutkimusmenetelmän avulla. Menetelmä omaksuttiin osaksi *Intiimiys datavetoisessa kulttuurissa* -hanketta, jossa väitöskirjatyö on tehty. Menetelmä keskittyy poliittisten toimijoiden päivittäisiin kokemuksiin alustoilla ja alustojen kanssa, ja se korostaa toimijoiden arjen käytäntöjen ja tuntemusten merkitystä politiikassa, haastaen käsitystä politiikasta ennalta määriteltynä alueena. Siksi tutkielmassa nojataan feministiseen politiikkakäsitykseen, joka antaa yhteiskunnallista painoarvoa myös varsinaisten poliittisten instituutioiden ulkopuolelle jääville yksityisemmille kokemuksille. Tämän lähtökohdan vuoksi tutkielmassa tarkastellaan hyvin erilaisia poliittisia toimijoita: kansanedustajia, nuoria, tavoitteellisia poliitikkoja sekä sukupuolivähemmistöihin kuuluvia sosiaalisen median käyttäjiä. Tutkimusaineistona on 52 haastattelua ja 28 mediapäiväkirjaa.

Yhteenvetoraportti kokoaa yhteen kolme tutkimusartikkelia. Artikkeli I keskittyy nuoriin tavoitteellisiin poliitikkoihin. Se tarkastelee alustojen toimintaperiaatteiden eli ”sosiaalisen median logiikan” ja poliitikkojen toimijuuden välistä suhdetta. Artikkelissa käsitellään kysymystä alustavallan vaikutuksesta politiikan syvään medioitumiseen. Artikkeli II suuntaa katseensa sosiaalista mediaa käyttävien suomalaisten sukupuolivähemmistöjen kokemuksiin. Artikkelissa pureudutaan siihen, miten alustat – hämärtäessään julkisen ja yksityisen välistä rajaa – vaikuttavat

kokemuksiin poliittisesta toimijuudesta ja muuttavat laajemmin ymmärrystä politiikassa toimimisesta. Artikkeli III tarkastelee sekä kansanedustajia että nuoria poliitikkoja. Se keskittyy sekä poliitikkojen käsityksiin että luovimiseen ideologisten erojen ja konfliktien sävyttämässä mediamaastossa. Artikkelissa esitetään, että alustat ovat deliberatiivisen eli keskustelevan demokratian sijasta agonistisia tiloja, jotka vaativat politiikkaan osallistuvilta yhä enemmän tunteiden käsittelyä ja hallintaa.

Yhteenveto tarkastelee artikkelien löydöksiä kolmesta näkökulmasta, joita ovat intiimiys, konflikti ja haavoittuvuus. Näkökulmat tuovat esiin ensinnäkin sen, miten alustoitunut media vaikuttaa yhä enemmän arjen poliittisiin käytäntöihin sekä median parissa että sen ympärillä. Toiseksi näkökulmat valottavat konsensushakuisen suomalaisen poliittisen kulttuurin ja alustoilla alati vaikuttavan konfliktin välistä kitkaisuutta. Kolmanneksi näkökulmien kautta hahmottuu, millä tavoin sosiaalisen median alustat – tasa-arvolupauksistaan huolimatta – voivat voimistaa ja hämärtää sekä osaltaan myös ehkäistä sukupuoleen kytkeytyvää yhteiskunnallista epäoikeudenmukaisuutta. Väitöskirjan johtopäätöksenä on, että alustoituminen haastaa ja hellii suomalaista demokratiaa: vaikka teknologiajättien valtaa ja datavetoisten järjestelmien muovaamaa poliittista mediakulttuuria tarkastellaan väitöstyössä kriittisesti, työ korostaa moninaisia seurauksia, jotka syntyvät politiikan, mediateknologioiden ja inhimillisen toiminnan keskinäisessä puristuksessa.

ASIASANAT: sosiaalinen media, politiikka, aktivismi, poliittinen toimijuus, alustoituminen, dataistuminen, medioituminen, tunne, affekti, poliitikot, sukupuolivähemmistöt, intiimiys, agonismi, haavoittuvuus

Acknowledgements

Well, it has been quite a ride.

I owe the deepest thanks to my supervisor and colleague, Professor Anu Koivunen. We first met in 2018, when you became my master's thesis supervisor. Since then, you have played a major role in inspiring me to pursue a doctoral degree. I vividly remember the day when you pulled me aside around the time I was finishing my master's thesis and, quite unexpectedly, asked if I would be interested in joining a newly funded project *Intimacy in Data-Driven Culture* (IDA). As someone who had always been uncertain about themselves but had dreamed of continuing in academia, this was an enormously happy moment. Ever since, I have admired your intellectual depth and how you approach science across disciplines. This is reflected in the way you have supervised my research, as well as in the generous and detailed feedback you have always offered to others. I can only hope that I will be able to cherish these traits in my own career.

I thank my second supervisor, Professor Susanna Paasonen, who stepped in to supervise me during the final stretch of my dissertation project. Although our time together has been shorter, your work has had a major influence on my thinking. Your experience in media theory has given me confidence in writing about platformization, and I have thoroughly enjoyed being around your presence: the academic world would be a better place if there were more genuine, lively, and eccentric people like you.

I would also like to thank Professor Johanna Kantola, who started as my supervisor in 2020 at Tampere University. Due to my transfer to University of Turku, as well as my academic hiatus in 2023 – caused by both a breakdown (part of the PhD process of course) and mandatory civil service – changes occurred in my work environment and among my supervisors. Johanna, I thank you for your guidance in the initial years of my research. I continue to admire your research on gender, power, and politics. Your 2018 course on the state of Finnish gender equality sparked my interest in feminist political theory, particularly in the study of formal political institutions. Soon after the course, my first academic job took place in your GePoCo-project. This project, and all the supportive people involved – Anna Elomäki, Paula Koskinen Sandberg, Armi Mustosmäki, Ville Kainulainen,

and Miikaeli Kylä-Laaso – made me want to continue in the academic path and within the field of politics.

The connections made then also continue to shape my future: I want to thank Hanna Ylöstalo, who in 2024 asked if I would be interested in joining a project she had been developing and thinking of seeking funding for. Half a year later, the stars aligned: we got funded! Hanna, I can't wait to work and think with you. Having such exciting future plans has made the final year of my dissertation work so much easier.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Docent Mona Mannevuo and Professor Tuija Saresma, who gave their time to review this dissertation. Mona, I was deeply impressed by the depth of your comments on my work. They helped me refine some of my key arguments and, more importantly, gave me ideas for the future. Tuija, I'm grateful for your thorough feedback. I can't thank you enough for your kind and generous words, and above all, for accepting the role of opponent and taking the time to engage further with my thesis.

This work is a collective effort by everyone involved in the IDA-project. Special thanks go to my closest colleagues Vilja Jaaksi and Aino Koskenniemi. Vilja, thank you for sharing ideas and doing research with me. Your feedback is always superb, and I'm excited to celebrate your dissertation soon after! Aino, your presence and thinking have brought so much life to our work package, despite us most meeting remote. I also want to thank Anne Soronen, without whom my work would not be the same, and Maiju Turunen, who valuably helped us with data collection and its initial analysis.

Furthermore, I thank all the IDA scholars with whom we met regularly during the first years of research: Kaarina Nikunen, Karoliina Talvitie-Lamberg, Sanna Valtonen, and Vilma Lehtinen, as well as Marjo Kolehmainen, Sanna Spisak, Annamari Vänskä, Heikki Tyni, Olli Sotamaa, and Elina Pirjatanniemi. It was so fun thinking with such a diverse and warm group of people. I also want to thank Laura Antola for her immense work in holding the entire project together.

The intellectual environment I studied in deserves a mention. I'm specifically looking at you, *Perunat, The Potatoes*: ten social scientists of the University of Tampere who started in 2014 – Aliisa, Calu, Iida, Inkeri, Juhana, Karoliina, Liban, Mirva, Taru, and Tuna. Even though beer has been – to an extent – replaced by orange juice and the matter of mortgage now seems more interesting than Marx, we remain passionate about the surrounding society and about each other's company. I'm happy that we all meet at least annually in summery Ruovesi, and I'm grateful that you were there when I was taking my first steps in academia. Despite the tremendous amount of anxiety over our professional lives, we have all made it, and I'm sure we will keep making it. I am so proud of us all.

Likewise, I want to thank my teachers, Virve Peteri and Eeva Luhtakallio. Virve, your teaching was both inspiring and encouraging – I wish every first-year university

student could experience such support. Eeva, your experience and enthusiasm for political sociology left a big impact on me.

Of course, I'm grateful to my friends. Markus, I'm lucky to have grown up with you. I think it's fair to say our time together has fundamentally shaped us. Remember the first – and last – time we got detention in elementary school? It was because we discussed a math problem too loudly. Perhaps that gave away our nerdy side. And speaking of nerdiness, I also want to thank Antti and Anders, who made sure the so-called work-life balance stayed in check. Hope the four of us can blast an all-nighter in-game again soon.

Finally, I thank my family for their continued and unconditional support. Panu, my older brother, I've always looked up to you and your curiosity about a variety of things. Mother, Sinikka, and father, Olavi – not only did you teach me how to think, but perhaps more importantly, you encouraged me to find my own path. As Sinikka continuingly reminds us, referring to the 1955 movie starring James Dean: "From an early age, Julius was always a *Rebel Without a Cause* - *Nuori kapinallinen.*" Without this attitude, I likely wouldn't have pursued a degree in gender studies, one of the most politicized disciplines.

Iisa, my partner, thank you for sharing life with me. No book has shaped me or my understanding of the world like you have.

Tampere, May 2025

Table of contents

List of original publications

The dissertation is based on the following original publications, which are referred to in the text by their Roman numerals:

I Hokkanen, Julius. ”Ja jos se ei kelpaa algoritmeille niin sitten ei kelpaa. Se siitä.” Datakäytännöt nuorten poliitikkojen arjessa. *Politiikka*, 2022; 64(2): 98–119.
https://doi.org/10.37452/politiikka.109128

II Hokkanen, Julius. Belonging, responsibility and reflexivity: mediated intimacy among Finnish nonbinary and trans social media users. *Feminist Media Studies,* 2023; published online, 1–17.
https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2023.2285710

III Hokkanen, Julius and Koivunen, Anu. Consensual or conflicting encounters? Finnish politicians' digital lives and platforms as spaces for agonistic pluralism. Submitted to *European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology*.

1 Introduction

Some time in the warmth of summer 2024, the following post found its way onto my X feed: *Hallitus on huolissaan lasten lisääntyneestä ajasta kännykän ääressä* – "The government is worried about the increasing screen time of children using a mobile phone." The text was accompanied by what, according to the timestamp, appeared to be a screen capture of a plenary session. The picture presented Finland's Prime Minister Petteri Orpo and Minister of Finance Riikka Purra seated next each other. The capture was slightly grainy and zoomed in. It provided no additional context, such as whether the session has been opened or if any members of parliament had taken the floor. However, what the post did show was both Orpo and Purra with their eyes very much glued to their mobile phone screens.

The post acquired over 500 likes and 40 shares, making this satirical piece a popular social media post on Finnish-speaking X, especially given that it was updated by an account with only a few thousand followers and no public figure behind it. The post attracted many commentators, one of whom wrote: "Indeed, there are two adolescents (*keskenkasvuinen*), applies to their accomplishments as well!" Another user quipped how "Question time got a toll on them," and a third one ascertained: "Nice example, the members of the government [using phones] themselves." Others were quick to point out that members of the previous government were "guilty" of similar behavior. This highlights the dynamics of social media debates where (other) users are frequently suspected of saliently expressing their political views. However, no claims were made about any ideological shortcomings of Orpo or Purra in the original post, nor was there even a significant ideological divide between the right and the left in the matter of *screen time*.

This anecdote is one example of the so-called *digital backlash* or *techlash* (see e.g. Helles & Lomborg 2024). Technologies that at first promised connection and connectedness, freedom from the repressiveness of mass media, individuality and autonomy, now themselves face a broad range of critiques. Not only are virtual screens suspected of stealing our time by making us addicted – tech giants like Facebook, Google, and Amazon are accused of exploiting our data and violating our privacy through "rogue data operations" (Zuboff 2019, p. 482). The code that powers platform newsfeeds and connections has also been linked to the rise of

disinformation and political polarization that may destabilize entire Western democracies (Settle 2018; Vaidhyanathan 2018). These critiques wish to place the human, instead of technology, on the driver's seat once again. Of course, the fears are in many regards justified. We have learned how tech moguls like Mark Zuckerberg, Steve Jobs, and Bill Gates, along with the rest of "Silicon Valley's parents," have been cautious of their own achievements, evidenced by their reluctance to give their own children access to devices and social media sites.[1] These adjustments as well as legislative actions that have taken place (e.g., the EU's GDPR and the AI Act) indicate how trajectories that were once cherished have since produced their own crises and their following counter-movement.

Techlash is the context that predominantly foregrounds today's discussions on the relationship between politics and social media. Not only does the critique directed at Finnish ministers Orpo and Purra scold these politicians for saying one thing and doing another, but it also makes a more general statement about social media use. Its proposition finds social media petty, performative, or posturing – and somehow less relevant than genuine political practices that presumably have real impacts. Mobile screens are conceived of as distractions from political work; sometimes even a threat to our democratic lives. Alongside the monitorial gaze of the public, politicians themselves partake in this public discourse: "Every politician should be less involved in scrolling through Twitter and chasing after trivial matters," emphasized Orpo[2] after returning from medical leave brought about by a heart attack, before his time as prime minister (see Fast & Enli 2024 for similar understandings among politicians).

Formal political institutions and actors are not the only ones being touched by the techlash. Civil society has gone through somewhat similar developments. Even though social media platforms arguably powered many popular protests that took place in different continents at the beginning of the 2010s (e.g., Jackson, Bailey, & Foucault Welles 2020), digitally mediated activism has been pejoratively termed "slacktivism." In this view, online participation is marked by effortlessness and fleetingness – even untruthfulness. Indeed, especially those expressing progressive viewpoints have faced critique. They have been accused of "virtue signaling," that is, privileging their moral appearance over actual political support or action. And as evidenced by today's panic over so-called "wokeness" and its related predecessor,

1 https://www.independent.ie/life/family/parenting/the-tech-moguls-who-invented-social-media-have-banned-their-children-from-it/37494367.html https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/26/style/phones-children-silicon-valley.html; https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/mar/02/silicon-valley-tech-authorities-children-safety-online

2 https://yle.fi/a/3-12043210

"cancel culture," social media platforms have even sparked fears of a supposed decline in freedom of speech, as audiences can quickly and collectively criticize what they perceive as wrong. These ambiguities make the relationship between social media and politics a particularly interesting object of research.

1.1 Background and my approach to politics

The premise in the present dissertation is that the prevailing *zeitgeist*, as described above, does not adequately capture the role of social media platforms in today's political cultures and practices. On one hand, this perspective easily *overplays* the influence of platforms in politics by using "high profile cases" (see Kennedy 2016) to frame platforms as primary drivers of troubling phenomena such as political polarization and the resulting societal unrest. On the other hand, it simultaneously *downplays* platforms' significance by dismissing them as trivial spaces when compared to the formal institutions of "high politics" (see Duncombe 2019) where elites exercise power. In other words, contemporary understanding often fails to address how platforms operate as essential arenas through which today's Western democracies are shaped by mundane, *everyday* practices with media. Platforms are spaces where elected officials communicate policies, seek validation, stay informed on current issues, and challenge their colleagues; where aspiring politicians can build their visibility and reputation; and where citizens, collectively and individually, have political discussions, seek change, or simply strive to make their voices heard. These regular interactions with media and the personal experiences they foster are far from insignificant. They form an integral part of our democratic legacy that shapes politics, even when they are not linked to major events that capture public attention.

My central argument is that social media platforms do not, however, merely influence how politics is practiced. Instead, the very nature of *the political* is undergoing transformation: It takes on new forms and is rearticulated as debates emerge over what is and is not political. Platforms also invite people into very diverse political roles. This shapes what it means to act politically (see Papacharissi 2010). In this sense, social media platforms have created a new space for reconsidering what the political entails and how it should ideally be practiced and by whom, which paves the way for various discussions about the direction and future of democracies in this new era of media. In the light of these tendencies, I suggest that platforms and the power they entail must be taken seriously. However, rather than theorizing platform power in a unidirectional and decontextualized manner, it should be considered in concert with individual agency and through various perspectives.

For this purpose, I, along with my colleagues working in the *Intimacy in Data-Driven Culture* project, collected 52 interviews and 28 media diaries on the *digital*

everyday lives of diverse groups of Finnish political actors: members of parliament (22 interviews), aspiring young politicians (12 interviews and 10 media diaries), and gender minority social media users (18 interviews and 18 media diaries) who either identified as activists or avoided such a label. The motivation behind gathering this unique and experientially rich research material was not to construct a rigorous framework for the relationship between commercial platforms and politics. On the contrary, I argue that a better understanding of the platformization of politics can be gained only when attention is directed toward everyday experiences with the media, and the varying contexts and social positions from which these experiences arise.

Before turning to the concept of platformization and the research debates the dissertation draws from, my approach to the political needs to be elaborated. With the concept of politics, I refer to a broad view of the political field. I adopt a feminist perspective that points to the necessity of studying relations of power "in all social contexts and times, in formal and informal institutions" (Kantola & Lombardo 2017, p. 137). Indeed, feminist scholars have long challenged mainstream political theory for its reliance on a liberal notion of citizenship and the following assumption that there exists a clear separation between private and public spheres of society and human existence (Okin 1991). This liberal view problematically rendered the public as the true realm for "the political" and resulted in all matters deemed "personal," such as the family and the gendered division of labor implied in the family norm, were – and often are – being considered nonpolitical (ibid., p. 71). Feminist scholarship contested this seemingly natural separation by revealing the political in the personal and how the liberal notion was itself dependent on a conception of sexual difference: As argued by Pateman (1988), women's subordination made the liberal notion of politics, and the conception of an individual who may freely partake in the political, possible. These critiques gained force from seminal thinkers like de Beauvoir, whose political philosophy fundamentally questioned sexual difference: "[t]o pose Woman is to pose the absolute Other, without reciprocity, denying against all experience that she is a subject, a fellow human being" (1993[1949]), pp. 267–268).

Despite decades of feminist critique, this liberal understanding of politics remains dominant in the public consciousness on platformizing politics, as interest in the democratic implications of platforms tends to focus on major polemics, while their everyday political significance is often dismissed as trivial posting and browsing. Fraser (1990) importantly highlights that the conception of a common public sphere not only has historically excluded minorities from decision-making but is also rooted in masculinist and bourgeois assumptions. She maintains that institutionalized arenas serve as the primary locus for reasoned public debate, with the "common good" as their ultimate goal. She thus critiques this perspective for falsely unifying highly different interests and making it harder to recognize the

"multiplicity of competing publics" as vital to democracy (ibid., p. 62). Following Fraser, I view politics as a conflictual process between competing publics, which makes the political a dimension inherent to human societies (see also Mouffe 1993). This view is different from notion of deliberation in which politics is consensus-driven, reasoned decision-making – an understanding of politics that is particularly common in the Finnish multiparty system. However, again siding with Fraser, I am not naïve to assume that removing formal barriers to entry would solve systemic injustices and make every political actor equally able to participate and be heard.

Adopting a feminist perspective means that my approach to the platformization of politics does not center on formal political institutions or the realm of government, even though my empirical material includes actors associated with these political bodies. Instead, my interest lies in the forms of action that take place in a media-saturated, platformizing society. What is of my concern is not only political practices where something concrete is done through media but also the "relationship between the political world and the ideas held by political actors about that political world" (Hay 2002, p. 60). Indeed, when our participants' diary entries note how they used time and energy to word their social media posts in a way that does not "attract trolls" or get their name and picture "placed on far-right blacklists," as was written by a young politician, or when they refrain from posting "any kind of heavy topic" in an attempt to make social media more bearable for their audiences, as was expressed by a gender minority participant, they talk about their practices within and their relation to the political world – while also acting politically. Such everyday political practices and imaginations are central to politics. They challenge the binary between formal and informal politics and show how politics is "made of processes and practices that mobilize people's emotions in different directions" (Kantola & Lombardo 2017, p. 155).

With platformed media, a perspective that emphasizes everyday experiences is not merely important for my explicitly feminist project. I propose that only by carefully analyzing practices and feelings of media use can we understand what Papacharissi (2010, p. 77) describes as the *elusiveness of politics* in a digital age, where "space is colonized by activities that combine the social, commercial, political, and cultural, but do not define them in isolation." Indeed, Papacharissi argues that in digital and contemporary democracies – or perhaps today, platformizing democracies – it makes less sense to discuss an institutionalized political arena as the space where the political truly resides (ibid., p. 79). Instead, as platforms architecturally connect autonomous private spheres, place emphasis on the self, and challenge the idea of a shared public good, they contribute to engaging in democracy through self-reflexivity and expressions of dissent (ibid., pp. 78–79, 166–167; see also Bennett & Segerberg 2012; Andrejevic & Volcic 2020). This elusiveness of politics aligns with Luhtakallio and Eranti, and their colleagues

(2024), who propose the notion of *doing society* for analyzing politics as a commonplace practice exercised by virtually every citizen. This stresses the necessity of considering all kinds of imaginations, engagements, and acts relevant, for they are the mundane cultural patterns that build and rebuild democracy (Luhtakallio & Eranti 2024, pp. 5–6). The long tradition of democracy has never been about a particular political system and the authoritative use of power through institutions; it entails a way of life that takes place in all sectors of society (see Alhanen & Perhoniemi 2017, pp. 10–11).

These approaches to politics that highlight both the role of the everyday and "unequal relations in 'the political'" (Kantola & Lombardo 2017, p. 137) explain why I have been fascinated by the digital everyday lives of political actors. Though our research participants occupied different social positions – some firmly within core political institutions, some striving to enter them, some driving change through civil society, and others who do not even see themselves as political actors – they were all connected by platforms. These platforms, and the politics surrounding them, both constrain and enable new possibilities for claiming power and practicing politics. Even though I seek to emphasize how platforms create distinct possibilities for people in different social locations that shape their experiences with media and political life more broadly, I also stress how all social actors are shaped by platforms that impact their ability to act.

In what follows, I clarify what I mean by the term *platform*. In doing so, I highlight how platforms are indeed spaces of power, as they can shape user interactions and affect social actors' lives. Next, I introduce the concept of platformization, which indicates how platforms extend their influence beyond the individual and instead shape the development of entire societal sectors and the cultural understandings surrounding these sectors. Finally, I show how platformization takes place in the political field by considering the relationship between social media and politics. Building on these research debates, I then elaborate on my own approach to platformizing politics.

1.2 Platforms as spaces of power

The mid-2000s introduced a new era in media as the availability of better software and the massive decrease in the costs of data storage led to the emergence of *platforms* (Manovich 2009, p. 319; Kitchin & Dodge 2011, p. 8). By definition, platforms are digital or programmable architectures that organize users' interactions with other users as well as with corporate and public entities (Srnicek 2016, p. 43; Van Dijck, Poell, & de Waal 2018, p. 4). The functionality of platforms builds upon "systematic collection, algorithmic processing, circulation, and monetization of user data" (Van Dijck, Poell, & de Waal 2018, p. 4). In other words, platforms are fueled

by extracted and processed user data, which is made possible by the proliferation of digital technologies, especially in the accumulation and analysis of data.[3] The platform economy evolved in light of these developments and as a response to different crises facing capitalist economies, in particular the U.S., as firms sought new venues for productivity and profitability through technological innovation, outsourcing, and monopolization (Srnicek 2016).

However, platforms are not only computational entities but also a "new type of firm" (Srnicek 2016, p. 48) guided by their own economic aims. Gillespie (2010) argues that the term *platform* was deliberately adopted and fostered by 21st-century technological companies primarily for two reasons. First, these companies wish to invoke the idea of egalitarianism and freedom of expression, implicitly challenging mainstream broadcasters for their role as gatekeeper (see also Dror 2015). Second, they seek to "position themselves as just hosting" (Gillespie 2010, p. 357), which makes them less liable for the content they distribute. This discursive work strategically downplays the role of platforms in their attempts to "inhabit the middle" (ibid., p. 356) where they are neutral enough to avoid responsibility yet active enough to attract advertisers.

Therefore, despite platforms' neutral rhetoric, they "embody a politics" (Srnicek 2016, p. 47). This means that they operate as spaces of power. Although platforms present themselves as neutral facilitators, they create rules that shape user actions. Platforms steer how users connect, the extent to which users can or cannot express themselves, and the types of content that are shown – or hidden – from users (e.g., Gillespie 2010; Bucher 2018; Karppi 2018; Saariketo 2020). A central mechanism behind these processes is the production of and reliance on "network effects" (Srnicek 2016, p. 45). This refers to a platform's value being dependent on the number of people using it. Users themselves are more satisfied when people, content, and services are available, and active users are essential for platforms' economic aims as they depend on user-generated data to improve their services, such as search algorithms or personalized newsfeeds. As Karppi (2018) argues, platforms like Facebook are dependent on user engagement, which is why it is in their interest to make disconnection from the platform difficult – if not impossible.

[3] This process is referred to as datafication, which underscores the technological advancements through which spheres of human activity that were previously unobservable have become tracked, quantified, and analyzed for value creation through all sorts of activities (Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier 2013; van Dijck 2014; Couldry & Yu 2018; Zuboff 2019, pp. 186–187).

1.3 Platformization as a contested cultural process

The tendency toward monopolization and the endless growth of user bases have advanced the *platformization* of societies. The concept can be approached in at least three ways. First, platformization is a process "in which entire societal sectors are transforming as a result of the mutual shaping of online connectors and complementors" (van Dijck, Poell, & de Waal 2018, p. 19). The transformations taking place in the field of journalism is one example of platformization: Even legacy media organizations have needed to adjust to the platform ecosystem in their production, distribution, and monetization of news (van Dijck, Poell, & de Waal 2018, p. 49ff; cf. Penttilä, Ovaska, & Ahva 2024, pp. 41–43). Second, the concept refers to platforms' efforts in operationalizing an "infrastructural agenda" (Nieborg & Helmond 2019, p. 211). This means that platforms aim to become systems on which entire sectors of society depend. Third, platformization is defined as a process in which *cultural practices* and *imaginations* reorganize around platforms (Poell, Nieborg, & van Dijck 2019, p. 6). In the dissertation, this third description is the most important one. Even though these different formulations of platformization are interconnected, it extends beyond technological and economic aspects in certain sectors and captures the changing conditions for both politics and individual agency.

The most apparent way in which platformization is present, as it pertains to how people culturally exist and go about are lives, is found in perspectives that emphasize a further embedding of media in everyday life – "the integration of media-based processes and relations into the very elements from which the self sustains its project as a self" (Couldry & Hepp 2017, pp. 166–167). Or as Karppi (2018, p. 9) notes, today's data-driven media serves as a "technosocial fabric" conditioning the possibilities people have and constructing the context in which human existence takes shape.

As platforms track and learn about our "intimate patterns of the self" (Zuboff 2019, p. 199), the potentially detrimental and damaging effects of platformization have gained much public and scholarly interest. From the shifts happening in cultural fields like music (Eriksson et al. 2019; Siles et al. 2022), to the close monitoring and intensification of workers' productivity (O'Neil 2016; Chan 2019) or companies' use of personal health data to determine insurance eligibility (Eubanks 2019; Favaretto et al. 2019), human behavior is shaped by both the promises and the perils of data-driven platforms. Consequently, captured by ideas like surveillance capitalism (Zuboff 2019) and data colonialism (Couldry & Mejias 2018), platform power is argued to be problematic not only in terms of individual privacy but also in its ability to diminish agency by modifying and even manipulating human behavior (Vaidhyanathan 2018, p. 35; Zuboff 2019, p. 9; cf. Andrejevic 2011, p. 76).

On the other hand, some scholars have challenged what they view as overtly pessimistic framing of platform power. For instance, Burgess and her colleagues

(2022) critique perspectives that predominantly focus on the oppressive nature of data use, such as in surveillance capitalism (see also Kennedy 2016). In their view, an overemphasis on platform power (e.g., manipulation) might actually amplify the dominant rhetoric of technology companies rather than challenge it. It is then everyday life "where the politics of digital transformation are worked through in practice, as people negotiate, wrangle, learn and struggle with or against data-intensive technologies, in the context of their own bodies, lives, communities and histories" (Burgess et al. 2022, p. 9). In this strand, Ruckenstein (2023, pp. 8, 21) proposes considering the "coexistence of anxiety and routinized utility" as she calls for empirical research that goes beyond the (supposed) harmful effects of data-driven platforms and technologies. Others stress the interplay between culture and technological shifts as they challenge a view according to which devices and platforms alone explain the transformations taking place today (e.g., boyd 2014; Paasonen 2021).

The dissertation sides with approaches that emphasize both the ambivalence of platforms and their dynamic interplay with culture, as these dynamics stand out in its interview and diary material: Some MPs stress how they would leave social media platforms instantly if given the choice, while others acknowledge their practical benefits but repeatedly stress the effort required to make use of them bearable. One young, aspiring politician, in turn, even found public concern over platforms' time-consuming nature puzzling, considering them instead as sites where politics – the very thing they are passionate about – actively happens. Meanwhile, for one of their peers, platforms appeared as an unavoidable "circumstance" (*olosuhde*) that had to be lived with. Similar ambivalence was evident among gender minority participants: Platforms can harm, but they are also arenas for social and political life offering recognition, community, knowledge, and means to subtly drive change. At the same time, they are sites where progress is met with resistance. From this vague mix of practices and emotions, I aim to understand the platformization of politics and the transformation of the political itself. Throughout the dissertation, I show how engagements with platforms can also genuinely create openings for new imaginations about one's position, role, and participation in democracy. As Burgess and her colleagues (2022, p. 29) note: "data portraits are not effective in capturing the full richness and messiness of the events, rituals and everyday encounters […] everyday routines and actions add up to more than the sum of their parts."

1.4 Social media, platform power, and politics as a field of study

The relationship between social media platforms and politics – both formal and informal – is particularly interesting because of the stormy developments since the

beginning 21st century. These developments, in turn, have stimulated public imaginations as to where Western democracies are headed (see e.g. Papacharissi 2010, p. 8; Fast & Enli 2024). Indeed, platforms were initially celebrated for their ability to democratize political communication and electoral participation. In institutional politics, this was exemplified by the 2008 Barack Obama campaign in which the political social network my.barackobama.com, built and led by Facebook co-founder Chris Hughes, was at the center of the campaign's strategy as it helped create engagement and foster a sense of community (Harfoush 2009, pp. 74–75). In the context of grassroots movements, the series of popular uprisings that took place in Northern Africa and the Middle East between 2010 and 2012, especially in Tunisia, Egypt, and Yemen – dubbed the Arab Spring by Western commentators – was seen a revolution made possible by social media (see Jackson, Bailey, & Foucault Welles 2020; cf. Wolfsfeld, Segev, & Sheafer 2013). These uprisings, along with protests like the Occupy movement, helped shape the widely held view of social media as powerful "tools" for activism (van Dijck, Poell, & de Waal 2018, p. 31).

On the other hand, utopian narratives that emphasized the new potential of platforms were soon accompanied by highly different imaginations as skepticism grew about the operating principles and motivations of commercial platforms. These concerns entered public consciousness especially after NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden's 2013 leaks, which exposed the "intergovernmental surveillant assemblage" (see Cheney-Lippold 2017, p. 155) of the U.S. government and underscored the severe repercussions for people's right to privacy. Only a few years later, the 2016 U.S. elections and victory of Doland Trump amplified the fears, as what was at stake was no longer simply privacy but also platforms' potential for influencing opinions and behaviors (e.g., Zuboff 2019, pp. 272–280; Matz, Appel, & Kosinski 2020).[4]

Amid these trends, studies have shown how Big Tech have permeated political campaigning and contributed to *hypermedia* (Lilleker, Tenscher, & Štětka 2014),

[4] At the heart of the scandal was Cambridge Analytica, a "consulting firm" also associated with the 2016 Brexit referendum. The firm had illicitly collected personal data from millions of Facebook users – that is, without their awareness – and allegedly used this data to craft personality profiles for psychologically tailored advertising (e.g., Zuboff 2019, pp. 272–280; Matz, Appel, & Kosinski 2020). Arguably, what was new about this form of "behavioral modification" was the use of meta-data: Instead of analyzing content that was permeated by human valuations, e.g., favorite TV shows and playlists, personality traits could be predicted – and much more accurately – from subtle and unconscious behavior such as users' clickstreams and the general amount of information shared. The knowledge about a user's personality would in turn be used to tailor services so that users would be as receptive as possible to the political advertising (Zuboff 2019, pp. 271–272; cf. Hauser et al. 2009).

technology-intensive (Kreiss 2016), as well as *data-driven campaigning* (e.g., Baldwin-Philippi 2017; see also Kreiss & McGregor 2017; Bossetta 2018). Analyzing the 2016 U.S. elections, Kreiss and McGregor (2017, p. 167) demonstrate, for instance, not only that platforms were unidirectionally utilized but also that technology firm staffers actually served as "quasi-digital consultants" of the campaigns. Somewhat similar possibilities have opened for social movements, as data-driven platforms have fostered mobilization by enabling the rapid circulation of content (Bennett & Segerberg 2012, p. 742), hence creating space for emancipatory forms of citizenship through "hashtag activism" (Jackson, Bailey, & Foucault Welles 2020).

Described above are some key trends that have taken place in the past two decades. However, the phrase *platformization of politics* has rarely been used and mainly in a descriptive sense underscoring the "increased reliance on social media in the political field" (see Fast & Enli 2024, p. 139; cf. Borucki & Vittori 2020; Liubimau 2022). Research on the platformization of politics has highlighted the practical *purpose* (Reunanen & Harju 2012, p. 133) and *importance* (Larsson & Skogerbø 2018, pp. 230–231) of social media for activities like self-promotion and electoral mobilization (see also Strandberg 2013; Strandberg & Borg 2020). In other words, the emphasis has been on how platforms have become central arenas in which activists mobilize and gain support for their social cause and politicians are able to connect to citizens and reach the electorate.

Unlike much of the existing research, I approach the platformization of politics by focusing on how it is experienced and lived in the digital everyday lives of Finnish politicians and gender minority social media users. When situating my dissertation within the research literature, I consider there to be three particularly relevant debates to draw from. The first of these debates centers on how political behavior individualizes and how platforms are *felt on the skin* (see Reunanen & Harju 2012). In social movement research, these changes have been conceptualized as a shift from *collective* to *connective action* (Bennett & Segerberg 2012). Connective action underscores the self-motivatedness of action through digital media, which highlights the role of personal hopes and grievances as opposed to collective identities and organizing. Action through social media thus reveals a "different economic and psychological logic: co-production and sharing based on personalized expression" (ibid., p. 752). In this individualizing way, commercial platforms are "antithetical to community formation" because they can also make collective action fleeting and hinder progressive change (Poell & van Dijck 2015, p. 534; cf. Dean 2009; A'Lee Frost 2020). For gender minorities, in particular, platforms have presented a fundamental change. As Billard argues (2024, p. 7), the trans movement "emerged from within this unsettled media environment. Unlike many other movements, it did not adapt to the changes wrought by digital technologies; it was forged by them."

For Billard, the unsettled media environment refers to the post mass-mediated era in which communication disperses into various, smaller publics. Many others highlight how digital media thus itself contributes to the cultivation of trans identities (e.g., Horak 2014; Cavalcante 2016; Haimson et al. 2021).

The movement toward personalization has also affected politicians. It coheres with the privatization, individualization, and even intimization of politics, which refer to how private matters are brought onto media and how public interest is directed to individual politicians as opposed to political parties (see Isotalus 2017, p. 84; Stanyer 2013; cf. Larsson & Kalsnes 2014, p. 664). It was observed early that television marked a profound change in political communication (Sennett 2013[1974]; Negrine 2008). Rulers had to adapt to this new medium that made their personality and intimate life a focus of interest, as they were no longer observed "from the alienating distance of the stage" (Schickel 2000, p. 10, cited in Stanyer 2013). The introduction of social media amplified these tendencies. Research on politicians' social media use indicates that authenticity (Enli 2016) and the "ability to appear ordinary, imperfect" as well as "everyday and normal" (Wood, Corbett, & Flinders 2016, p. 582; cf. Isotalus 2017, pp. 215–216) are key parts of being successful in this new communicative sphere.

In her research on Finnish MPs' experiences of social media, Mannevuo (2022) shows that what is at stake is not merely strategic performance; platforms are actually an "ambivalent glue that holds things together" (ibid., p. 3; see also Paasonen 2021, p. 20). This means that they can be both uncontrollable and potentially harmful spaces as well as key locations to build affirmative sociality with colleagues and citizens. Finnish MPs have even felt a need to remain accessible and responsive to citizens' particular concerns (Mannevuo 2020, pp. 420–422; cf. Isotalus 2017, p. 215). Similar ideas were expressed by New Zealand MP Clare Curran, who was interviewed about social media by Ross and Bürger (2014, p. 53): "[people] can see you as a human being […] it allows you to build relationships," and British MP Ian Lavery, who was interviewed by McLoughlin (2019, p. 120): "you get in their bedroom, you get in their sitting room, or you get in their kitchen without irritating them." However, on the downside, feelings of "entrapment and distraction" (Fast & Enli 2024, p. 146) hinder agency, as there is no switching off from the instant and ubiquitous politics of social media (Flinders et al. 2020; p. 266; Mannevuo, Rinne, & Vento 2022; also Article I; Hokkanen, Koivunen, & Turunen 2021).

The second debate relates to discussions that have directed attention to how social media shapes public and political discourse. Studying candidate–constituent interaction on Twitter and Facebook, Nelimarkka and his colleagues (2020) for instance find that while Twitter is associated with opining-sharing and seeking information, Facebook is used more often for formal campaigning, praising, and expressing support. In what the authors term "platformed interactions,"

communication is platform-specific. Hence, it is shaped by forces that are not necessarily in support of public or democratic values (ibid., p. 10). In this sense, platformization affects and even takes hold of political practices and discourse (see also Knuutila & Laaksonen 2020).

Concerns have particularly revolved around whether platforms' design features, graphical user interfaces, algorithms, and other elements operate as "emotional architectures" (Wahl-Jørgensen 2018) that have the ability to facilitate and steer users toward communication that is uncivil, even hostile (Ott 2017; Sano-Franchini 2018). This, again, would undermine key democratic values such as rational discourse and mutual respect (e.g., Bratslavsky, Carpenter, & Zompetti 2019; Duncombe 2019). Subsequently, social media platforms are often framed as a central cause of political polarization (e.g., Settle 2018; Overgaard 2024). Many indications suggest that affective polarization has indeed increased in Finland and around the world (Kekkonen & Ylä-Anttila 2021; Gronow & Malkamäki 2024; Iyengar, Sood, & Lelkes 2012; Ward & Tavits 2019; Frimer et al. 2023) although, in Finland, the level of affective polarization has remained quite static since 2011 (Kawecki & Kekkonen 2024, p. 238). Nonetheless, the extent to which polarization can be explained by social media platforms – as is commonly done – remains vague (see Kubin & von Sikorski 2021; Nordbrandt 2023).

The third research debate pertains to mediated hate speech and increased monitoring of individuals. In what have been termed "infrastructures of incivility" (see Bratslavsky, Carpenter, & Zompetti 2019 on Twitter), the platformization of politics has raised questions about whether online hostility has drastically undermined the political agency specifically of women and marginalized populations who are disproportionately targeted by online harassment and hate speech (Pew research 2014; CSPL 2017; Chemaly 2019; Knuutila et al. 2019; Mannevuo 2020). Research on feminist activism shows that heightened visibility can lead to networked hate as platforms connect all sorts of actors (e.g., Fotopoulou 2016; Banet-Weiser 2018; Kanai & McGrane 2021). Visibility is thus linked to digital surveillance, which is not only conducted at the state level (e.g., Hintz, Dencik, & Wahl-Jørgensen 2019, pp. 112–114) but is also organic action. For instance, Megarry (2018) notes how digital feminist activism is practiced under "the watchful eyes of men." Thus, platforms can provide increased opportunities for close and constant monitoring of women's organizing (see also Kuntsman 2017). In a similar vein, the growing visibility of trans representation online has sparked a backlash, with trans rights emerging as "the flashpoint du jour of the American culture wars" (Billard 2024, p. 17). In Finland, during a legislative process to reform trans law, social media faced criticism from conservative MPs who accused it of enabling and fostering the "social contagion" of what were believed to be false identities. Hence, even though connective action provides new venues for social

movements, collective behavior also becomes structured by the very systems that seem to enable it (Dolata & Schrape 2016, p. 6; see also Poell & van Dijck 2015).

Also in the Finnish context, Saresma and her colleagues (2020) conceptualize different forms of mediated hate speech – the various ways in which political actors are threatened and targeted by derogatory and discriminatory speech acts – as political violence. Despite its being "only" verbal, it operates as a kind of symbolic violence that causes the receiver to experience feelings of threat, anxiety, or fear (ibid., p. 20). At the same time, the idea of online hate speech and whom it touches have been politicized, as is evidenced by the ways in which groups not conventionally viewed as marginalized have attempted to appropriate language on vulnerability (see ibid., p. 19; Koivunen, Kyrölä, & Ryberg 2018; Klein 2024, p. 142). For instance, in 2021, the leader of the national-conservative Finns Party, Jussi Halla-aho, tweeted:[5] "Amid all the fuss about hate speech and playing the victim, it is sometimes good to remind ourselves of the facts." In the tweet, Halla-aho refers to a page of a research report by Knuutila and his colleagues (2019). While that page shows that men who act in Finnish politics, especially the most well-known figures, also receive abusive messages, the general findings of the report underscored the disproportionateness of these message (see also Saresma et al. 2020; cf. Van Sant, Fredheim, & Bergmanis-Korāts 2021).

1.5 Aims and research questions

The dissertation explicitly brings platformization and my feminist approach to research on social media, politics, and activism. Leaning toward the cultural studies notion of platformization as a process in which practices and imaginations are reorganized around platforms (Poell, Nieborg, & van Dijck 2019), I focus on the experiences of Finnish political actors who – in a conventional understanding – exist both at the center as well as at the very edges of the political world. This approach is only possible through – and only makes sense in – a multidisciplinary setting, which is why I travel between gender studies, media studies, and cultural studies as well as sociology and political science. This setting is present in the selection of journals in which the articles were published or by which they are under process: the Finnish journal *Politiikka* (a political science journal of The Finnish Political Science Association), *Feminist Media Studies*, and *European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology*.

As I have noted, the research literature presented in the previous chapter provides three particularly relevant frames of reference. These center on the individualization

5 https://x.com/Halla_aho/status/1372917593678417921

and personalization of politics, the ways platforms amplify the role of (presumably) negative emotions in politics, and how they further exacerbate societal inequalities in political cultures through online hate. Considering my multidisciplinary and everyday approach, these frames serve as the backbone of my approach, which studies the platformization of politics through three key aspects: 1) intimacy, 2) conflict, and 3) vulnerability. While these aspects are related to prior research, the notions of intimacy and vulnerability also animated our entire research project. Even though some of these aspects are more prominent in specific articles (e.g., intimacy is more central to Articles I and II, while conflict is more relevant to Article III), my aim is to tie the articles together through these aspects in this summarizing report. Intimacy, conflict, and vulnerability also serve as the foundation for my research questions (i.e., one primary question and three sub-questions), addressed in the results and discussion in Chapter 4. The research questions are as follows:

How is the platformization of politics present in the digital everyday lives of Finnish political actors, and how does platformization shape the political sphere more broadly?

1. How do platforms intimately influence political practices and experiences?
2. How is political conflict discussed and framed in the context of platformizing politics, and what is implied in this sense-making?
3. In what way do platforms affect experiences and perceptions of vulnerability among different political actors?

In our research material, intimacy marks the numerous ways in which platforms are felt on the skin. By doing so, they operate as infrastructures (Paasonen 2018; Paasonen et al. 2023) that organize the rhythms of everyday life (Article I) and, as Soronen and Koivunen (2022, p. 1347) note, through which "attachments and imagined presences of others" are assessed (Article II). One example of this is when gender minority participants considered what they thought their audience expected of their role and the form of their content, which ambiguously shaped their practices with and feelings about social media. "I notice that I have also partaken in, it's not really activism within one's community, but a kind of let me, as a nonbinary person, explain my life and identity to you cishetero folks," said one participant when they characterized their relationship to platformed activism. This expression challenges the notion of activism as mere political activity aimed at influencing others' opinions. Instead, it emphasizes one's own social circle as a central aspect through which change occurs.

Conflict is another aspect of how platformization organizes practices with and imaginations about media. It mirrors popular debates on political polarization and

considers the extent to which platformization hinders or enables democratic debate. In Finland's multiparty democracy, this is particularly interesting because it shines light on the tensions between a political culture rooted in consensus-building and the conflict-driven nature of digital platforms. Most participants deemed social media as having eroded civility in political discussion. This was the reason many found platforms emotionally exhausting, while only a few considered platforms' potential for acknowledging and dealing with ideological difference (Article III). For instance, an MP whom we interviewed maintained that Instagram was the most pleasant social media for them because "on Instagram, there hasn't developed the same kind of, maybe racket (*vöyhötys*) isn't the right word, but that trolling culture that exists on Twitter, even Facebook. So, I see Instagram as more of a platform for collaboration and, perhaps, a feel-good space."

Finally, vulnerability highlights how, despite platforms' seeming neutrality, they operate as spaces that impact political actors differently depending on their social location. This reflects broader debates on hate speech, incivility, and harassment in digital spaces (e.g., Fotopoulou 2016; Saresma et al. 2020; Mannevuo 2022, pp. 113–115). In this sense, taking vulnerability into account is crucial for understanding how structures of power shape political lives. As the quote above suggests, vulnerability calls forth careful consideration on the line between conflict – an essential element of democratic debate – and antagonisms that go beyond desired (or bearable) forms of dissent. Power dynamics, therefore, shape the extent to which individuals can engage in politics, the movement available to different actors, and how one's capability to act is affected not only by actual and real-time experiences but also by anticipatory forms of action (see also Koivunen et al. 2023). As a young politician reflected in her voice-recorded diary after seeing negative comments about her appearance on social media: "I've been thinking about, thinking whether I'm strong enough. To do politics and to really be involved in it. I can handle local politics. And I can handle my current [position in this district]. But if I think about the upcoming parliamentary elections, then... Can I handle that? Maybe you grow into it, and of course, I'm still maturing and so on. But still... Can I handle it? I don't know."

Through these three interlinked aspects, I study the platformization of politics in relation to how political actors move through, engage in, make sense of, and experience social media platforms. While the increasing significance of platforms and their sociotechnical power in shaping communication remain highly relevant, my focus extends beyond these concerns. By centering on the digital everyday lives of my research participants, I explore how platforms have become key arenas where their effects, implications, and *frictions* (see Ruckenstein 2023) for/in the political world are continuously assessed and negotiated. It is also through these arenas that political actors develop and *reflexively* (see Papacharissi 2010) problematize their own practices with media and politics. As Skogerbø and Kunelius (2017, p. 5)

propose, multi-sited analyses are necessary in a digitalized and data-driven era as they allow consideration of whether and how the new communication infrastructure *shapes* structural forces and simultaneously *reflects* the contexts it operates in.

The aspects, therefore, shed light on the broader transformations in the political sphere. In the words of Berlant (1997, pp. 175–178), they have made me think about the *political in the personal*. Indeed, even though Berlant wrote from a very different standpoint and prior to the rise of social media, Berlant's work emphasized the shifts in the societal landscape as a particular "mass political experience" was produced in public narratives around intimacy.[6] These narratives influenced both the sphere of citizenship and the realm of political imagination that became "more concerned with personal morality". Similarly, within platformizing politics in Finland, the "core context of politics" (ibid., p. 3) is under constant (re)negotiation as platforms and platformed political cultures – infrastructurally, materially, discursively, and organically (e.g., Article I, II, III; Duncombe 2019; Knuutila & Laaksonen 2020; Lehto & Mannevuo 2023; Ylöstalo 2025) – affect political agencies and subjectivities. In this setting, politics as a matter of "managing shared interests", as a common Finnish understanding of politics dictates[7], comes under pressure, when social media operates as both a key site of politics and a "zone of trauma that demands political therapy" (see Berlant 1997, p. 8, who originally referred to nationality as the zone of trauma; cf. Koivunen 2021).

My perspective thus emphasizes that platforms do not alone define how politics is unfolding in Finnish democracy during the 2020s. Rather, a dialectical process is at play in which platform power is both resisted and subverted through media-based reflection (see Couldry & Hepp 2017, p. 152). This process can lead to outcomes – including revitalizing ones – that extend beyond the architectures and user cultures of the platforms themselves.

The rest of this summarizing report is structured as follows. I next provide a brief overview of each article included in the dissertation. In Chapter 2, I present the methodological framework for my study, perhaps unconventionally, before introducing the theoretical approach. There, I also discuss how the dissertation was conducted as part of a larger research project. The reason for presenting methodology first is to introduce the cultural studies notion of *everyday* that serves as an important

6 See Berlant 1997, p. 177. Above all, Berlant directed their critique toward reactionary forces that had started to exploit issues of intimacy, such as private sex and family life, to distract attention away from hard politics, including actual social inequalities and oppression.

7 See e.g., Wass & Virtanen 2021: Politiikka on opiskelijoille kulttuurisotaisaa yhteisten asioiden hoitoa: https://ilmiomedia.fi/artikkelit/politiikka-on-opiskelijoille-kulttuurisotaisaa-yhteisten-asioiden-hoitoa

foundation for Chapter 3, where I deepen my approach to platformization through three concepts: practice, agency, and emotional/affective labor. Chapter 4 addresses the three research sub-questions individually while discussing their theoretical implications. Finally, Chapter 5 is the concluding chapter. I summarize my research and briefly assess the changes that have occurred in the social media sphere since the research material was originally gathered.

1.6 Summaries of the research articles

Article I – "And if it's not good enough for the algorithms then it's not. That's it": Data practices in the everyday life of young politicians. Original article in Finnish: "Ja jos se ei kelpaa algoritmeille niin sitten ei kelpaa. Se siitä.": Datakäytännöt nuorten poliitikkojen arjessa. Published in the Finnish journal *Politiikka*.

In the first article, I study how social media platforms are present in the daily lives of 12 young, aspiring Finnish politicians, who for instance serve as local politicians and in political youth organizations. While drawing from prior studies that have considered the mediatization of politics, I propose that the data-driven and ubiquitous nature of platforms also demands new approaches. With deep mediatization as my conceptual premise, I highlight how media is not only a tool to be utilized but also a political environment where platforms shape and set boundaries for political agency and discourse. In this article, I ask what kinds of practices with platforms young politicians engage in, how these practices reflect platforms' internal operating principles, and what deep mediatization means in everyday political life.

To answer these questions, I develop the concept of data practice (Lupton 2015), which highlights the dialectical relationship between platform power and social actors who are ultimately agential in these digital spaces. In my analysis, I use interviews and media diaries to examine participants' data practices through the lens of social media logic (van Dijck & Poell 2013). This analytical setting allows me to scrutinize the ways in which platforms' operating principles shape young politicians' everyday lives and experiences around politics, without leaning toward an overly pessimistic understanding of platform power.

In the results section, I first highlight how participants described their experiences of and practices with being compelled to maintain continuous engagement with platforms to remain visible and relevant. Second, I address the ways in which online popularity is negotiated in spaces that allow political actors to carefully refine their messaging to maximize content circulation, while also posing potential ethical challenges for democracy. Third, I analyze how the politicians discussed their interactions within political networks and addressed ongoing concerns about so-called social media bubbles. The article concludes that in the

context of deep mediatization, different aims are balanced as the new media environment is experienced as an underlying tension, where even "unfinished updates, unread notifications, and missed media scandals" play significant roles (Article I, p. 112).

Article II – Belonging, responsibility and reflexivity: mediated intimacy among Finnish nonbinary and trans social media users. Published in *Feminist Media Studies*.

The second article shifts the focus from institutional politics to civil society. It draws from the accounts of gender minority social media users, specifically 16 nonbinary and two trans individuals. The article combines media studies with a Berlantian notion of intimacy that seeks to deconstruct the prevalent narrative in which intimate life – namely, long-lasting relationships, family, and self-development – operates as the most desirable way to live and build one's subjectivity. Instead, Berlant argues, attention should be directed to all sorts of mobile processes of attachment. In doing so, the article draws from a conceptual pair: *mediated intimacy*. Apart from signaling descriptively how platforms increase the virtual interdependency of users and the media (and between users through the media), the conceptualization shows how platforms facilitate connections that "make worlds and world-changing fantasies" (Berlant 1998, p. 288).

I use the conceptualization to understand how non-cisgender actors navigate their experiences with data-driven media and to reframe their everyday experiences as matters of political agency. In this sense, mediated intimacy offers news ways of thinking about the relationship between the personal and the political, as well as the intersection of public and private domains. Furthermore, I show how the personal is not only political but also becomes a matter of public interest when the politics of gender "travel within and across personal and societal realms" (Article II, p. 3). This process highlights that (mediated) political agency is not only a matter of strategic action that is confined to specific movements and hashtags, as even the smallest actions can carry political significance.

In the empirical analysis, I discuss three ways in which participants' experiences relate to political agency, which I define as belonging, responsibility, and reflexive political subjectivities. Belonging highlights the frictions taking place in data-driven cultures, where platforms enable various forms of connection and inclusion but can also reinforce normative pressures on non-cisgender lives rather than allow for more fluid subjectivities. Responsibility addresses the subtle yet ambivalent ways in which mediated political cultures may render all kinds of action political, while also increasing the already pervasive need to stay informed. Reflexivity emphasizes the ethical considerations involved in social media engagement, particularly the ways in which users take others into account – including those with fundamentally different

worldviews – when performing their own political agency online. The findings show how data-driven culture shapes politics while making it possible to reimagine what the political sphere actually entails, as gender minorities, both individually and collectively, develop ways to drive social change.

Article III – Consensual or conflicting encounters? Finnish politicians' digital life and platforms as spaces for agonistic pluralism. Submitted to *European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology*. Co-authored with Anu Koivunen. The article has gone through one round of peer review, with the journal asking for *some revisions*.

The third article takes the most focused approach to the platformization of politics by examining how Finnish MPs and young politicians navigate conflict and ideological differences, as well as how they approach self-promotion and personal visibility in an environment where the operating principles of platforms are assumed to favor snarky, even uncivil, modes of messaging and engagement. The article begins with the premise that instead of serving as deliberative spaces for democratic interaction, platforms might be better understood as agonistic arenas. Hence, drawing from agonistic democracy theory (Mouffe 1993; Connolly 1995), we propose that platformed political culture carves out political differences and conflict. However, instead of only highlighting the problematic consequences of this process, we discuss its varying implications for politicians' lives and Finnish democracy.

To better understand and assess agonism within platformizing politics, our approach involves using the concepts of affective and emotional labor in analyzing the research material. The article asks: How do politicians' digital everyday lives reflect the agonistic role of platforms – and the challenging relationship between agonistic democratic theory and Finnish political culture? In addition to examining our participants' experiences and forms of meaning-making in these conflictual spaces, we are interested in the extent to which agonism is a feasible ideal in platformizing politics – where, according to our material – social media clearly requires significant emotional management from politicians.

We discuss the results considering three key criteria for ideal agonistic conduct, as outlined by Norval (2014), who draws from Mouffe. These criteria are 1) respect for the rules of political engagement, 2) respect for one's political 'enemy'/adversary, and 3) recognition of difference as ontological. In relation to the first point, we note how participants navigated the challenges in maintaining polite political engagement within platform data flows, where both platforms' operating principles and organic conversation cultures often steer interactions away from civil debate. Second, we examine the problems that arise when platforms blur the lines between legitimate political adversaries and obscure social media audiences, including trolls and bots, leading to a heightened need for emotional management.

Third, we consider the room available for recognizing political conflict as a legitimate aspect of mediated political engagement, contrasting this to a Finnish political culture shaped by its historical reliance on consensus decision-making.

2 Research material and methods

The dissertation reviewed here was conducted as part of a research project named *Intimacy in Data-Driven Culture*[8] (IDA), where our general aim was to understand how platformization – and its reliance on technologies and data – shape the lives of Finnish people inhabiting different social roles. The project was animated by Berlant's (1998) thinking, which helped us develop an understanding of platforms as *infrastructures of intimacy* (see also Paasonen 2018). Platforms allow social actors to create and form sorts of ambivalent attachments and senses of proximity, "who or what was experienced as being comfortably or uncomfortably close, and the kind of nearness that was desired to start with" (Paasonen et al. 2023, p. 290). This conceptual starting point motivated us – especially those of us who at the time conducted research in work packages 2 and 3 in Tampere University – to approach our research interests and data collection through what we termed "digital everyday life" (see Paasonen et al. 2023; Koivunen et al. 2023).

Being part of the IDA project means that the dissertation was ultimately a collective effort, even though two of the three research articles included were authored only by me. This collaboration is reflected not only in conceptual perspectives such as intimacy and vulnerability, or in the general approach to digital everyday life, but also in the fact that most of the research material was collected collectively in our work package 3. While I led the study and independently gathered research material on young, aspiring politicians, the MP interviews were a joint effort between Anu Koivunen, Maiju Turunen, and myself, and the material on gender minorities was collected by Vilja Jaaksi and myself. We also thought through our research settings, interests, and data collection collectively with other Tampere University IDA scholars, namely Anne Soronen, Kaarina Nikunen, Karoliina Talvitie-Lamberg, Sanna Valtonen, and Vilma Lehtinen.

In this chapter, I first introduce the notion of the everyday and consider its relevance in digital cultures. Next, I provide a more detailed description of my

[8] IDA was funded by the Strategic Research Council at the Academy of Finland, 2019–2025. My own work in the project took place primarily between 2020 and 2022, and in 2024–2025, under work package 3 titled "Politicized intimacies."

research material, followed by an explanation of the methodology behind media diaries and interviews. Finally, I conclude with notes on how the research material was analyzed and approached both epistemologically and ethically.

2.1 Everyday life and its relevance

While studies often rely on natural data scraped from platforms (for argument see Langlois and Elmer 2013) – images, posts, conversations, videos, as well as the number of likes, shares, and reactions garnered by content – I was intrigued by how people experience, discuss, and attribute meaning to social media use. Their ordinary experiences and practices with the media struck me as crucial for understanding the direction of today's platformizing democracies. This theoretical underpinning, along with the broader framework of our IDA project, led me to frame my dissertation research around the digital everyday lives of Finnish political actors. While each article adopts a particular perspective and utilizes different conceptual tools, digital everyday life is the context central to every data set and article.

With the notion of the everyday, Williams (1989[1958]) influentially stated that "culture is ordinary." The phrase stresses how culture contains both the "special processes of discovery and creative effort" (e.g., arts and mass media) and a "whole way of life" (ibid., p. 4). Williams' project was then to understand the interplay between these two very different forms of culture and argue that culture cannot be prescribed: It is "the product of a man's whole committed personal and social experience" where meanings are "made by living, made and remade, in ways we cannot know in advance" (ibid., p. 8). This approach, both rooted in the cultural studies tradition and having widely shaped it, resonates well with my approach to platformization and politics. Social media and the discourses associated with platforms do not solely define (digital) political culture, nor does platform power alone prescribe how political agency unfolds in these online spaces. Furthermore, politics is not merely a "special process" of culture that occurs between or through bodies recognized as political by a higher authority. In this sense, media offers the *general texture of experience* by being a "daily […] constant presence in our everyday lives" (see Silverstone 1999, p. 6). This is why, Silverstone maintains, experience and its ordinariness ought to be the starting point when analyzing the influence of media.

In the context of conducting critical social media research, my work aligns with a field that has shown growing interest in a perspective Kennedy (2018) has named "living with data" (see also Pantzar & Ruckenstein 2015; Kennedy 2016; Bucher 2018; Saariketo 2020; Isin & Ruppert 2020; Paasonen 2021; Burgess et al. 2022; Ruckenstein 2023). This body of research studies platformization empirically and from the perspective of social actors' mundane use of technologies and platforms.

Furthermore, as opposed to the oppressive nature of platforms and their data-drivenness, it has discussed how digital everyday life is "rich with material practices and thick with feelings" (Burgess et al. 2022, p. 33). As proposed by Kennedy, Poell, and van Dijck (2015, p. 1), "datafication can be understood not only as collecting and analysing data about Internet users, but also as feeding such data back to users, enabling them to orient themselves in the world."

In our research project IDA, emphasis was placed on various dependencies and ambiguities offered by platforms and networking technologies. In this sense, platform power is met with "the complexity and vitality of everyday forms of relating, impacting, and world-making" (Paasonen et al. 2023, p. 303). For example, Soronen and Koivunen (2022) have proposed that Finnish actors' social media use should not be conceptualized only as promotional activity. Social media is also a key site for the cultivation of professional identity and belonging through various attachments. By analyzing anticipation as a particular aspect of platform power, we also discussed the uneven ways in which platforms both constrain and enable the agency of different social groups in Finland (Koivunen et al. 2023).

Hence, the "living with data" approach provided a two-fold perspective for my work on the platformization of politics. First, this approach underscores the ways in which people's mundane actions "meet technology and establish relationships with it" (Saariketo 2020, p. 24). Following and interpreting metrics of social media platforms is one example of these relationships. The approach is most visible in Article I, where I discuss the data practices of young politicians. Second, and more crucially, when platforms are approached as infrastructures (Paasonen 2018), they enfold us "in the intensity of a media culture" (Silverstone 1999, p. 3). This shifts attention away from solely the relationships between the user and the platform and instead emphasizes their role as conduits through which social actors relate to other people and themselves (Article II and III).

This everyday approach addresses some of the methodological and epistemological concerns of critical social media research in which communication, as an object of study, "is not simply about human content and context": platforms "tap into everyday life in order to try and refashion it from the inside" (Langlois & Elmer 2013, pp. 4, 5). By studying different logics in relation to each other, it becomes easier to understand platformization. My methodological approach also involves following Kennedy (2018, 2021), who emphasizes the idea of "de-centering" data when engaging with ordinary people. Kennedy argues that mundane talking points, such as social media use and the experiences surrounding the use of media, resonate better than expert language around the data-drivenness of platforms and technologies (see also Bucher 2017; Ruckenstein 2023).

2.2 Participant recruitment and research material

My search for participants began in May 2020, and the initial focus was on young, aspiring politicians: The experiences of young and ambitious people appeared to be a suitable place to start studying platformization of politics and its everyday relevance. I identified potential participants through the websites of political youth organizations, my personal social media networks, as well as the digital election service of Finnish Broadcasting Company (Finland's national public broadcaster). This service allowed me to find politicians who had performed well in elections but had not been elected. As I was specifically interested in young politicians – originally termed "digital natives"[9] – I limited my search to individuals aged 18 to 35 who had a presence on one or more social media platforms. Next, within a span of a couple weeks, I contacted over a hundred politicians throughout Finland who were affiliated with parties represented in parliament at the time. With a few participants dropping during the diary period, the final material consisted of 12 politicians, all of whom were interviewed, and 10 of these produced the media diaries (participants were given the option to participate in interviews only). This group had an average age of 28, with six participants identifying as female and six as male. Despite repeated attempts and direct emails to politicians individually, no participants from the Finns Party, The Swedish People's Party of Finland, or the Christian Democrats were successfully recruited.

After finalizing the collection of this research material and gaining a better understanding of what to focus on in social media use, my colleagues Anu Koivunen, Maiju Turunen, and I proceeded to conduct interviews with MPs together. Again, we were primarily interested in politicians with a presence on social media but aimed to recruit both highly active users and those who, while using social media, were not as engaged in terms of their posting habits. To achieve this, we went through MPs' primary social media profiles, which at the time included Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. After identifying a pool of potential participants, we contacted them via email (in some cases, by phone), staggering our invitations rather than sending all of them at once. This approach allowed us to adjust for diversity among participants and consider factors such as party, age, gender, length of political career as an elected MP, and level of social media activity. We emphasized that we were not interested in our participants' political beliefs, as the research was focused on their typical platform use. For this reason, we used the same interview frame for all participants, despite our being aware of their varying social media habits. Of course, follow-up

[9] When I began on working Article I, I soon refrained from using the term, as it homogenizes a group of people who ultimately approach the use of devices and social media very differently.

questions to each participant's particular stories were asked. In total, we contacted approximately 50 MPs, with the final material consisting of 22 interviews – a number we were very happy with. The average age of the participants was 42, making them a little younger than MPs in parliament generally (48 years on average) at the time. All parliamentary parties except for the Christian Democrats and Movement Now were included in the interviews. In this material, 14 participants are female and 8 male.

The diary method was not utilized for MPs, as we concluded that this group would not be interested in participating in such a demanding research process. The MP interviews, as did all other interviews, took place via Zoom, as we were living through the pandemic years. The initial research with the young politicians gave us valuable insights into the interviews with the MPs. Even though the MP interviews followed a semi-structured interview format with certain questions asked from each participant, I felt more ready to direct attention to the key issues because of the expertise I had gained. In particular, this made it easier to recognize the moments where follow-up questions were necessary. I conducted 11 of the interviews with MPs.

The final research material, consisting of 18 interviews and diaries from gender minority participants, was gathered a year later, in late 2021 and early 2022. The motivation for collecting this particular material came from my colleague Vilja Jaaksi, who joined our research project during 2021 and had conducted prior research on nonbinary people's experiences. Since my initial aim was to understand platformizing politics in a way that does not reduce to institutions and party politics but addresses the wider shifts taking place in the mediated political realm, our overlapping interests presented a good opportunity to collect material together. This happened through a preestablished channel – an Instagram account – that Jaaksi had set up and previously used for participant recruitment.[10] The account had a few hundred followers, most of whom we assumed to be users from gender minority backgrounds.

We posted our research invitation, titled "Gender minorities in social media" (*Sukupuolivähemmistöt somessa*), on this Instagram profile and its stories, explicitly stating our interest in everyday social media experiences, participation, and content creation. The invitation specified that we were seeking gender minorities, including nonbinary, agender, and binary trans people, as well as anyone who was exploring their own gender identity. Most likely due to the Instagram profile's initial focus on nonbinary experiences, most of our participants identified as nonbinary (or used the Finnish term *muunsukupuolinen*), though there was a broad range of more specific

[10] Originally, Jaaksi received more contacts than they were able to interview in their own project. This is also why we felt it important to continue research through this channel.

identities within the nonbinary spectrum, along with one participant identifying as a trans man and another as a trans woman. In the dissertation, I use the term "gender minorities" when generally referring to this group, as well as the notion of "non-cisgender" when referring to our participants. This group included people who explicitly identified as activists, those who did not use the term but saw themselves as drivers of change, and those who, despite being active and having strong opinions on political developments, did not emphasize their own role in influencing political matters. Nine of these interviews were conducted by me.

In total, our research material consists of 375 pages (about 290,000 words) of transcribed interview material and 303 pages of diary material. As is expected when an approach centers on everyday lives, the material was simultaneously rich and messy. It contained both mundane aspects of platform use and deep considerations of the participants' lives amid devices and on platforms. Noticeably, the non-cisgender participants' diaries were on average 3 times as long as those of the young politicians, with a few diaries exceeding 30 pages. In part, this was explained by slightly different instructions. Gender minority participants were asked to log (*taltioida*) different forms of digital content and experiences related to this content at least once per day. It was also explicitly stated that they could take screen captures of the content. Young politicians, in turn, were asked to write or voice-record their experiences on digital everyday life. As a result, non-cisgender participants' diaries included more images as opposed to the plain text that was often the case for the politicians. As Zimmerman and Wieder (1977, p. 486) note, participants' backgrounds should be taken into consideration when utilizing diaries in research, which is what we too sought to do. It also remains likely that the politicians were generally more used to expressing themselves textually.

2.3 Interviews and diaries as methodology

Interviews have long been a fundamental method for accessing individuals' personal experiences. They serve as a way to spheres of life that other methods cannot easily get to (Hyvärinen 2017). At the same time, interviewing is possibly the most scrutinized research method due to its epistemological complexity (Gubrium et al. 2012, pp. 2–3). This complexity became particularly evident in the aftermath of the poststructuralist turn, when scholars started to question if it is possible to access the essential self of the participating subject (see Davies & Davies 2011; Roulston 2013). In related debates, feminist perspectives underscored the ways in which power relations always affect the outcomes of interviews. To address this problem and the socially constructed nature of interviews, dialogical and less hierarchical interview settings have been theorized in feminist research (see Oakley 1981; Ribbens 1989).

Even though I align – both epistemologically and practically – with feminist perspectives that address the conversational nature of interviews and the influence of power dynamics, my personal experiences led me to consider how situations and encounters are always contextual. Above all, this means that power in these interactions is not unilaterally held by the researcher (see e.g. Ross 2001; Kosunen & Kauko 2016). When I started conducting the MP interviews, I felt small and nervous – after all, I was a new doctoral student and had never interviewed anyone in such influential positions. Some of my interviewees, in turn, had decades of experience with interviews. Unlike me, they were professional speakers accustomed to such a setting. Unsurprisingly, the experience I had with gender minority participants was different. While my focus during MP interviews was on managing my nerves and "appearing professional," the priority with non-cisgender participants was making sure they felt comfortable. For example, I deliberately avoided a conventional academic appearance and wore accessories like dangle earrings that better reflected my personality.

The initial channel for accessing digital everyday lives, however, was through media diaries. In the IDA project, we began this methodological work by directing attention to our own engagements with media. It was the start of 2020, and we were living at the very beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic that brought our original plans for data gathering to a halt. Since our project was centered on how people navigate in the data-driven culture, it felt natural to keep diaries of our digital media use at a time when we were supposed to stay indoors and avoid face-to-face contact. Indeed, we were deeply connected to the devices and platforms we were supposed to study.

As media diaries proved to be a successful way to understand mundane practices with and feelings about media, I employed this method as an initial way to generate knowledge on the platformization of politics. The diary method has its roots in ethnography, wherein a diarist serves as both "observer and informant," operating as "adjunct ethnographers of their own circumstances" (Zimmerman & Wieder 1977, p. 484). In critical social media research, this is a particularly valuable because it enables a semi-ethnographic approach in a context where traditional participant observation would hardly make sense – no one, after all, would want a researcher in their living room observing the intricacies of afternoon Instagram scrolling. In addition, the diary approach alleviated the epistemological challenges of studying platforms solely through the communication acts visible on those platforms.

A key aspect of the diary method is how the ethnographer, that is, the participant, is "either constantly or intermittently operating as a theorist over the course of his data collection" (Zimmerman & Wieder 1977, p. 491). This enables a new type of reflexivity that cannot be acquired with interviews alone (see also Spowart & Nairn 2014), as simply asking participants about their regular media use might yield different results. In a conference presentation, my colleague Vilja Jaaksi (2024)

demonstrated this point by presenting an example from one of our non-cisgender participants' diaries. This participant began and concluded their diary with a hand-drawn, circular, multilayered diagram of their "internet safety bubble." At the start of the diary period, this diagram placed platforms like Instagram at the center, indicating the central relevance of this platform. However, by the end of the diary period, the participant had moved Instagram to an outer layer and removed platforms like Twitter altogether. This shows how being guided to examine one's own social media use and write down observations of it can lead to surprising realizations.

In practice, our research participants were provided with a PDF document[11] containing instructions on keeping the media diary. We asked participants to log and record their experiences of their digital everyday lives at least once a day, over a period of approximately seven to ten days. They were given the option of expressing themselves in the format they preferred. Most wrote digitally, and a few chose to write by hand. An exception was a young politician who recorded their diary entries as voice memos. While asking participants to document their daily digital activities and experiences, we also encouraged them to reflect on the reasoning behind certain digital practices, such as why they chose one platform over another. Additionally, we were interested in the more latent side of the digital mundane, the "less directly observable features of the events recorded, of their meanings, their propriety, typicality, connection with other events" (Zimmerman & Wieder 1977, p. 484). This was explicitly mentioned in the instructions, which noted that attention could be paid to instances where "you ponder, whether you make a post about a particular issue or not."

While the diaries served as important research material themselves, documenting how our participants thought through how they engaged with different social media feeds and how they broadcasted content online, the diaries also served as the grounds for "intensive interviewing" (Zimmerman & Wieder 1977, p. 481), which is central to the diary-interview method. The interviews we conducted were based on the diaries, although we also designed some general questions for each group. Key here was both the "process of expansion" (ibid., p. 491) in which participants elaborated on real life events that were included but often only briefly described, and the way in which the interviews made it possible to reenact or reperform emotions and subjectivities (Spowart & Nairn 2014). Take for instance this section of an interview:

> Julius: You briefly wrote about this [case] in your diary. I noticed when you mentioned someone criticizing your comment, saying something like "Is [your

[11] Diary instructions and MP interview questions are in the appendix of this summary.

> party] not interest in conservation?" […] What do you think when you're argued against like this in social media, arguments that clearly aren't so well-reasoned?
>
> Young politician: There are good and bad days. I notice that, okay, I don't have the patience to be some kind of a diplomat who is like "I'll respond to this in a constructive manner," so sometimes it might result in where my inner child starts to throw a tantrum and not respond to these messages. Sometimes I don't reply at all because I feel like it's not really about having a conversation, but more about provoking. Then I decide I won't provoke. […] And of course, I'm guilty of this sometimes as well, like focusing on one person and using them to argue against the whole party or group.

In that interview, I asked the participant to elaborate on a diary entry about someone challenging their opinion in a local Facebook group. Even though their response extended beyond this situation into a broader reflection of their media habits, it demonstrated how asking about real life events can lead to both analytical reflections and transparent accounts of personal practices and emotions. Thus, diaries can also help participants "prepare their thoughts in private and at their own pace" before the interview (Gibson et al. 2013, p. 392). Of course, we did not assume that politicians would be entirely transparent or genuine in everything they told us. Nonetheless, since I was familiar with their social media profiles and habits, I shared a perspective similar to that of Ross (2001, p. 160), who interviewed political elites: "I don't believe that I was spun a line […] and when I was on the receiving end of a particular spin, it was always obvious, I like to think."

2.4 Analysis, epistemology, and research ethics

In the research material, my focus was on two aspects: personal experiences on platforms, and how our participants gave meaning to platforms and their typical interactions with them. In other words, I was interested in what political actors generally do with the media, how they experience all of this, and what these experiences say about platform power. At the same time, I was intrigued by participants' meaning-making and what this meaning revealed about the relationships between social media platforms and the platformizing political world more broadly. This dual focus served my primary research question, which sought to understand the role of platformization in everyday life and its implications for politics. This epistemological approach meant that I travelled between positivism and constructivism (see e.g. Roulston 2013). The theoretical and analytical concepts I operated with are better introduced in Chapter 3.

Generally, the approach combining positivism and constructivism served both my ethical and intellectual interests: Ethically, it allowed me to remain attentive to research participants' experiences, which meant taking them, to an extent, at face value. Intellectually, it supported my aim of critically examining the experiencing subject. As noted by Davies and Davies (2011, p. 5), "the researcher could never be finding out about a preexisting subject who exists independently of the interview or other account making processes" (see also Scott 1991). Indeed, when the politicians or non-cisgender actors shared their experiences from the perspective in which they were initially invited to speak, they simultaneously positioned themselves within the ideological structure that gave these categories – "politician" and "non-cisgender" – meaning and contributed to their reproduction. I find this perspective particularly important within today's political sphere where platformization evokes various ideas and ideals – normative, pessimistic, futuristic, as well as realistic – about one's own position in a democracy.

To examine these experiences and forms of meaning-making, my research process involved listening to the interviews and reading the diaries and interview transcripts several times, throughout the time span of several years, always making notes on everything I found interesting. While it was being gathered, all the material was simultaneously coded to Atlas.ti by our project's research assistant, Vivian Tuominen.[12] This process combined both inductive and deductive coding methods to ensure that our project would capture both the sphere of individual experiences as well as how platforms, as a technosocial fabric, played a part in facilitating these experiences and meanings. While the coded Atlas.ti file was helpful in writing Article I, it was especially useful in the analysis of Article II. For Article III, a separate Excel file was used in coding the research material, as that article relied on a more focused approach. These analyses are better detailed in the articles.

From a research ethics perspective, our work sought to ensure strong anonymity for its participants. This means, for instance, that we did not include references to their political parties or ages when quoting them in research articles or elsewhere. This was also a methodological choice: by emphasizing interest in participants' everyday lives, we simultaneously stressed that our project did not examine political opinions. Of course, gender minority participants did express explicit political views (as did politicians), but I believe they were generally less likely to suspect that we might disagree with their beliefs. For the politicians, in particular, anonymity most likely served as a motivating factor for participation while also making them more

[12] I would like to thank Vivian Tuominen for their enormous work coding the material. Even though I could not use the entire coded corpus for analytical purposes in individual articles, it helped me understand what, to me, stood out as relevant in the material. It also made handling of the nearly 700-page data set generally bearable.

relaxed and open during interviews. To maintain anonymity, the quotes I use in this summarizing report also include minimal identifying details about participants: Quotes indicate the participant group and whether they are taken from a diary or an interview but provide no additional information. The only exception is gender, which is specified when relevant to the discussion.

As it is a general research ethics practice, I remained attentive to our participants' well-being, especially that of those who kept diaries. This involved checking in with them and asking if everything was going well, giving them the time they needed, and always stressing that they could withdraw from the study at any time if they wished. When necessary, we also provided alternative participation options. For instance, when one non-cisgender participant felt anxious about an upcoming interview and decided not to attend without informing me beforehand, I later contacted them via email. We then exchanged messages about the situation and decided to conduct the interview via email instead. Before beginning participant recruitment in 2020, we asked for a statement from the Ethics Committee of the Tampere Region and received a positive ethical statement for our project.

3 Theoretical approach to everyday experiences

In this chapter, I present my approach to studying the everyday within the context of platformizing politics. While both "everyday life" and "platformization" are themselves central to my current field of research as well as its theoretical framework, they require supplementary conceptual tools to grasp the relevance of platformization in politics. The chapter follows the frameworks of the dissertation's research articles for considering the relationships between personal experiences, everyday life, and platform power. In Article I, the Bourdieuan concept of *practice* is used to discuss the dialectical relationship between political actors and platforms. Article II shifts the focus to *agency* to consider the dynamic interplay between subjectivity and agency, while highlighting how collective experiences of both marginalization and emancipation may lead to agential outcomes in platformed contexts. Article III introduces the concepts of *emotional* and *affective labor* to discuss how platforms evoke emotions and demand their regulation.

3.1 Practice as a lens to understand everyday life under platform power

In Article I, the concept of *practice* is used to think through how young, aspiring politicians exercise their capacity to act under the sociotechnical power of social media platforms. The concept aligns with my dissertation's broader premise, which avoids an overly deterministic view of platform power and instead argues that platforms do not alone dictate how politics unfolds. Practice is, therefore, the central analytical concept that animates the entire dissertation. Bourdieu (1977) developed the concept in his attempt to criticize as well as synthetize the friction between structuralism and phenomenology. He departed from phenomenologists who, in his view, placed too much emphasis on individuals' primary experience. He maintained that this results in "unquestioning apprehension of the social world" (p. 3), and, as such, hides the principles from which practices are generated. At the same time, Bourdieu was left unsatisfied with structuralists and their objectivist epistemology.

For him, structuralism invoked a theory of action where agency is a "mechanical reaction" (p. 73), a "mere execution of the [theoretical] model" (p. 29).

For Bourdieu (1977), then, practices are above all strategies aimed at satisfying *material* and *symbolic* interests. Satisfaction of these interests is again influenced but not unidirectionally decided by particular economic and social conditions (p. 36). In platformization, two elements of Bourdieu's conceptualization are especially fruitful. First is his attendance to ambivalence of action. In writing that "only a virtuoso with a perfect command of his 'art of living' can play on all the resources inherent in the ambiguities and uncertainties of behavior and situation in order to produce the actions appropriate to each case," Bourdieu (p. 8) observes how everyday actions also escape from social norms, laws, rules, and structures, however strict they are. Second, borrowing from dialectics, Bourdieu is right to emphasize the double movement between practice and structure or the "internalization of externality and the externalization of internality" (p. 72). He makes a convincing argument for understanding power as a crucial but not the sole determining element. This view of agency allows approaching both the pervasiveness and ambiguity of platform power and makes it possible also to interpret platformization in affirmative ways.

Bourdieu's understanding of practice is supplemented by his most known concept, namely *habitus*. Calhoun (1996, p. 304) notes how habitus is a concept "[n]otoriously difficult to pin down," defining it as an *embodied sensibility* that makes "structured improvisation" possible. Similarly, Bourdieu's expression of habitus as a "history turned into nature" (1977, p. 78) captures the key point: habitus as a cognitive system, influenced by social conditions and personal histories, a system that then becomes the basis of the "perception and appreciation" of subsequent experiences and different social situations. To put it another way, different objective situations provoke varying responses from individual actors *because* the actors are predisposed to answer these situations differently, that is, inclined to sense and interpret situations in accordance with their personal histories, status, and other qualities, which, again, are influenced (but not determined by) social structures.

In Article I, this original concept is supplemented by Lupton's (2015) idea of *data practice*. With this term, Lupton describes actors' relations and engagements with "lively data" that is presented and announced to users through data materializations (e.g., graphs and lists of numbers) as well as interfaces and elements such as the push notifications of sites and apps. The emphasis is on how platforms form "digital data assemblages" as they pull and place actors into recursive feedback loops "in which information is generated from digital technologies that then are used by the individual to assess [their] activities and behaviour, and modify them accordingly" (Lupton 2017, p. 206). With this formulation, Lupton distances her

usage from what are most commonly referred to as data practices: the ways in which private and public bodies collect, analyze, and put (user) data to use for their own purposes. Instead, she suggests, attention should also be devoted to personal data practices. Particularly useful here is Lupton's ability to treat those patterns of action, that seemingly have little to do with data, as data practices. She (2015, p. 9) uses mothers' information-sharing on pregnancy and early motherhood as an example of a (communal) data practice that serves both technical (sourcing of information) and affective (belongingness to a community, combatting feelings of isolation) purposes.

A link exists between Lupton's formulation and Bourdieu's theorization on practice even though Lupton does not draw from practice theory nor define data practice conceptually (see also Papacharissi & Easton 2012; Pantzar & Ruckenstein 2015). In highlighting the movement between internalization and externalization or by maintaining that "it is just as true and just as untrue to say that collective actions produce the event or that they are its product," Bourdieu's (1977, p. 82) ideas resonate well with the recursive logic of platforms that generates feedback loops to shape user behavior. However, because users are not "puppets" of the techno-commercial dynamics taking place on platforms (van Dijck, Poell, & de Waal 2018, p. 11), they also position themselves as actors who partake in platform economies by interpreting and using data to their own ends (Lupton 2015). In line with Bourdieu, there are material and symbolic interests at play when actors seek both concrete benefits and deeper meanings from these digital environments.

For instance, our participants highlighted the various ways in which they, as Ruckenstein (2023, p. 19) puts it, "are living the metrics." Platforms' digital infrastructure (Bossetta 2018; cf. Kreiss & McGregor 2017) provides excellent possibilities for politicians' visibility work, as it becomes easy see the kind of content that reaches people, not only in terms of likes and reactions but also in engagement rates. In getting a feel for these metrics, politicians learn to speak out on matters and voice themselves in a way that makes their messages circulate in these digital spaces. On the other hand, one young politician, for example, wrote about their feelings when their YouTube video ended up having more thumbs down than thumbs up: "It did start to bother me. I remember driving and thinking if people consider me a complete joke." Such cases make evident that platforms can also negatively influence how political actors make sense of their own political thoughts and identities, as metrics are the mediators of public feedback. These experiences demonstrate how practices on platforms are personal: they are shaped by an actor's history and competence with media, but they are also influenced by the data-driven nature of social media. While some recognized the underlying logics and leveraged them strategically, others struggled with the emotional weight of metrics. The idea of data practices highlights the situated nature of actors' digital everyday life while avoiding sharp generalizations about platform power and the structure it imposes.

3.2 Agency – collective experiences, collective futures

In Article II, my focus shifts from young politicians to gender minority social media users. While some of the participants in this group saw their actions as activism, others refrained from naming them such. Despite these differences in how they related to the online political world, the key argument in this article is that everyday use of social media platforms facilitates political agency in various ways ranging from small acts of peer support to the experiencing of and resisting harmful discourses, and even to explicit efforts to drive social change. In this sense, the interplay between empowerment, marginalization, and resistance on data-driven platforms becomes essential to the formation of subjectivity itself. To understand the platformization of politics in this setting, I supplement the concept of practice with a concept of agency that highlights how women's and other marginalized populations' "capacity to act needs to be situated in specific social, cultural, political and organizational contexts and relations that structure […] action" (Kantola & Lombardo 2017, p. 78). In other words, this view renders agency as a "historically specific effect of a given configuration of power relations" (McNay 2008, p. 275).

Empirically, many women who participated in the research wrote about and discussed social media as either a site of past trauma or a source of potential future risk that influences the kinds of agential possibilities available to them. Similar experiences were highlighted by gender minority participants. A nonbinary person wrote: "During the [diary] period, social media has really worn me out. I participate in public discourse primarily because of my occupation, but lately, I've felt that discussing politics is exhausting." Even though men certainly had their share of negative experiences with platforms, the ways in which harassment figured in their discussions were different from those of women and non-cisgender participants. Because platforms are "mediated architectures of everyday sociality" (Papacharissi & Easton 2012, p. 172), they also hold latent power. In this sense, the politics of platforms – such as their claim to be "simply hosting" with minimal moderation (Gillespie 2010) – raise pressing questions about who benefits from these policies and who is potentially harmed by them. This is why feminist perspectives that capture the different fields or relations of power within platformizing politics are necessary.

However, my approach does not only seek to describe structural domination; I wish to understand the interrelationships between structurally shaped subjectivity, the constraints this imposes, and the potential for agency. This is why Article II turns to McNay (2003, 2008), who aptly addresses the relationship between subjectivity and agency. Instead of adopting a negative paradigm of identity

formation,[13] McNay emphasizes selfhood and self-interpretation. McNay borrows from Bourdieu, whose work around habitus and practice, in her view, correctly captures "the deep entrenchment of arbitrary social hierarchies upon the body" while still allowing room for "agency and change" (McNay 2008, p. 279). While this perspective remains somewhat underdeveloped in Article II, my intention was not only to reemphasize Bourdieu's relevance through McNay but to expand on Bourdieuan thought while acknowledging its limitations. As argued by McNay (2008, p. 291), Bourdieu's "social theory seems to undercut the possibility of genuinely disinterested emancipatory thought" with its emphasis on strategizing language (see also Calhoun 1996, p. 305).

In analyzing the everyday experiences of non-cisgender media users, it indeed became clear that defining agency solely as a set of practical strategies to fulfill particular individual needs would fail to capture the myriad ways in which platforms shaped and were present in our participants' lives. Certainly, agency is exercised within political media cultures that reinforce prevailing structures of domination. This is why the use of platforms often requires practical decisions to make them livable. However, it is just as important to see how platforms enable alignment with others through the mass circulation of shared experiences. In doing so – and despite the ambivalence by which mass circulated representations can also cause particular anxieties – the sense of collective experiences fosters political subjectivity, which is marked by a shared desire to shape the future (see Article II, p. 5, citing Markham 2014). In other words, platforms incite what McNay critiques Bourdieu for not showing: a genuine interest in emancipatory forms of action. Emancipatory aspirations emerge in everyday interactions with the media, where actors' personal moral aims become entangled with shared visions for better lives.

3.3 Emotional and affective labor in conflicting spaces

The third approach to the everyday within platformizing politics – and the power in this process – is offered in Article III where my co-author Anu Koivunen and I analyze political work through the lens of emotional and affective labor.

[13] McNay argues that early Foucauldian understanding of power and its applications, such as Butler's theory of gender performativity, are unsatisfactory from as regards agency. In her view, poststructuralism's overreliance on subjectification easily challenges the emancipatory aims of feminism through its "symbolic determinism" (2003, p. 141). For instance, McNay (ibid., p. 142) argues that Butler's notion of performativity emphasizes "retrospective dimensions of time," which leads to a kind of one-dimensional sedimentation of agency that always looks to and operates in the principle of the past.

Emphasizing these forms of labor on platforms, we ask whether platforms function as spaces for agonistic democracy and to what extent agonism, as an ideal, is feasible within infrastructures that amplify affect and, thus, potentially heighten the demand for emotional labor. In my view, affectivity is closely intertwined with the notions of practice and agency. As Koivunen (2010) notes elsewhere, affect theories emerged partly as a response to the dominance of scholarly attention given to discourses and language, and secondly, in attempts to embodiment back to feminist theorizing on subjectivity. These theories emphasize that affect and emotion should not be simply regarded as biological responses of the body but instead as a relational and embodied circuit that mediates power (Ahmed 2004; Pedwell & Whitehead 2012; Wetherell 2012). Understanding emotions allows fuller accounts of agency and practice: They are "the expression of latent tendencies of the world that have been absorbed into the body as a set of physical and psychological dispositions (habitus)" (McNay 2008, p. 279).

Emotional (Hochschild 2012[1983]) and affective labor (Hardt 1999) originate from distinct traditions, each emphasizing different aspects of labor (see Mäkinen 2021, pp. 2967–2968 for a discussion). Emotional labor is more closely associated to feminist theorizing, particularly in relation to the female-dominated service sector. In this context, Hochschild's original work showed how emotions were both used and exploited in emerging service industries where workers had to carefully regulate their own and others' feelings. Her political project was to show "how fragile public civility really is […] of what the social carpet actually consists of and what it requires of those who are supposed to keep it beautiful" (Hochschild 2012[1983], p. 28). Affective labor, in contrast, is more firmly linked to broader developments in economic production, especially the transition from manufacturing industries to a service and knowledge economy. This shift fostered the rise of immaterial labor, with affectivity becoming its "binding element" (Hardt 1999, p. 95). Here, managing affects and their flows, in both the form of networks and one's very subjectivity, becomes essential, as these elements constitute the fundamental "informational and cultural content" of a commodity (Lazzarato 1996, p. 142).

As social media platforms establish their position as political spaces, they not only amplify emotions within political cultures but also demand different forms of affective and emotional labor from political actors. In platformizing politics, both concepts are important. In one sense, political actors must manage emotions – both their own and that of others – through boundary management and self-regulation in order to make social media bearable (see also Mannevuo 2022, pp. 114–115) and to also sustain audience interest in what they have to say. However, this labor goes beyond the personal level, as it is also embedded in a broader democratic project where actors seek to foster emotional cultures that, in their view, shape platforms into viable spaces for democratic engagement (see also Koivunen 2021). Therefore,

in the platformization of politics, emotions are both tools and terrain: They are managed in the moment but also operate as essential parts of democratic subjectivities and networks.

Understanding emotions and the work behind them is also important in platformed knowledge economies where information is more abundant and yet increasingly contested (see Andrejevic & Volcic 2020). In light of this development, Papacharissi (2010, p. 76) has discussed how "the political becomes even more elusive in the context of converged media and the converged expression these media afford." This leads in where *the political* is not centered on the ideal of consensus but on the expression of dissent. Here, I would argue, emotions are key to both how dissent is expressed (and manipulated) and how it is managed.

3.4 Summarizing notes

The conceptual triad introduced in this chapter offers a focused lens on the everyday – its practices, agencies, and emotions – in platformizing politics. Certainly, the richness of life cannot be reduced to these conceptual aspects, but they each shine light on the everyday and its experiential dimensions in this digital and data-driven context. Practice refers to the ways users engage with and adapt to platform power, agency highlights the broader relations of power that then flow into Finnish political media culture, and emotions (i.e., emotional and affective labor) stress the relevance of emotion management in media environments that both induce and expose conflict. I positioned myself at the center of this conceptual terrain when examining the platformization of politics.

For the purpose of this summary, this conceptual frame addresses different fields or relations of power: The capacity of social actors to act does not acquire its shape only between a data-driven platform and an actor with no distinct history but also between actors with different social positions; different articulations of political agency within platformed contexts result. It other words, I'm interested in both power relations between particular social actors (and how power differently manifests in their lives) and the dynamics of power within an emerging technological infrastructure with the potential to both deepen as well as mitigate prevailing social inequalities.

4 Results and discussion

4.1 How do platforms intimately influence political practices and experiences?

By understanding platformization as a deep cultural shift, I was able to approach the significance of data-driven media for the political sphere multidisciplinarily. While previous research has illuminated the *importance* of social media and of particular sites (see Larsson & Skogerbø 2018, pp. 230–231; Strandberg & Borg 2020) for both self-promotion and possibilities for interaction, and reported that politicians and activists find the use of platforms, to some extent, a necessity (Reunanen & Harju 2012, p. 135; cf. McLoughlin 2019, p. 121), the focus on platformization sheds light onto how different media technologies influence political practices in everyday life and, arguably, more intimately than before. This is indicated in the ways our participants discussed how platforms operate as a potentially inspiring element of the political world that can strengthen the democratic system, while also making participants – in particular MPs – struggle with the amount of attention they felt is required in the platformed political culture. Intimacy is also reflected in how political actors are led into close and constant reflection on the right and wrong in their own media habits.

In this sense, platforms are a "glue" (Mannevuo 2022) that enables affective alignment with various audiences and communities while allowing users to address and respond to the shifting political currents of the moment. In a Berlantian sense of intimacy, platforms offer "connections that *impact* on people, and on which they depend for living (if not 'a life')" (Berlant 1998, p. 284, emphasis in original). Take for instance a conversation I had with a non-cisgender participant:

> Julius: What kind of role does social media have in your life generally? Is it mostly connected to your identity and gender, or is there all kinds of other stuff too?
>
> Participant: [laughs] Yeah, it probably has too big of a significance for me […] Social media gives me quite a lot content for my life and much to think about so that my brain doesn't completely wither away. Is this even possible? I keep up

> my intellectual capacity and conversation skills. I also learn about things I otherwise wouldn't know about. […]
>
> Julius: You mentioned earlier that you're a heavy user of social media and also laughed when I asked about its role. Does this somehow reflect that, if I understand correctly, you might even think it's a bit excessive, or how do you feel about your usage?
>
> Participant: I think it's a bit tricky to say whether it's excessive or not. I guess *excessive* would be if it starts interfering with my life or relationships, or if I'm never present with my children because my nose is always glued to my phone. It's not like that, though. (nonbinary, interview)

In addition to its role in gender minorities' efforts to make social change, then, social media was described as a central part of their daily lives. While the idea of addiction was occasionally brought up, as also illustrated above, participants often challenged and critiqued this framing of social media use (see also boyd 2014; Paasonen 2021). On the contrary, many stated that platforms are useful for accessing crucial information, such as knowledge about health(care), that they might not otherwise receive from public institutions.

For politicians, social media appears as a messy mixture of different sites that are used ubiquitously: during commutes and lunch breaks, between moving from one location to another, and, particularly for MPs, even during idle times in committee and plenary sessions. At each particular site lies a blend of digital architectures that diversify communicative practices. While Facebook's feed offers a (highly curated) overview of events that the platform deems relevant for individual users, notifications, groups and group chats, and private messages all operate as affordances that structure political agency. As one of the young politicians put it, they are *everyday to-do lists* that have to be addressed. The politicians I talked with found that placing themselves outside of platforms would indicate that they were practicing democracy wrongly. When I asked how the spread of social media had influenced their political work, a seasoned MP provided a detailed answer of the shifts but first stated shortly: "It surely has influenced it in a way that, if you're not on social media, *you don't, in fact, exist*" (see Fast & Enli 2024, p. 140 for a striking similarity). In this sense, platforms operate as infrastructures (Paasonen 2018) through which politics and participation are actually practiced. Throughout the research articles, my attempt was to show how their effects are now more intimate and pervasive:

> I might not necessarily be in front of the computer, but so much of my mental capacity goes into thinking about social media. I've noticed that even at night, right before going to sleep, the last thing I think about is how to express an opinion. And I've noticed that I specifically have a habit of thinking about expressing an opinion in terms of how it fits on Facebook or Twitter. In a way, it's the frame into which I try to bring my own opinion. (MP, interview)

This reflection highlights how social media steers politicians to think through political content with platforms in mind, which offers an apt example of platformization. Similar to artists who shorten songs and write particular melodies in an attempt to get playlisted (Siles et al. 2022, p. 557), politicians must shape their political messaging to align with the demands of particular platforms. Even more importantly, the reference to the "mental capacity" devoted to social media indicates how platforms function as a ubiquitous backdrop: They are not just tools for practical self-promotion but spaces that shape both thought and expression.

In Article I, *temporal shifts* are addressed as one way platformization was present in the lives of research participants (see also Hokkanen, Koivunen, & Turunen 2021). This highlights the perceived acceleration of communication and shows how platforms, through their design and the political and communicative culture they cultivate, have an effect on both practices and imaginations. This is evidenced by "micro-level interactions" (see Sano-Franchini 2018, p. 403) with platform interfaces. One of the MPs, for instance, suggested that "a world where people receive a notification when their message has been seen creates the expectation that a response must be given within a reasonable time." This is what Mols and Pridmore (2020, p. 431) term *response accountability*: The check mark indicates when the recipient is absent by decision, which creates the need to react as soon as the original message is read. In addition, both the MPs and the younger politicians discussed the challenge of staying updated. With scandals and social media fusses (*kohut*) happening quickly, politicians felt a risk of being uninformed or joining discussions too late.

These observations link to the broader shift that has been occurred with 24/7 news cultures. Comparably with my material, McLoughlin (2019) has noted how British MPs have struggled with the faster timeframes in which discussion topics might change on an hourly basis. As quite humorously expressed by MP Jo Platt: "It's faster-paced in the sense that it's instantaneous … you get dizzy just looking at it" (ibid., p. 121). While McLoughlin observes that this generally creates pressure to act more quickly – potentially leading to mistakes – it is necessary to recognize that the stakes go beyond personal stress and the fear of bad publicity within platformizing politics. My material demonstrates that the sensation of staying constantly connected is pervasive and all-encompassing. The politicians had to

prioritize and make personal decisions about their engagement as individuals. Scheduling was hardly a solution. Some struggled as they combatted what they termed addiction. Others shared how they succeeded in taming the intrusive intimacy of platform power: "For example, during weekends, when it's a day off, I don't really use phone, I might even be bad as answering calls. Simply for the sake of *detaching myself from the mood and the movements of the finger* and everything else related to this" (MP, interview). Very similar findings are seen in Fast and Enli's (2024) study on Norwegian MP and local politician use of social media. They dub politicians "post-digital experts" who not only struggle with platforms and develop tactics to combat their distracting effects but also evoke somewhat normative post-digital imaginaries about platform power.

Interestingly, even though the gender minority participants operated between the public and private sphere and hence were not under public scrutiny in the same way, somewhat similar experiences were identified in their accounts. One of the participants was concerned about whether they were doing enough, given that they were not a frequent attendee of live protests and hence could not present this live form of activism in their social media. Others raised worries about keeping up with how gender and other issues are discussed by various minority cultures. As I discuss in Article II, there is a deep sense of responsibility in these political cultures: A responsible activist will broadcast their doings for the sake of ensuring themselves that they perform activism "right" while staying informed of certain cultural issues as they emerge and are discussed in the constantly evolving online sphere.

These experiences are exemplary of the ways in which platforms organize everyday politics individually and intimately by conjoining different (data) practices: the pull of platforms in their own right, the internalized need to stay on track, perceptions of audience expectations, and how user interfaces (check marks) and particular affordances (such as the story format) keep users connected and engaged. The experiences highlight the pervasiveness of what van Dijck (2013, p. 174) has termed the culture of connectivity: "Opting out of connective media is hardly an option. The norm is stronger than the law." Furthermore, political actors not only are expected to participate more frequently and remain available to the media but also must present their activity to an audience more quickly than their peers and rivals – even when there is little new to say. In the present era of excessive information, where users are "seeing and remembering more, and are consequently overlooking and forgetting less" (Smith 2016, p. 111), a young politician fittingly discussed their boredom with repeating themselves, feeling that they hardly contribute anything novel to discussions. Hence, platformization with its temporal rhythms and the constant streams of information force political actors to think through their relationship with their (digital) selves, not just how to make social media bearable.

My research articles also present how online visibility and popularity shape political actors' self-perception and influence their actions within the political sphere. Participants, particularly politicians, were highly aware of the fact that in an information-saturated social media, the messages that circulate best are distinctive but, above all, emotionally provocative, exaggerated, simplified, or snarky – even uncivil. They discussed how to "game" the platforms and their algorithms and how to combat their supposed causes, such as fear of personal invisibility (see Bucher 2012; Ruckenstein 2023) and the potentially troubling democratic consequences. As expressed by a young politician whom I cite in Article I (p. 108):

> I've been involved in politics at various levels for a very long time. And the more analytical, reflective, genuinely issue-focused, and content-rich something is – whether it's a video or text – the worse it circulates. But the crazier, simpler, more exaggerated, and more snarky it is, the better it circulates. The more attention it gets. (young politician, interview)

This view, shared by many others, is in line with a vast body of research that has shown how like and other reaction buttons are not neutral elements, as they privilege and further circulate messages that are likeable or otherwise easy to react to (e.g., van Dijck 2013; Sano-Franchini 2018). In other words, "online quantification indiscriminately accumulates acclamation and applause, and, by implication, deprecation and disapproval" (van Dijck 2013, p. 13). It is argued by participants and academic discourse alike that even algorithms themselves prioritize "highly charged content" (Vaidhyanathan 2018, p. 9), resulting in what Ott (2017) terms a politics of debasement. What needs mentioning here is that because algorithms are trade secrets, there is no way to truly determine whether algorithms themselves amplify the circulation of "charged content" (for instance by assessing the sentiment of a communicative act), or whether charged content is preferred – liked, shared, engaged and interacted with, clicked, opened, stopped by and stared at – by humans within these interfaces. This is why Ruckenstein (2023, p. 22) suggests that algorithms are not merely technical solutions but something people react to in their cultural imagination: "In addition to asking what algorithms are doing to us, we need to ask: What are we doing to algorithms? How are we feeding them with our stories, actions, and engagements?" Similarly, Laaksonen (2021) has suggested that content that is rife with emotion succeeds in part because we are drawn to such content.

Viewing platformization as a process that shapes our cultural everyday lives, I use the concept of practice to understand the dynamic interaction between social media platforms and their users, rather than focusing on platform power alone. Platforms engender various practices when they enable a quest for media visibility that has to be chased under the influence of algorithms and user interfaces that

operate independently of traditional media. Some participants were practical and let the numbers speak for themselves. As expressed by an MP who discussed their ways of experimenting with audience engagement when they were uncertain about a particular idea: "It takes ten minutes for me to see if a post takes off, and if it doesn't there's something wrong with it." Others noted how low levels of engagement or likes might cause particular feelings, like shame. These are different ways of living metrics from which "new patterns of experience begin to emerge, and people think differently about themselves and act accordingly" (Ruckenstein 2023, p. 19). What is notable, however, is that political actors do not simply follow the numbers but individually assess what they mean and what they do not. In line with Bourdieu's (1977, p. 72) thinking, the "popularity principle" (van Dijck 2013, p. 13) of platforms influences subjectivity as metrics are internalized to make sense of the self, but the effects are contextual. For instance, young politicians generally appeared to be more concerned with their personal visibility and follower numbers as opposed to MPs who had already been elected.

It was also apparent that gender minority participants were not concerned by metrics the same way. For them, the logic of online popularity was more often an implicit background, influencing the content they encounter on social media platforms. For instance, the most popular and frequent forms of representation around trans bodies – as well as the experiences attached to these bodies – caused feelings of discomfort if they did not resonate well with the unique situations of our participants (see also de Ridder & Dhaenens 2019; Malatino 2019). Without necessarily explicitly emphasizing the data-driven logics of platforms, this resulted in some of our participants critiquing how particular experiences were more widely represented and circulated than others, leading them to develop alternative practices:

> I started to think that when stories are told on social media, we often involve stories about painful experiences. And I feel like it's often thought that this is what interests others […] This is a topic I've actually been meaning to make a post about, but I haven't had the energy yet. That I long for *happy stories*. (nonbinary participant, interview)

The excerpt shows how, contrary to treating popular online content as mirroring reality, participants also challenged and questioned a platformed logic that privileged certain affects over others – and arguably, people's interest in those affects. While digital literacy is clearly an important competence that influences the extent to which actors can (or cannot) claim agency with different technologies (see Papacharissi & Easton 2012, p. 181), these perspectives offer insight into the wider shifts in the political: social media platforms, much like mass media before them, operate according to a sentimental logic. They produce a pervasive "public rhetoric of citizen

trauma," as Berlant (1997, p. 2) put it when discussing how the cultural agenda of the Reagen and Bush era exploited issues of intimacy that were perceived as national traumas. Of course, when considering the experiences of gender minorities today, depicting trauma is not – in many cases – a false representation or a matter of exploitation (at least not directly). Yet, despite this context, and perhaps surprisingly, in an era where content dealing with painful experiences is so piercing, some are led to explore different approaches, such as the "happy stories," through which political agency can be constructed and meaningfully sustained among marginalized populations.

Finally, the tension between platforms' influence and political actors' own ambitions led me to consider reflexivity. I explicitly address this in Article II, where I understand reflexivity as a form of political agency in which the feelings of one's audience are considered: It is a matter of an "affective sense of shared ethics" (Pym, Byron, & Albury 2021, p. 399), through which marginalized communities can be responsible to and for others. These shared ethics are cultivated, for example, through the use of language that allowed the participants to signal and align themselves with others in what is often referred to as the LGBTQ+ community (see also Ferris & Duguay 2020). On the other hand, as already noted, this also requires knowledge, not all of which everyone feels they have timely access to. As a result, some expressed feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt about their own actions and their awareness of current subcultural vocabulary. Somewhat similarly to the interviewee above, one participant directly criticized what they experienced as an imperative to remain and appear political at all times: "And then if I have to do it [succumb to certain feminist speech practices] on my free time as well, have to go on about everything that is wrong, 'fuck the cistem', I just don't have the strength."

Politicians highlighted ethical tensions in issues such as self-promotion and online interaction. As discussed above, they talked about the difficulty in having to balance between snark and fact-oriented content, while many brought up a concern whether they were active enough in citizen–politician interaction or whether blocking badly behaving users was in line with proper democratic conduct. Like non-cisgender users, they emphasized the necessity of doing the right thing, but, in the first place, not for other internet users but for the sake of the greater good. As captured by one young politician in the interview:

> Since social media greatly emphasizes the individual's power over their interactions, it also highlights the ethical responsibility and behavior of the individual. So in the past, the expectation might have been that the party defines what constitutes ethical behavior, but today, that responsibility falls entirely on the individual. For instance, if you consider how [this particular MP] often

> tweets material that I find unethical, ultimately the judgment also rests solely on them and even in a very short time frame too. (young politician, interview)

In this excerpt, the interviewee notes that each politician must independently and quickly decide what kinds of messages are suitable for publishing on their social media accounts. Even though they criticize a certain high-profile politician for his communication style, they also express understanding of the politician. While it is clear that through this sense-making, the interviewee positions themselves as a virtuous subject, their remark also addresses an intriguing shift in how ethical considerations have become outsourced. Indeed, it could be argued that in the era of platformizing politics, editorial practices no longer take place only within political parties or traditional journalistic news media. Instead, political actors must now take on the role of editors themselves as they weigh different logics and assess their implications.

With this shift comes a redistribution of pressures onto individuals. Political actors must not only consider the substance of their politics but also think through the level and form of their participation and interaction with others. Furthermore, the demand for authenticity emerges as a two-sided concern: both as a matter of strategic performance (see Enli 2016) as well as a genuine ethical question. One young politician reflected on this tension, writing "I made and timed a post … but then I started to think, if I really care about sex workers' rights, or was I hoping for a bit of fuss or attention for my cause." This diary entry was written after noticing that another party had shared content about sex workers earlier that same day. Similarly, another young politician expressed in their diary: "Weekly, I think about my public position and the content I produce; does it meet expectations, should I be doing even more, and above all, is this *the real me?*" In other words, even though the "economies of attention" raise valid concerns about the depth of socially mediated politics under platform power where topics shift quickly (see Lehto & Mannevuo 2023, pp. 877–878), it also remains likely that political actors encounter a range of content and issues that were not previously featured in their political imagination. In this sense, platforms widen actors' view of the political world and require actors to define their relationship to a broader range of issues.

Ultimately, platforms emerge as intimate infrastructures with both benefits and harms:

> In this sense the good things are that you get a lot of information, you get different perspectives, you get quick feedback on what people... you get to test your thinking with others. But the downside, of course, is that if it starts to control you, that you are no longer in charge. […] There is also the risk that you start changing your opinion based on the trolls there. I'm not sure if you get what

> I mean, but it's still interactive. And if you let it take control of you, it can become so anxiety-inducing that you no longer even know who you are." (MP, interview)

Perspectives such as the one above demonstrate the relationship between routinized utility and anxiety (Ruckenstein 2023, p. 8): Platforms are important arenas as they make information more accessible and allow one to not miss out on what is happening in the political realm. Much like boyd (2014, p. 18) who, in her study of North American teens, observes that engagement with technology is driven less by gadgetry and more by the desire for friendship, my interviewees emphasized that their dependency on social media stemmed from a genuine interest in staying informed about political events. On the downside, the intensity of the political media culture can mean that actors start to question themselves based on the engagement they have with others. In this sense, "there is something at stake when things get intimate" (Paasonen et al. 2023, p. 288).

Based on our research material, this thing at stake cannot be captured solely by perspectives focusing on personalization, individualization, and the labor that goes into handling new pressures, whether from time or publicity. Even though the participants inhabited very different social locations, the similarities in their experiences and practices give insight into the structural changes taking place within platformizing politics. These experiences relate to what Papacharissi (2010) views as the political becoming more elusive in digital democracies: "We are concerned that our actions narcissistically revolve around the politics of self-interest, yet, at the same time, the self is the one constant in the midst of ongoing reflexivity" (ibid., p. 77). In this "convergent sphere of experiences" (ibid.), the dynamic between different social, commercial, political, and cultural logics influences how platforms are experienced and how one's role in them is discussed and practiced.

4.2 How is political conflict discussed and framed in the context of platformizing politics, and what is implied in this sense-making?

My interest in political conflict developed from popular terms often associated with platforms: *polarization* and so-called *social media bubbles*. These expressions were frequently used by research participants who discussed their mundane use of platforms. Even though many underscored the various affirmative experience they had had with social media, most participants also highlighted how political discussions on social media are polarized. This was especially evident for Twitter, which was described for instance as "a pool of poison," "a very toxic place," "highly taxing," "mentally draining," "exacerbated by polarization," "a scene of cultural

wars," "a bubble of its own with no ordinary citizens but people who intentionally misunderstand." This is why many gender minority participants stated that they did not use the platform at all.

These notions resonate well with a particular body of academic research that emphasizes the harmful effects of social media. For instance, in his highly critical book *Antisocial Media*, Vaidhyanathan (2018, pp. 4–10) discusses how Facebook divides people. Although he does not use the term *polarization*, he highlights the two most prevalent drivers explaining the phenomenon: the sociotechnical curation of emotion through algorithms and/or user interfaces, and the creation of filter bubbles or echo chambers. In this field, the central argument is that digital architectures – different design features, graphical user interfaces, algorithms, and other elements – contribute to the expression and circulation of negative emotions in political cultures. This undermines key democratic values such as rational discourse and mutual respect (e.g., Bratslavsky, Carpenter, & Zompetti 2019; Duncombe 2019). It is for instance asserted that both Twitter (Ott 2017) and Facebook (Sano-Franchini 2018) promote hostility by favoring impulsive behavior over thoughtful engagement. Hence, it is argued, both conflict and simplicity flourish in social media spaces like Facebook (Vaidhyanathan 2018, p. 8).

However, polarization is a difficult term because it simultaneously operates as a vague cultural expression as well as an academic concept with distinct definitions. Generally, polarization can be defined as either positional or affective polarization (e.g., Kubin & von Sikorski 2021; Gronow & Malkamäki 2024). Positional (or ideological) polarization refers to the increasing distance between political views (e.g., DiMaggio, Evans, & Bryson 1996). Affective polarization, in turn, is a more novel concept. It points to the negative feelings directed toward an out-group (Iyengar, Sood, & Lelkes 2012) and the rising hostility in political talk (Yarchi, Baden, & Kligler-Vilenchik 2021). Because these forms are often not distinguished from one another in research literature on polarization, there remains little consistent evidence for a role of social media platforms in political polarization (Kubin & von Sikorski 2021, p. 192).

In my reading, politician and gender minority participants most often referred to affective polarization when using the colloquial term. However, Finland can be considered less polarized than many other Nordic countries (e.g., Ryan 2023). Furthermore, as noted in the literature review in Chapter 1.4, no major shifts have occurred in the level of affective polarization in Finland since 2011 (Kawecki & Kekkonen 2024, p. 238). This raises the key question that animates Article III: Do our participants' accounts, which emphasize various negative forms of conflict, reflect the way platforms' digital architectures polarize political debate, potentially making political participation more difficult? Or, rather, are they indicative of the fundamental conflict and disagreement inherent to politics, which may have been

less visible in Finland's traditionally consensual and deliberative political culture – and when fewer opportunities existed for public figures to be directly contacted or publicly challenged – before the widespread platformization of politics? The point here is not to question the intentions or experiences of our participants. Instead, as argued in Article III, we propose that the answer to both questions is yes: the use cultures and affordances of platforms both *enable* and *foster* conflict when they are adopted for political purposes (see also Duncombe 2019). One example of the process is presented in this diary entry:

> The online campaign itself was successful, achieving 15 times more visibility on Facebook alone compared to normal campaigns. This was due to the message being shared in multiple groups simultaneously. When something succeeds, it makes me feel good, especially because success isn't always guaranteed. In digital communication, unlike writing for a newspaper, so many people can alter the message if it is open to comments. They can provide interpretations that even influence readers in advance. When something is printed in a newspaper, no one takes away that interpretative freedom if you read it alone at home, without any additional commentary. (young politician, diary)

In this excerpt, the politician writes about their start of the week, expressing satisfaction with their party's recent successful online campaign at the local level. This success is emphasized because, according to the politician's personal experience, online messaging can easily be disrupted when commentators challenge the original message and reframe it. Interestingly, while previous research had suggested that social media platforms allow politicians to control the framing independently of journalistic media, potentially leading to problematic democratic outcomes (Enli & Rosenberg 2018, p. 4; Mannevuo 2020, p. 425), this participant found traditional media, in some ways, a safer option. This is because traditional media does not subject messages to the same degree of public scrutiny as occurs on social media. Hence, in my reading, by offering new possibilities for democratic interaction, politicians may certainly gain many benefits by using platforms, but there is also much to lose when confrontation is enabled in ways that were not previously possible.

Only a few participants explicitly stated that they liked to partake in political debates. Instead, uneasy relationships with networked audiences were captured in frequent references to "trolls," "misinterpreters," "loudmouths," and "troublemakers" – terms used to describe the kinds of individuals our participants encountered when interacting on social media. It was indeed much less common to frame political adversaries as simply the "opposing party," an expression used by one non-cisgender participant. Reflecting these tendencies, visually oriented (Ekman

& Widholm 2017) and "less political" (see also McLoughlin 2019, p. 125; Ylöstalo & Kinnunen 2023) platforms, particularly Instagram, were noted for their ability to evoke positive emotions. As a result, both the unpredictability and the constant possibility of political disagreement were considered strategic challenges for political communication – as was the case in the diary entry above – and associated with feelings of emotional exhaustion:

> Twitter is one of those platforms that, at least daily, makes me feel like, *Do I really have to be here, when it's this difficult?* It's like everything is going to hell, life is miserable, and the planet, either it's melting or there are all kinds of other kinds of nonsense. I mean it's just so polarized *(ääripäistyny*) and such. (MP, interview)

> In the responses to my tweet, *I was particularly irritated* by this [politician] who falls under the category of 'National Coalition Party members who I follow for the sake of not being completely bubbled, yet who I constantly get annoyed by.' (young politician, diary)

These quotations, highlighting the emotional toll of engaging on social media platforms, suggest that not all political disagreement is necessarily a matter of uncivil discourse that undermines democratic interaction. Instead, they indicate the paradoxical nature of such encounters. On one hand, it is draining to frequently encounter viewpoints that either lack nuance (appearing extreme or "polarized") or originate outside of one's "bubble." On the other, from the standpoint of democratic interaction, there is still value in these encounters and thus the platforms they take place on. This tension is echoed by Klein (2024, p. 120), who brilliantly writes about her ambivalent relationship with social media as a public person: "as soon as I see a bad-faith attack, or notice someone whose posts are reliably putting me in a foul mood, I click 'mute.' It's satisfying and feels a little like self-determination on platforms where everything else is determined by others. But I am also unsettled by the ease with which we can turn off other humans. I fear that there is something habit-forming about making other people disappear with a keystroke." Thus, the challenge, which is also reflected throughout our empirical material, is precisely the friction between *being able to stand conflict* without *succumbing to cynicism* in environments that are also factually rife with "bad-faith attacks": trolling, harassment, and utterly absurd exchanges – all phenomena that make it difficult to distinguish valid opposition from mere noise. I more fully discuss the outright problematic side in the next chapter.

In the light of these developments, Andrejevic and Volcic (2020) propose that rather than limiting exposure to diverse perspectives through so-called filter bubbles,

the commercial and individualizing nature of today's digital environment actually reinforces individualism and solipsism, making mutual recognition and the envisioning of a "shared sense of community" more difficult. "[T]he disintegration of a national public sphere challenges any attempt to mobilise a national sense of a 'we,'" Koivunen (2021, p. 195) argues. In this view, the central challenge is not the narrowing of content but the information glut that places the burden on the individual user, who then must find their own way through conflicting narratives: "every account can be undermined and contested, every representation deconstructed, every proof counterfeited, every theory transformed into a conspiracy and vice versa […] If, in the filter bubble, people are deafened to the views of others by the constant reinforcement of their preconceptions and prejudices, in a context of 'infoglut', the cacophony is equally deafening" (Andrejevic & Volcic 2020, pp. 32–33). In this information era, differently positioned actors are indeed drawn into what Klein (2024) describes as the mirror world. They become "tethered to each other as reverse marionettes: their arm goes up, ours goes down. We kick, they hug" (ibid., p. 132).

On the other hand, I question whether deliberative understanding of democracy and the ideal of a shared community – virtues highlighted by Andrejevic and Volcic (2020) – are the only suitable directions for today's Western democracies. In Article III, we propose the framework of agonistic democracy (Mouffe 1993; Connolly 1995) to interpret this contemporary condition – one characterized by pervasive conflict – without attributing it simply or solely to platforms' alleged operations, such as the filter bubbles that presumably polarize democratic debate. In this line of thought, social media platforms are, by default, agonistic democratic spaces that may connect people with differing views on societal matters more than before (see Fletcher & Nielsen 2018; cf. Bruns 2019). In Article II, the phrase "epistemic distance" is used to capture this circumstance in which participants ponder how to engage in debates with those having fundamentally differing views:

> I always find the agenda jokes funny [making fun of viewpoints arguing that there is a broader trans conspiracy aiming to turn everyone trans]. […] It, sort of, makes visible endlessly, how completely different viewpoints people have who enter these conversations. […] It's kind of an eternal question, like, if the whole discussion doesn't seem to make sense, and the other person's starting points don't make any sense either, is it even possible to have a reasonable conversation at all? I don't… does it just end up being this back-and-forth taunting, and you're just like, "Whatever." I really don't know. (nonbinary, interview)

> All the [conversations] feel nuanceless and pointless. I speak a completely different language than many cisgender people, and having conversations feels straining. (nonbinary, interview)

Experiences such as these pose some necessary questions about the possibility of a truly shared community. The increasing availability of research, often producing conflicting perspectives, together with diminishing cultural homogeneity, the proliferation of diverse identities and lifestyles, as well as persistent forms of marginalization, suggests the need to reconsider the roles of (rational) knowledge and common ground in politics. In this sense, platformization also calls for an update of our understanding of democracy (see also Papacharissi 2010) in a way where we do not attempt to carve out differences but to understand where these differences emerge, why they come into sight now, and what is implied by them. Evidently, in Finnish political culture, this is particular difficult: Politicians tend to emphasize their role as virtuous actors of democracy who "manage the moods" (Koivunen 2021) amid increasing incivility, whereas gender minorities may better voice dissent. Nonetheless, as discussed by the nonbinary interviewees above, even for them wording how democratic debate should ideally take place can be difficult.

Roughly a decade ago, Finnish politicians stated that sharp debates and confrontations make politics engaging (see Reunanen & Harju 2012, p. 56), but this was hardly the case for the majority in our participants anymore, as conflict was often framed in negative terms. However, as both dramatization and simplification were the operational logic of journalistic media long before the proliferation of social media platforms (e.g., Chibnall 2013[1977], pp. 29–31; cf. Kunelius, Noppari, & Reunanen 2009), it might be more meaningful to consider how economic, technological, and cultural developments influence both politics and media operating from their own point of departure, instead of emphasizing platform power over the political realm (see Kunelius & Reunanen 2016). In this sense, what takes place is a dynamic interaction between different forces that results in new articulations and experiences as to what politics is and how it ought to be practiced.

4.3 In what way do platforms affect the experiences and perceptions of vulnerability among different actors?

> I'd like to develop a better version of Instagram. Because in my opinion, the story format is a nice system. You don't have to think too much, and you can send a private message saying, "This was a nice thing." But no one, including myself, is able to see any numbers about what's popular. Basically, I would make

> the app to only include stories. This would make it entertaining and not stressful. (nonbinary, interview)

Vulnerability can be seen as an ontological condition of platform use as every social actor is placed under public scrutiny: "In the habitus mediated through social awareness systems, self-awareness and self-monitoring are heightened as individuals advance into a constant state of redaction, or editing and remixing of the self" (Papacharissi & Easton 2012, p. 180). The opening quote above demonstrates one example of this form of vulnerability: the pervasive pressure to conform to the logic of popularity, leading to constant self-monitoring and feelings of emotional fatigue. This was also present in experiences where participants compared the actions of others to their own: "It's a number one mistake" to "browse others pictures," wrote a young politician when scolding themselves for drifting into such behavior.

However, in my gradual research process with 52 accounts of digital everyday lives, it became clear that this general understanding of vulnerability was an insufficient way to understand the different implications platforms have for political agencies. Despite media companies' interest in promoting platforms as egalitarian spaces (Gillespie 2010), platforms are highly different fields for social actors in different social locations: They are infrastructures that hold latent power. Platforms carry the possibility to amplify, hinder, or remain completely oblivious to the tendencies of our broader culture and its injustices (see also Wilson 2016).

In my discussion of vulnerability, I refer to all sorts of notions about social media use that center around experiences of hurt, feelings of concern, and perceptions of harassment – all of which were common, if unevenly distributed experiences in our research material. One example of this unevenness was present in discussions about social media bubbles, a case noted in Article I. Whereas a young male politician stated that "if someone from a different camp says something that is hardly accurate or not true at all, then I step in to set things straight, set the facts right (*käydään laittamassa asiat, faktat ojennukseen*)," a young female politician wrote how "[b]eing in a bubble once offered protection from hate, but now I have to spend time and energy carefully considering how to express myself." This suggests how political agency – the ability to travel between various ideological spheres and partake in discussions – might not be as readily available to all, as some are more concerned about their personal well-being or safety than others. This highlights the role of emotions, and the work that has to be devoted to emotions, in everyday media use. As is no surprise, a similar ambivalence regarding the meaning of social media bubbles was present among non-cisgender participants:

> Yeah, I've also written about this topic because I was so annoyed how bubbles are only discussed in the sense of... I mean it is of course relevant to talk about

> how the far right and everything else in those bubbles gets amplified and blah blah blah. But I wanted to bring it up that social media bubbles can also be really important in terms of, for example, social change, community, and safety. (nonbinary, interview)

This excerpt eloquently presents how so-called bubbles are not only means to preserve one's well-being and to foster a feeling of community. In my reading, the notion that links bubbles with the capability for *social change* also shows how a sense of security and togetherness operate as preconditions for voice and collective organizing (see also Jaaksi 2025). Indeed, in a time when platforms have amplified widespread resistance to and hate toward feminist and trans movements, as well as heightened political violence against women, agency can be seen to be increasingly dependent on a feeling of security. As a result, platformization invokes highly different kinds of imaginations about one's role in relation to both platforms and their democratic implications. Whereas women and non-cisgender participants considered the affirmative side of rigid boundaries, male participants were able to feel otherwise. One young politician stated in an interview: "I think it's pointless to try to live in some kind of Twitter bubble. […] There's really no sense in not following people outside your own political circle."

In the research material, experiences of vulnerability are tied to both past experiences and future anticipations. While one high-profile MP mentioned the word "trauma" while discussing her experiences that led to a radical shift in her social media practices, the emphasis was more often on how vague experiences of hateful feedback and even particular historic events influenced one's relationship with their online presence:

> So maybe the hardest part in all of this is always *the self-doubt you get*, you can't help it, and you start thinking, why always, *what is it about me that triggers such incredibly strong reactions*, such intense disgust and hate. (MP, interview)

> I remember when Anna Lindh was killed, that is when I genuinely got scared. However, this is a long time ago, social media was obviously not present then. But I somehow thought that okay, it is possible, no public person can ever really be sure... […] But mostly, it's more distressing and frightening. I've received some [messages] that were a bit scary, but more often, it's just unpleasant. More unpleasant and something that makes me not want to be part of that discussion, not want to engage with those people. And I notice that I'm being driven away from the conversation. (MP, interview)

These experiences demonstrate the importance of conceptualizing the ambiguous and novel forms of online hate as verbal political violence, as proposed by Saresma and her colleagues (2020, p. 20), who draw on the Bourdieuan concept of symbolic violence. In this sense, violence operates as a structural and discursive element that disproportionally affects political actors. As suggested by Ahmed (2017, p. 23), experiences of hurt "accumulate over time, gathering like things in a bag, but the bag is your body, so that you feel like you are carrying more and more weight. The past becomes heavy." Due to the frequently gendered and racialized nature of online hate, even those who have not personally experienced such violence may adapt their media practices to avoid potential injury: "But yeah, my thought has always been that, at some point, that situation will happen, and there might be threats or something like that to really think about. But I try to avoid it," a young politician said while discussing her caution on platforms.

Even though many women participants mentioned how they had grown accustomed to hateful messages over time by developing a "thicker skin," it is evident that accepting "hate speech as part of the job" (see Mannevuo 2020, p. 425) is not a viable solution to this unequal situation. We have argued elsewhere that online hate is also taxing simply because of the significant time and effort required for moderation (Hokkanen, Koivunen, & Turunen 2021). In addition, my research has shown that what takes place is not merely the duality between being silenced or having a voice, between participation and withdrawal, between fear and audacity, but rather the types of media-based practices actors can or cannot perform in everyday politics. For instance, in Article III, we cite a male MP who explained that "if vulgar commenting happens, with pigs I speak the language of pigs, so I usually get involved in that too. I also do give back." Contrast this with a young female politician who said how "especially on Twitter, every time I tweet, I try to not be too snarky or provocative, because I try to precisely avoid that reaction." This exemplifies how many women perform emotional labor while navigating online spaces, "making mental maps of the digital landscape and navigating around high-risk arenas" (Sobieraj 2018, p. 1709).

By considering these uneven and gendered experiences between different political actors, I have grown to think that as a form of symbolic violence, online hate shapes how actors develop orientations toward and practices within online spaces. Even though, as noted by Fast and Enli (2024, p. 140), platforms make every politician vulnerable as "[p]osts coming through your phone can feel very invasive," both personal and collective histories also influence how, and to what extent, the vulnerability fostered by social media is actually experienced as such. This is because platforms enable different fields "of vision" and "plausibility structures" (Skeggs 2004, p. 139). Personal choices, in this sense, function as *resources* (ibid.), and not everyone is equally equipped to choose how they respond or act in a

particular situation. This disparity is evident in how some actors are more able or willing to jump into highly charged conversations and even derive benefits from them. Of course, this is also a cultural matter that relates to what kinds of attributes can be used by whom; men may more readily benefit from reckless and bold communicative practices similarly to the way they can benefit from a strategic display of femininity (Skeggs 2004, p. 55, citing Adkins 2000; cf. Koivunen 2011).

Finally, it needs emphasizing that vulnerability also "operates within a tactical field" through which particular cultural signals are transmitted (Butler, Gambetti, & Sabsay 2016, p. 5). When I asked MPs about harassment, some men said that their gender functions as a protective resource from the type of harassment women face. One stated that he could quite freely exercise agency without "having an inbox constantly full of shit" – a case that he deemed reality for women colleagues. The same MP referred to having "white man's immunity" when it comes to receiving unwanted messages. Similar findings are reported by Saresma and her colleagues' survey study (2020, p. 26). They discovered that female Finnish local politicians and MPs experience online hate and address gender explicitly, men witness or even deny the (relevance) of the phenomenon as opposed to experiencing it, despite also being targeted by hateful messages. This suggests that men address gender and the implications of online hate indirectly, which potentially reflects societal norms that discourage them from expressing vulnerability (ibid., p. 27). In turn, women may take strategic advantage of vulnerability. In our material, a young politician expressed how she utilized "filthy comments" by publicly sharing them, despite habitually feeling cautious about her online presence. This was done to send a message: "I'm not going to be silenced." The account captures how seemingly contradictory realities can hold true: Pain is both capitalized on and felt in the skin as unsettling emotional distress (see also Klein 2024, pp. 71–72).

Vulnerability has never been an innocent term as there has always been politics surrounding it (e.g., Berlant 1997). At the same time, Koivunen, Kyrölä, and Ryberg (2018) argue that a "new language of vulnerability" is forming. This refers to contemporary discussions surrounding social movements such as #MeToo and underscores how experiences of vulnerability and injury are simultaneously mobilized for collective action, appropriated by the powerful, and serve as a peculiar discursive ground where "asymmetries of power are addressed, contested, and felt as *issues of being or becoming vulnerable*" (ibid., p. 4, emphasis in original). Our material similarly presents how vulnerability, as a discursive surface, engenders different knowledges as to how political actors feel their way through platformizing politics: "[Knowledge] is the space from which we speak, the political, disciplinary and social inheritances that we travel through, which leave traces and marks upon us*, enabling us to see some things and be blind to others*" (Skeggs 2004, p. 45, emphasis my own).

4.4 Final reflections

In this chapter, I have reflected on my dissertation's research material from three aspects: intimacy, conflict, and vulnerability. Each connects to the wider aim of our research project IDA, which sought to understand the ambivalence of networked, data-driven culture and its implications for different spheres of Finnish society. Our mission took shape in a cultural context where techlash was a widely adopted cultural narrative producing collective imaginations about the future of digitalizing Western societies (see also Fast & Enli 2024; cf. Koivunen 2021). However, techlash has also emerged as a legitimate concern leading people to question what is reasonable and sustainable in an era where digital services, devices, and platforms shape both private and professional lives. These platforms not only collect and transfer users' data to (foreign) tech companies but are simultaneously spaces where online hate is pervasive and where their operating principles constantly challenge users' personal schedules (see also Hokkanen, Koivunen, & Turunen 2021).

Platformization and the following countermovement happened fast. These shifts were amplified by the Covid-19 pandemic, which is evidently the context where I conducted my research. However, I deliberately avoided reading the pandemic into my analysis, as our participants rarely emphasized it as the main reason for behaviors such as what some described as excessive social media use. Indeed, while many acknowledged how live events were replaced by mind-numbing online settings – and recognized the temporary practical benefits of these virtual gatherings – social media platforms and the routines tied to them emerged as a profound aspect of our participants' political lives, independent of the pandemic itself.

This messy and constantly developing context demanded individual responses from political actors – even, and perhaps especially, those in privileged positions within institutional politics. This is why I have been fascinated with studying platformization from a multidisciplinary perspective focusing on people's experiences while using concepts that reach both how platform power shapes political practices and how platforms more broadly wrap actors in the intensities of political media culture. In these cultures, political shifts are continuously assessed and managed, the gaze of others is always present, and conflict is inevitable. This context is also why I felt it necessary to distance my work from perspectives centered on political mobilization, campaigning, and electoral contexts; I decided instead to use everyday life as a methodological approach. The focus on everyday life allowed me to move beyond visible acts of communication and to study the platformization of politics as a process where agency is shaped by an intimate interplay between technology, culture, and individuals' political desires.

Our research material does not support the idea that the Finnish democratic system – or the democratic way of live – is somehow whimpering or coming apart in the age of social media. While the material certainly shows the pervasiveness of

particular aspects of platform power, it also shows that users derive considerable meaning from platforms. It also demonstrates an expansion of politics and the political. Perhaps one of the key questions, then, is how best to support people in an increasingly individualizing, data-driven culture that may both revitalize political practices and pose threats for users who must ultimately navigate its uncertainties alone:

> You asked so nicely, "What's good, what's bad?" There is more good than bad. But *the bad things are just fatal*. They are exactly the kind that can turn your whole life upside down. (MP, interview).

5 Concluding notes

> I got a call from an unknown number today, demanding to know why I hadn't responded to a question in a comment on Twitter. This was in a thread with a total of 200 comments. Quite something, I'd say. I asked them to send the question by email. Haven't heard back. (MP Veronika Honkasalo, tweet[14] from November 2021)

In the dissertation, I examined the platformization of politics from the perspectives of Finnish MPs, young and aspiring politicians, and non-cisgender individuals and their everyday lives. I propose that in Finnish democracy, political actors are stepping into a terrain that, on the one hand, reflects and retains many of the ways in which media power has historically shaped politics, while on the other, introduces new elements and dynamics that are still emerging. Much like the television, which arguably transformed formal political communication (see Negrine 2008) through "crafting of soundbites and cultivation of more intimate styles of address" (Blumber & Kavanagh 1999, p. 212) and by allowing the audience to "read character into the face" (Schickel 1986, p. 14), platformizing politics engenders a new set of practices, experiences, and imaginations.

As the tweet above illustrates, platforms have made it easier for citizens to connect with representatives, thus potentially strengthening democracy by enabling and motivating ongoing participation beyond elections. However, by increasing the relevance of emotions in political publicity and facilitating a "politics of presence" (Isotalus 2017, p. 215), platforms have also fostered a strong sense of individualism where those reaching out may develop a kind of parasocial entitlement, expecting instant and personalized responses while disregarding the context or the feasibility of these demands. The tweet also captures the fleetingness of platformizing political cultures: The urgency of citizens' inquiries may fade as quickly as it arose in the first place. However, as social media users themselves, political actors are touched by the same systems as they balance immediacy and perform their own visibility in spaces where the (algorithmic) threat of invisibility is always present (see Bucher 2012).

[14] https://x.com/veronikahonka/status/1463262278787215367

In this summarizing report, I have discussed the results of my articles through three aspects and their related research questions: intimacy, conflict, and vulnerability. Intimacy relates to the prior research discussions on personalizing politics and activism, while it also served as a framework within our research project, *Intimacy in Data-Driven Culture*, under which I conducted my research. Through this aspect I examined how social media platforms permeate the everyday lives of political actors, shaping both their strategic communicative practices and how they experience and reflexively discuss their roles as political actors. I believe that this discussion has also provided important insights for audiences seeking to understand the broader process of the mediatization of politics.

With the emphasis on conflict, I have made sense of the ambiguity around political polarization. In doing so, I have challenged the prevalent understanding – also common in the research material – that attributes polarization primarily to platforms. Rather, I have considered the dynamic clash that takes place between a consensus-driven Finnish political culture and social media platforms that both architecturally and organically carve out political differences. This raises some interesting questions about how to sustain meaningful engagement in spaces where conflict is pervasive and where excessive information loads complicate the possibility of finding shared interests (see Andrejevic and Volcic 2020). More broadly, the existence of competing publics and the conflictual nature of commercial and data-driven media present challenges for the possibilities and future of the deliberative democratic ideal. While these questions are beyond the scope of the dissertation, they remain essential areas for future research.

Finally, through vulnerability, I have considered the ways in which troubling experiences and perceptions of harassment emerge on social media platforms. In the qualitative research material, women and gender minorities highlighted the threats they face much more often in comparison to politician men. This suggests that gendered structures of oppression continue to manifest online, thereby challenging the egalitarian promise of platforms. However, rather than understanding harmful experiences and online violence as particular and exceptional incidents that can be judicially classified as (hate) crimes (see also Hokkanen, Koivunen, & Turunen 2021, p. 49), I have considered the politics of vulnerability as an everyday reality of social media use disproportionately affecting those groups who are historically marginalized. I propose that we – as both scholars and social media users – must be cautious of these new dynamics around vulnerability, as what is at stake is not simply whether someone can participate, but how everyday life feels on these platforms and the kinds of agency these feelings enable and restrain.

I have always been fascinated in studying people's experiences as a lens for understanding cultural, political, and economic shifts and their implications. Reflecting the frame of feminist political theory presented in the introduction of this

summary, I believe that attending to experiences has served a dual purpose in my study on the platformization of politics. First, I have been able to highlight the continuing relevance of "the personal" in the political by showing how the space for movement in digital zones is dependent on, although not determined by, the social position of the political actor. While men, for instance, referred to harassment and online snark as a democratic problem, perhaps both as a genuine concern and as a way "to speak emotions" (see Skeggs 2004, p. 110), women and non-cisgender participants often framed these issues in terms of their personal well-being.

Second, studying personal experiences is important as data-driven platforms ultimately penetrate and shape private lives from within for financial gain. Since every political actor is, in some way, subsumed under platform power, new democratic practices emerge from this private sphere of experiences. While platforms shape the temporality of political cultures, they also foster constant reflexivity and pervasive self-doubt. In addition, they function as meaningful everyday spaces that may enable new understandings of what the political actually entails.

As I have suggested by drawing from Berlant (1997), the political is then, in other words, also the personal: platformization leads political actors to consider not only which (private) issues should be addressed in the political realm, but, above all, the forms, practices, emotions, and expectations that shape – or fall outside – the political; the kinds of actors and the modes of connection imagined as essential – or disruptive – to political life; and the responsibilities and actions seen as constituting the proper moral basis for political agency. As stated by a young politician: "in a way my priority is not to do politics for those already involved in politics, but, really, to be easily approachable". Similarly, Lehto and Mannevuo (2023, pp. 873–874) have importantly noted how the movement toward personalized politics means that "feelings, intensities and a sense of commonness among participants" become increasingly central as opposed to "concrete political activity or a clear ideology". In this setting, "the *subject of politics* turns into a *subject of feeling*" (Lehto & Mannevuo 2023, p. 873, emphasis in original, citing Berlant, 2008, pp. 145–146). Perhaps my research has opened space for considering whether it is possible to view these two political subjectivities as separate entities in an era of information and media where sentimentality is both a tool for attracting attention and building community, and a profound affective force, as distress (see Soronen & Koivunen 2023; cf. Article II, p. 1; Lehto & Mannevuo 2023, p. 875) and political conflict are always present.

Throughout the dissertation, I have highlighted this ambivalent role of platforms, resisting the tendency to lean into contemporary moral panics while maintaining a critical stance. Indeed, the shift in the political – and complexity surrounding it – cannot be captured solely by certain narratives. In conclusion, I think that

understanding the everyday and personal levels of political activity is more relevant than ever in an era where data-driven technologies reshape relationships and structures of power – both between humans and between humans and the media.

While my research has produced vital knowledge on the platformization of politics in Finland, it also leaves many questions open. First, the focus on political actors who have been – at least to some extent – active on social media has excluded those who do not use media for political aims at all. This raises the question of what forms of political engagement are possible outside commercial platforms in the 2020s. Furthermore, a necessary question concerns who is being drawn into and recruited for politics in the era of new media: what kinds of people find politics engaging, for what reasons, and who are being pushed further away? This issue is increasingly important as visual platforms like Instagram and TikTok are making their way into Finnish politics, which, in turn, reshapes the logic of earlier, more text-based platforms like X and Facebook.

More qualitative research is also needed on the deeper implications of platformized politics: do data-driven media cultures make political communication more competitive, or even more creative? Do they make politics more engaging for audiences, or do they signal the growing power of media over politics, with potentially devastating illiberal consequences? Do the constant and excessive streams of information – and knowledge – lead to better politics, or do they contribute to looser and less coherent political practices? These are important matters, especially considering that in Finland, younger generations are increasingly interested in politics supposedly due to the prevalence of political content on social media. This provokes further queries on the relationship between communication, media, and audience engagement. What should be valued most in a functioning democracy, and where is the line between liberal and illiberal when platforms are, by design, populist spaces for political communication?

As I have argued in this report, the rise of emotions should not alone be associated with (illiberal) polarization. At the same time, the growing emotional toll – both in terms of hate speech and general affective intensity – means that greater support for political actors is needed, especially as platforms structurally individualize political agency. Finally, the increase in affectivity raises questions about the distinct roles of different platforms – an issue I have only lightly touched upon. For instance, are platforms like Instagram, dominated by "good vibes" (Ylöstalo 2025), actually a necessary counterbalance to sites that feel particularly harsh but serve as important, agonistic spaces for political engagement?

It is important to note that in 2025, we are experiencing what could be considered a second wave of techlash: Meta's platforms, Facebook and Instagram, as well as today's X (formerly Twitter), are no longer ambiguous spaces where their political aims, connections, and black-boxed operating principles can only be vaguely

speculated on. Instead, through figures like Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg, these firms have made their ambitions increasingly transparent by aligning with power and capital – specifically, the new Trump administration. This shift is evidenced by their sudden retreat from responsible content governance, which has virtually enabled hate speech against marginalized populations. In some ways, these drastic changes have resolved the personal dilemma many participants faced over whether to remain on a given platform or not. Many Finnish politicians, along with a significant portion of civil society, have already left X, with the Greens already having collectively decided to do so.

Because my research material was gathered primarily between 2020 and 2021, the new wave of techlash had not yet emerged, nor were platforms like TikTok – more relevant today – widely used, at least among Finnish politicians. However, social media research will likely always involve studying "a moving target" (see Strandberg 2013, p. 1343, citing McMillan 2000). Despite these radical changes in my object of study, I do not believe the observations made here have become less relevant or dated. Even though Twitter has ceased to exist and Musk's X may be transforming into a platform that serves only one political end or be on the very edge of collapse, its legacy will persist on new sites like Bluesky, and it will also influence future platforms that design their services based on older media forms. Furthermore, data-driven media that seeks to harness people's attention and time is not likely to go anywhere in Western capitalist economies. By having studied Finnish political actors' experiences related to social media platforms, I have therefore shined light on not only on where we have been but also on where we should be headed if we wish to cultivate the best possible democratic ways of life in the age of new media.

List of references

Ahmed, Sara. 2004. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. 2nd edition. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Ahmed, Sara. 2017. *Living a Feminist Life*. Durham & London: Duke University Press.

A'Lee Frost, Amber. 2020. The Problem With Hashtag Activism. Retrieved from https://jacobin.com/2020/12/hashtag-activism-review-twitter-social-justice 20.12.2024.

Alhanen, Kai, and Perhoniemi, Tuukka. 2017. Demokraattinen Perintömme. Tampere: Vastapaino.

Andrejevic, Mark. 2011. Exploitation in the Data Mine. In Christian Fuchs, Kees Boersma, Anders Albrechtslund, Marisol Sandoval (Eds.), *Internet and Surveillance. The Challenges of Web 2.0 and Social Media*. Taylor & Francis, 71–88.

Andrejevic, Mark, and Volcic, Zala. 2020. From Mass to Automated Media. In Normann Witzleb, Moira Paterson, & Janice Richardson (Eds.), *Big Data, Political Campaigning and the Law.* Democracy and Privacy in the Age of Micro-Targeting. Abingdon & New York: Routledge, 17–33.

Baldwin-Philippi, Jessica. 2017. The Myths of Data-Driven Campaigning. *Political Communication* 34(4), 627–633. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2017.1372999

Banet-Weiser, Sarah. 2018. *Empowered: Popular Feminism and Popular Misogyny*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Beauvoir, Simone de. 1993 [1949]. *The Second Sex*. Translated by H.M. Parshley. [Original work *Le Deuxième Sexe*]. New York, London, & Toronto: Everyman's Library.

Bennett, W. Lance, and Segerberg, Alexandra. 2012. The Logic of Connective Action: Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics. *Information, Communication & Society* 15(5), 739–768. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2012.670661

Berlant, Lauren. 1997. *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City. Essays on Sex and Citizenship*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Berlant, Lauren. 1998. "Intimacy: A Special Issue." *Critical Inquiry* 24(2), 281–288.

Billard, Thomas J. 2024. *Voices for Transgender Equality: Making Change in the Networked Public Sphere*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Blumber, Jay G., and Kavanagh, Dennis. 1999. The Third Age of Political Communication: Influences and Features. *Political Communication* 16, 209–230.

Borucki, Isabelle, and Vittori, Davide. 2020. Platformization of Politics. ECPR Panel. https://ecpr.eu/Events/Event/PanelDetails/10070

Bossetta, Michael. 2018. The Digital Architectures of Social Media: Comparing Political Campaigning on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat in the 2016 U.S. Election. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 95(2), 471–496. https://doi.org/10.1177/107769901876330

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. *Outline of a theory of practice*. Translated by Richard Nice. [Original work *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique, précédé de trois études d'ethnologie Kabyle*]. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bratslavsky, Lauren, Carpenter, Nathan, and Zompetti, Joseph. 2019. Twitter, incivility, and presidential communication: A theoretical incursion into spectacle and power. *Cultural Studies* 34(4), 593–624. https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2019.1656760

Bruns, Axel. 2019. Filter bubble. *Internet Policy Review* 8(4), 1–14.
boyd, danah. 2014. *it's complicated: the social lives of networked teens*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
Bucher, Taina. 2012. Want to be on the top? Algorithmic power and the threat of invisibility on Facebook. *New Media & Society* 14(7), 1164–1180. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444812440159
Bucher, Taina. 2017. The algorithmic imaginary: exploring the ordinary affects of Facebook algorithms. *Information, Communication & Society* 20(1), 30–44. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1154086
Bucher, Taina. 2018. *If... Then : Algorithmic Power and Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Burgess, Jean, Albury, Kath, McCosker, Anthony, and Wilken, Rowan. 2022. *Everyday Data Cultures*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
Butler, Judith, Gambetti, Zeynep, and Sabsay, Leticia. 2016. Introduction. In Judith Butler, Zeynep Gambetti, & Leticia Sabsay (Eds.), *Vulnerability in Resistance*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1–11.
Calhoun, Craig. 1996. A Different Poststructuralism. *Review in Contemporary Sociology* 25(3), 302–305.
Cavalcante, Andre. 2016. "'I Did It All Online:' Transgender Identity and the Management of Everyday Life." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 33 (1): 109–122. https://doi.org/10.1080/15295036.2015.1129065
Chan, Ngai Keung. 2019. The Rating Game: The Discipline of Uber's User-Generated Ratings. *Surveillance & Society* 17(1/2), 183–190. https://doi.org/10.24908/ss.v17i1/2.12911
Chemaly, Soraya. 2019. Foreword. In Debbie Ging & Eugenia Siapera (Eds.), *Gender Hate Online.* Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, vii–xiii.
Cheney-Lippold, John. 2017. *We Are Data: Algorithms and the Making of Our Digital Selves*. New York: New York University Press.
Chibnall, Steve. 2013 [1977]. *Law-and-Order News: An Analysis of Crime Reporting in the British Press*. Hoboken: Routledge.
Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL). 2017. Intimidation in Public Life. Independent report.
Connolly, William E. 1995. *Ethos of pluralization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Couldry, Nick, and Hepp, Andreas. 2017. *The Mediated Construction of Reality*. Cambridge & Malden: Polity Press.
Couldry, Nick, and Mejias, Ulises A. 2018. Data Colonialism: Rethinking Big Data's Relation to the Contemporary Subject. *Television & New Media* 20(4), 336–349. https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476418796632
Couldry, Nick, and Yu, Jun. 2018. Deconstructing datafication's brave new world. *New Media & Society* 20(12), 4473–4491. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444818775968
Davies, Bronwyn, and Davies, Cristyn. 2011. Having, and Being Had By, "Experience": Or, "Experience" in the Social Sciences After the Discursive/Poststructuralist Turn. In Paul Atkinson & Sara Delamont (Eds.), *SAGE Qualitative Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 1–19.
Dean, Jodi. 2009. *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies: Communicative Capitalism and Left Politics*. Durhan & London: Duke University Press.
De Ridder, Sander, and Dhaenens, Frederik 2019. Coming Out as Popular Media Practice: The Politics of Queer Youth Coming Out on YouTube. *Journal of Diversity and Gender Studies* 6(2), 43–60. https://doi.org/10.11116/digest.6.2.3
van Dijck, José. 2013. *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media. Oxford*: Oxford University Press.
van Dijck, José, and Poell, Thomas. 2013. Understanding Social Media Logic. *Media and Communication* 1(1), 2–14. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v1i1.70
van Dijck, José. 2014. Datafication, dataism and dataveillance: Big Data between scientific paradigm and ideology. *Surveillance & Society* 12(2), 197–208.

van Dijck, José, Poell, Thomas, and de Waal, Martijn. 2018. *The Platform Society: Public Values in a Connective World*. New York: Oxford University Press.

DiMaggio, Paul, Evans, John, and Bryson, Bethany. 1996. Have American's Social Attitudes Become More Polarized? *American Journal of Sociology* 102(3), 690–755. https://doi.org/10.1086/230995

Dolata, Ulrich, and Schrape, Jan-Felix. 2016. Masses, Crowds, Communities, Movements: Collective Action in the Internet Age. *Social Movement Studies* 15(1), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2015.1055722

Dror, Yuval. 2015. 'We are not here for the money': Founders' manifestos. *New Media & Society* 17(4), 540–555. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444813506974

Duncombe, Constance. 2019. The Politics of Twitter: Emotions and the Power of Social Media. *International Political Sociology* 13, 409–429. https://doi.org/10.1093/ips/olz013

Eriksson, Maria, Fleischer, Rasmus, Johansson, Anna, Snickars, Pelle, and Vonderau, Patrick. 2019. *Spotify Teardown: Inside the Black Box of Streaming Music*. Cambridge & London: The MIT Press.

Ekman, Mattias, and Widholm, Andreas. 2017. Political communication in an age of visual connectivity: Exploring Instagram practices among Swedish politicians. *Northern Lights* 15(1), 15–32. https://doi.org/10.1386/nl.15.1.15_1

Enli, Gunn. 2016. "Trust Me, I Am Authentic!": Authenticity Illusions in Social Media Politics. In. Axel Bruns, Gunn Enli, Eli Skogerbø, Anders Olof Larsson, & Christian Christensen (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Social Media and Politics*. 1st ed. New York: Routledge, 121–136.

Enli, Gunn, and Rosenberg, Linda T. 2018. Trust in the Age of Social Media: Populist Politicians Seem More Authentic. *Social Media + Society* 4(1), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118764430

Eubanks, Virginia. 2019. *Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor*. New York: Picador, St. Martin's Press.

Fast, Karin, and Enli, Gunn. 2024. Political work under post-digital conditions. Or, how politicians endure digital entrapment and distraction in daily life. In Kristoffer Albris, Karin Fast, Faltin Karlsen, Anne Kaun, Stine Lomborg, & Trine Syvertsen (Eds.), *The digital backlash and the paradoxes of disconnection.* Nordicom: University of Gothenburg, 131–152. https://doi.org/10.48335/9789188855961-7

Favaretto, Maddalena, De Clercq, Eva, and Elger, Bernice Simone. 2019. Big Data and discrimination: perils, promises and solutions. A systematic review. *Journal of Big Data* 6(12), 1–27.

Ferris Lindsay, and Duguay, Stefanie. 2020. Tinder's lesbian digital imaginary: Investigating (im)permeable boundaries of sexual identity on a popular dating app. *New Media & Society* 22(3), 489–506. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444819864903

Fletcher, Richard, and Nielsen, Rasmus K. 2018. Are people incidentally exposed to news on social media? A comparative analysis. *New Media & Society* 20(7), 2450–2468. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444817724170

Flinders, Matthew, Weinberg, Ashley, Weinberg, James, Geddes, Marc, and Kwiatkowski, Richard. 2020. Governing under Pressure? The Mental Wellbeing of Politicians. *Parliamentary Affairs* 73(2), 253–273. https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsy046

Fotopoulou, Aristea. 2016. *Feminist Activism and Digital Networks*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Fraser, Nancy. 1990. Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy. *Social Text* 25/26, 56–80.

Frimer, Jeremy A., Aujla, Harinder, Feinberg, Matthew, Skitka, Linda J., Aquino, Karl, Eichstaedt, Johannes C., and Willer, Robb. 2023. Incivility Is Rising Among American Politicians on Twitter. *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 14(2), 259–269. https://doi.org/10.1177/19485506221083811

Gibson, Barbara, Mistry, Bhavnita, Smith, Brett, Yoshida, Karen, Abbott, David, and Lindsay, Sally. 2013. The Integrated Use of Audio Diaries, Photography, and Interviews in Research with Disabled Young Men. *International journal of qualitative methods* 12(1), 382–402. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940691301200118

Gillespie, Tarleton. 2010. The politics of 'platforms'. *New Media & Society* 12(3), 347–364. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444809342738

Gronow, Antti, and Malkamäki, Arttu. 2024. Political polarisation in turbulent times: Tracking polarisation trends and partisan news link sharing on Finnish Twitter, 2015-2023. Technical report.

Gubrium, Jaber F., Holstein, James A., Marvasti, Amir B., and McKinney, Karyn D. 2012. Introduction: The Complexity of the Craft. In Jaber F. Gubrium, James A. Holstein, Amir B. Marvasti, & Karyn D. McKinney (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Interview Research*: The Complexity of the Craft. SAGE Publications, 1–5.

Haimson, Oliver L, Dame-Griff, Avery, Capello, Elias, and Richter, Zahari. 2021. Tumblr was a trans technology: the meaning, importance, history, and future of trans technologies. *Feminist Media Studies* 21(3), 345–361. https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2019.1678505

Hardt, Michael. 1999. Affective Labor. *boundary* 2, 26(2), 89–100.

Harfoush, Rahaf. 2009. *Yes We Did: An Inside Look at How Social Media Built the Obama Brand*. Indianapolis: New Riders Pub.

Hauser, John R., Urban, Glen L., Liberali, Guilherme, and Braun, Michael. 2009. Website Morphing. *Marketing Science* 28(2), 202–223.https://doi.org/10.1287/mksc.1080.0459

Hay, Colin. 2002. *Political Analysis. A Critical Introduction*. Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Helles, Rasmus, and Lomborg, Stine. 2024. Techlash or tech change? How the image of Mark Zuckerberg changed with Cambridge Analytica. In Kristoffer Albris, Karin Fast, Faltin Karlsen, Anne Kaun, Stine Lomborg, & Trine Syvertsen (Eds.), *The digital backlash and the paradoxes of disconnection.* Nordicom: University of Gothenburg, 25–43. https://doi.org/10.48335/9789188855961-2

Hintz, Arne, Dencik, Lina, and Wahl-Jørgensen, Karin. 2019. *Digital citizenship in a datafied society*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hochschild, Arlie. 2012 [1983]. *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. 3rd ed. Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press.

Hokkanen, Julius. 2022."Ja jos se ei kelpaa algoritmeille niin sitten ei kelpaa. Se siitä." Datakäytännöt nuorten poliitikkojen arjessa. *Politiikka* 64(2), 98–119. https://doi.org/10.37452/politiikka.109128

Hokkanen, Julius. 2023. Belonging, responsibility and reflexivity: mediated intimacy among Finnish nonbinary and trans social media users. *Feminist Media Studies,* 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2023.2285710

Hokkanen, Julius, Koivunen, Anu, and Turunen, Maiju. 2021. Datan alaiset. Kansanedustajien digitaalinen arki. Tampere: Tampereen yliopisto. https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-03-1986-1

Horak, Laura. 2014. "Trans on YouTube: Intimacy, Visibility, Temporality." TSQ: *Transgender Studies Quarterly* 1 (4): 572–585. https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-2815255

Hyvärinen, Matti. 2017. Haastattelun Maailma. In Matti Hyvärinen, Pirjo Nikander, & Johanna Ruusuvuori (Eds.), *Tutkimushaastattelun käsikirja*. Tampere: Vastapaino, 9–38.

Isin, Engin, and Ruppert, Evelyn. 2020. *Being Digital Citizens*. 2nd ed. London & New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Isotalus, Pekka. 2017. *Mediapoliitikko*. Tampere: Vastapaino.

Iyengar, Shanto, Sood, Gaurav, and Lelkes, Yphtach. 2012. Affect, not ideology: a social identity perspective on polarization. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76(3), 405–431. https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfs038

Jaaksi, Vilja. 2024. Social media diary-interview as a method for studying trans everyday life. Presented at the 2nd International Trans Studies Conference, 6.9.2024.

Jaaksi, Vilja. 2025. "I made myself a new safety bubble": Building trans virtual homeplaces. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1177/13678779251322782

Jackson, Sarah J., Bailey, Moya, and Foucault Welles, Brooke. 2020. *#HashtagActivism. Networks of Race and Gender Justice*. Cambridge & Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

Kanai, Akane, and McGrane, Caitlin. 2021. Feminist filter bubbles: ambivalence, vigilance and labour, *Information, Communication & Society* 24(15), 2307–2322 https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2020.1760916

Kantola, Johanna, and Lombardo, Emanuela. 2017. *Gender and Political Analysis*. London & New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Karppi, Tero. 2018. *Disconnect: Facebook's Affective Bonds*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Kawecki, Daniel, and Kekkonen, Arto. 2024. Affektiivinen polarisaatio ja puoluevalinta. In Elina Kestilä-Kekkonen, Lauri Rapeli, & Peter Söderlund (Eds.), *Prime Minister Elections in the Age of Political Polarisation*. Publications of the Ministry of Justice, Reports and guidelines 2024:10, 224–243.

Kekkonen, Arto, and Ylä-Anttila, Tuomas. 2021. Affective blocs: Understanding affective polarization in multiparty systems. *Electoral Studies* 72, 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2021.102367

Kennedy, Helen, Poell, Thomas, and van Dijck, José. 2015. Data and agency. *Big Data & Society* 2(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/2053951715621569

Kennedy, Helen. 2016. *Post, Mine, Repeat. Social Media Data Mining Becomes Ordinary*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kennedy, Helen. 2018. Living with Data: Aligning Data Studies and Data Activism Through a Focus on Everyday Experiences of Datafication. *Krisis* 1, 18–30.

Kennedy, Helen. 2021. Lecture: Everyday life in times of datafication. Lecture series: Making sense of the digital society. https://www.hiig.de/en/digital-society-lecture-series/

Kitchin, Rob, and Dodge, Martin. 2011. *Code/Space. Software and everyday life*. Cambridge & London: The MIT Press.

Klein, Naomi. 2024. *Kaksoisolento.* Translated by Silja-Maaria Aronpuro. [Original work *Doppelganger. A Trip into the Mirror World*, 2023]. Helsinki: Into.

Knuutila, Aleksi, Kosonen, Heidi, Saresma, Tuija, Haara, Paula, and Pöyhtäri, Reeta. 2019. The impact of hate speech on public decision-making. Publications of the Government's analysis, assessment and research activities 2019:57. http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-287-786-4

Knuutila, Aleksi and Laaksonen, Salla-Maaria. 2020. Viraali vihaisuus ja tahmea nauru: tunteet ja algoritmit digitaalisessa vaalikampanjoinnissa. In Sami Borg, Elina Kestilä-Kekkonen, & Hanna Wass (Eds.), *Climate change in politics: Finnish National Election Study 2019*. Publications of the Ministry of Justice, Reports and guidelines 2020:5. Helsinki: Ministry of Justice, 394–418.

Koivunen. Anu 2010. An affective turn? Reimagining the subject of feminist theory. In Marianne Liljeström, & Susanna Paasonen (Eds.), *Working with Affect in Feminist Readings: Disturbing Differences*. London & New York: Routledge, 8–28.

Koivunen, Anu. 2011. Jyrki Kataisen kyyneleet eli sivustakatsova valta. In Anu Koivunen & Mikko Lehtonen (Eds.), *Kuinka meitä kutsutaan? — kulttuuriset merkityskamppailut nyky-Suomessa*. Tampere: Vastapaino, 219–237.

Koivunen, Anu. 2021. Managing moods. Media, politicians, and anxiety over public debate. In Anu Koivunen, Jari Ojala, & Janne Holmén (Eds.), *The Nordic Economic, Social and Political Model. Challenges in the 21st century*. London: Routledge,195–211.

Koivunen, Anu, Kyrölä, Katariina, Ryberg, Ingrid. 2018. Vulnerability as a political language. In Anu Koivunen, Katariina Kyrölä, & Ingrid Ryberg (Eds.), *Power of vulnerability: Mobilising affect in feminist, queer and anti-racist media cultures*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1–26.

Koivunen, Anu, Nikunen, Kaarina, Hokkanen, Julius, Jaaksi, Vilja, Lehtinen, Vilma, Soronen, Anne, Talvitie-Lamberg, Karoliina, and Valtonen, Sanna. 2024. Anticipation as Platform Power: The Temporal Structuring of Digital Everyday Life. *Television & New Media* 25(2), 115–132. https://doi.org/10.1177/15274764231178228

Kosunen, Sonja, and Kauko, Jaakko. 2016. Valtasuhteet tutkimushaastattelussa. *Politiikka* 58(1), 27–40.

Kreiss, Daniel. 2016. Prototype politics: *Technology-intensive campaigning and the data of democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199350247.001.0001

Kreiss, Daniel, and McGregor, Shannon C. 2017. Technology Firms Shape Political Communication: The Work of Microsoft, Facebook, Twitter, and Google With Campaigns During the 2016 U.S. Presidential Cycle. *Political Communication* 35(2), 155–177. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2017.1364814

Kubin, Emily, and von Sikorski, Christian. 2021. The role of (social) media in political polarization: a systematic review. *Annals of the International Communication Association* 45(3), 188–206. https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.2021.1976070

Kunelius, Risto, and Reunanen, Esa. 2016. Changing Power of Journalism: The Two Phases of Mediatization. *Communication Theory* 26(4), 369–388. https://doi.org/10.1111/comt.12098

Kuntsman, Adi. 2017. Introduction: Whose Selfie Citizenship? In Adi Kuntsman (ed.), *Selfie Citizenship*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 13–18.

Laaksonen, Salla-Maaria. 2021. Onko kärkäs keskustelu sosiaalisen median syy? Blog post. Retrieved 28.02.2025 https://rajapinta.co/2021/12/12/onko-karkas-keskustelu-sosiaalisen-median-syy/.

Langlois, Ganaele, and Elmer, Greg. 2013. The Research Politics of Social Media Platforms. *Culture Machine* 14, 1–17.

Larsson, Anders O., and Kalsnes, Bente. 2014. 'Of course we are on Facebook': Use and non-use of social media among Swedish and Norwegian politicians. *European Journal of Communication* 29(6), 653–667. https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323114531383

Larsson, Anders O., and Skogerbø, Eli. 2018. Out with the old, in with the new? Perceptions of social (and other) media by local and regional Norwegian politicians. *New Media & Society* 20(1), 219–236. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444816661549

Lazzarato, Maurizio. 1996. Immaterial Labor. In Paolo Virno & Michael Hardt (Eds.), *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 142–156.

Lehto, Mari, and Mannevuo, Mona. 2023. 'People tell me quite intimate things': The circulation of feelings and vague intimacy on politicised Instagram. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies* 29(4), 871–885. https://doi.org/10.1177/13548565221144258

Lilleker, Darren G., Tenscher, Jens, and Štětka, Václav. 2014. Towards Hypermedia Campaigning? Perceptions of New Media's Importance for Campaigning by Party Strategists in Comparative Perspective. *Information, Communication & Society* 18(7), 747–765. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2014.993679

Liubimau, Siarhei. 2022. Platformization of Politics in Non-democracies: Spaces of Participatory Experiments In Belarus in 2020S. *Studia Humanistyczne AGH* 21(4):7–21. https://doi.org/10.7494/human.2022.21.4.7

Luhtakallio, Eeva, and Eranti, Veikko. 2024. Introduction: Doing Society. In Eeva Luhtakallio and Veikko Eranti (Eds.), *Youth Participation and Democracy: Cultures of Doing Society*. Bristol: Bristol University Press, 1–25.

Luhtakallio, Eeva, Eranti, Veikko, Boldt, Georg, Jokela, Maija, Junnilainen, Lotta, Meriluoto, Taina, and Ylä-Anttila, Tuukka. 2024. *Youth Participation and Democracy: Cultures of Doing Society*. Bristol: Bristol University Press.

Lupton, Deborah. 2015. Personal Data Practices in the Age of Lively Data. Pre-print. In Jessie Daniels, Karen Gregory, & Tressie McMillan Cottom (Eds.), *Digital Sociologies*. Bristol University Press & Policy Press.

Lupton, Deborah. 2017. Digital Bodies. In Michael Silk, David Andrews, & Holly Thorpe (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Physical Cultural Studies*. Abingdon & New York: Routledge, 200–208.

Malatino, Hil. 2019. Future Fatigue Trans Intimacies and Trans Presents (Or How to Survive the Interregnum). TSQ: *Transgender Studies Quarterly* 6(4), 635–658. https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-7771796

Mannevuo, Mona. 2020. Anxious politicians: Productivity imperatives in the Finnish Parliament. *European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology* 7(4), 409–430. https://doi.org/10.1080/23254823.2020.1777442

Mannevuo, Mona. 2022. Uneasy self-promotion and tactics of patience: Finnish MPs' ambivalent feelings about personalised politics on social media. *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 26(1), 104–119. https://doi.org/10.1177/13678779221120028

Mannevuo, Mona, Rinne, Jenni, and Vento, Isak. 2022. Long Hours, Uneasy Feelings: Parliamentary Work in Denmark, Finland and Sweden. *Parliamentary Affairs* 75(3), 558–575. https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsab022

Manovich, Lev. 2009. The Practice of Everyday (Media) Life: From Mass Consumption to Mass Cultural Production? *Critical Inquiry* 35, 319–331. https://doi.org/10.1086/596645

Matz, Sandra C., Appel, Ruth E, and Kosinski, Michal. 2020. Privacy in the age of psychological targeting. *Current Opinion in Psychology* 31, 116–121.

Mayer-Schönberger, Viktor, and Cukier, Kenneth. 2013. *Big Data. A Revolution that will transform how we live, work, and think.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

McLoughlin, Liam D. G. 2019. How Social Media is Changing Political Representation in the United Kingdom. School of Arts and Media, University of Salford.

McNay, Lois. 2003. Agency, Anticipation and Indeterminacy in Feminist Theory. *Feminist Theory* 4(2), 139–148. https://doi.org/10.1177/14647001030042003

McNay, Lois. 2008. The Trouble with Recognition: Subjectivity, Suffering, and Agency. *Sociological Theory* 26(3), 271–296. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9558.2008.00329.x

Megarry, Jessica. 2018. Under the watchful eyes of men: theorising the implications of male surveillance practices for feminist activism on social media. *Feminist Media Studies* 18(6), 1070–1085. https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2017.1387584

Mols, Anouk, and Pridmore, Jason. 2020. Always available via WhatsApp: Mapping everyday boundary work practices and privacy negotiations. *Mobile Media & Communication* 9(3), 422–440. https://doi.org/10.1177/2050157920970582

Mouffe, Chantal. 1993. *The Return of the Political*. London & New York: Verso.

Mäkinen, Katariina 2021. Resilience and vulnerability: Emotional and affective labour in mom blogging. *New Media & Society* 23(10), 2964–2978. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444820941196

Negrine, Ralph. 2008. *The transformation of political communication. Continuities and changes in media and politics*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Nelimarkka, Matti, Laaksonen, Salla-Maaria, Tuokko, Mari, and Valkonen, Tarja. 2020. Platformed Interactions: How Social Media Platforms Relate to Candidate–Constituent Interaction During Finnish 2015 Election Campaigning. *Social Media + Society* 6(2), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120903856

Nieborg, David B., and Helmond, Anne. 2019. The political economy of Facebook's platformization in the mobile ecosystem: Facebook Messenger as a platform instance. *Media, Culture & Society* 41(2), 196–218. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443718818384

Norval, Aletta J. 2014. Deliberative, Agonistic and Aversive Grammars of Democracy: The Question of Criteria. In Steven Griggs, Aletta J. Norval, & Hendrik Wagenaar (Eds.), *Practices of Freedom. Decentred Governance, Conflict and Democratic Participation*. Cambridge University Press, 60–84. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107296954

Nordbrandt, Maria. 2023. Affective polarization in the digital age: Testing the direction of the relationship between social media and users' feelings for out-group parties. *New Media & Society* 25(12), 3392–3411. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211044393

Oakley, Ann. 1981. Interviewing women: a contradiction in terms. In Helen Roberts (ed.), *Doing feminist research.* London, Boston, & Henley. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 30–61.

Okin, Susan Moller. 1991. Gender, the Public and the Private. In David Held (ed.), *Political Theory Today*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 67–90.

O'Neil, Cathy. 2016. *Weapons Of Math Destruction: How Big Data Increases Inequality and Threatens Democracy*. New York: Crown.

Ott, Brian. 2017. The age of Twitter: Donald J. Trump and the politics of debasement. *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 34(1), 59–68. https://doi.org/10.1080/15295036.2016.1266686

Overgaard, Christian Staal Bruun. 2024. Perceiving Affective Polarization in the United States: How Social Media Shape Meta-Perceptions and Affective Polarization. *Social Media + Society* 10(1), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051241232662

Paasonen, Susanna. 2018. Infrastructures of intimacy. In Rikke Andreassen, Michael Nebeling Petersen, Katherine Harrison, & Tobias Raun (Eds.), *Mediated Intimacies: Connectivities, Relationalities and Proximities.* London and New York: Taylor and Francis, 103–116.

Paasonen, Susanna. 2021. *Dependent, Distracted, Bored: Affective Formations in Networked Media*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Paasonen, Susanna, Jaaksi, Vilja, Koivunen, Anu, Nikunen, Kaarina, Talvitie-Lamberg, Karoliina, Vänskä, Annamari. 2023. Intimate Infrastructures We Depend upon: Living with Data. *Media Theory* 7(2), 285–308. https://doi.org/10.70064/mt.v7i2.576

Pantzar, Mika, and Ruckenstein, Minna. 2015. The heart of everyday analytics: emotional, material and practical extensions in self-tracking market. *Consumption Markets & Culture* 18(1), 92–109. https://doi.org/10.1080/10253866.2014.899213

Papacharissi, Zizi. 2010. *A Private Sphere. Democracy in a Digital Age*. Cambridge & Malden: Polity Press.

Papacharissi, Zizi, and Easton, Emily 2012. In the Habitus of the New: Structure, Agency, and the Social Media Habitus. In John Hartley, Jean Burgess, & Axel Bruns (Eds.), *A Companion to New Media Dynamics*. Oxford: Blackwell, 171–190.

Pateman, Carole. 1988. *The Sexual Contract.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Pedwell, Carolyn, and Whitehead, Anne. 2012. Affecting feminism: Questions of feeling in feminist theory. *Feminist Theory* 13(2), 115–129. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700112442635

Penttilä, Pauliina, Ovaska, Liisa, and Ahva, Laura. 2024. lltalehden toimituksen ja yleisön pelillistynyt suhde analytiikan aikakaudella. *Media ja viestintä* 47(3), 27–50. https://doi.org/10.23983/mv.145549

Pew Research Center. 2014. Online Harassment. October 2014. Available at: http://www.pewinternet.org/2014/10/22/online-harassment/

Poell, Thomas, and van Dijck, José. 2015. Social Media and Activist Communication. In Chris Atton (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Alternative and Community Media*. London & New York: Routledge, 527–537.

Poell, Thomas, Nieborg, David, and van Dijck, José. 2019. Platformisation. *Internet Policy Review* 8(4), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.14763/2019.4.1425

Pym, Tinonee, Byron, Paul, and Albury, Kath. 2021. 'I Still Want to Know They're Not Terrible People': Negotiating 'Queer Community' on Dating Apps. *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 24(3), 398–413. https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877920959332

Reunanen, Esa, and Harju, Auli 2012. *Media iholla - Politiikan julkisuus kansanedustajien ja aktivistien kokemana*. Tampere: Tampere University Press.

Ribbens, Jane. 1989. Interviewing—An "unnatural situation"?. *Women's Studies International Forum* 12(6), 579–592. https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395(89)90002-2

Ross, Karen. 2001. Political elites and the pragmatic paradigm: Notes from a feminist researcher - in the field and out to lunch. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 4(2), 155–166. https://doi.org/10.1080/13645570119027

Ross, Karen, and Bürger, Tobias. 2014. Face to face(book): Social media, political campaigning and the unbearable lightness of being there. *Political Science* 66(1), 46–62. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032318714534106

Roulston, Kathryn 2013. Theorizing the Qualitative Interview. In Uwe Flick (ed.), *Reflective Interviewing: A Guide to Theory and Practice*. London: SAGE Publications, 1–22. https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781446288009

Ruckenstein, Minna. 2023. *The feel of algorithms*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Ryan, Alexander. 2023. Exploring differences in affective polarization between the Nordic countries. *Scandinavian Political Studies* 46(1-2), 52–74. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9477.12244

Saariketo, Minna. 2020. Kuvitelmia toimijuudesta koodin maisemissa. Tampere University Dissertations 241. Tampere: Tampere University. https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-03-1531-3

Sano-Franchini, Jennifer. 2018. Designing Outrage, Programming Discord: A Critical Interface Analysis of Facebook as a Campaign Technology. *Technical Communication* 65(4), 387–410.

Van Sant, Kristina, Fredheim, Rolf, and Bergmanis-Korāts, Gundars. 2021. Abuse of power: coordinated online harassment of Finnish government ministers. Riga: NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence. Retrieved 20.12.2024. https://stratcomcoe.org/publications/abuse-of-power-coordinated-online-harassment-of-finnish-government-ministers/5

Saresma, Tuija, Pöyhtäri, Reeta, Kosonen, Heidi, Haara, Paula, and Knuutila, Aleksi. 2020. Poliittisten toimijoiden kokema vihapuhe sukupuolittuneena poliittisena väkivaltana. *Sukupuolentutkimus* 33(4), 18–38.

Schickel, Richard. 1986. *Intimate Strangers: The Culture of Celebrity*. New York: Fromm International Publishing Corporation.

Scott, Joan W. 1991. The Evidence of Experience. *Critical Inquiry* 17(4), 773–797.

Sennett, Richard. 2013 [1974]. *The Fall of Public Man*. London: Penguin Books.

Settle, Jaime. E. 2018. Frenemies: *How social media polarizes America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Siles, Ignacio, Arguedas, Amy Ross, Sancho, Mónica, and Solís-Quesada, Ricardo. 2022. Playing Spotify's game: artists' approaches to playlisting in Latin America. *Journal of Cultural Economy* 15(5), 551–567. https://doi.org/10.1080/17530350.2022.2058061

Silverstone, Roger. 1999. *Why Study the Media?* London, Thousand Oaks, & New Delhi. SAGE Publications.

Skeggs, Beverley. 2004. *Class, Self, Culture*. London & New York: Routledge.

Skogerbø, Eli, and Kunelius, Risto. 2017. Introduction – political communication in networked societies. *Northern Lights* 15, 3–13.

Smith, Gavin JD. 2016. Surveillance, Data and Embodiment: On the Work of Being Watched. *Body & Society* 22(2), 108–139. https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034X15623622

Sobieraj, Sarah. 2018. Bitch, slut, skank, cunt: patterned resistance to women's visibility in digital publics. *Information, Communication & Society* 21(11), 1700–1714.

Soronen, Anne, and Koivunen, Anu. 2022. Platformed intimacies: Professional belonging on social media. *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 25(5), 1344–1360. https://doi.org/10.1177/13675494221079854

Soronen, Anne, and Koivunen, Anu. 2023. Witnessing distress: Cultural workers' processing of pandemic experiences on social media platforms. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1177/13548565231221687

Spowart, Lucy, and Nairn, Karen. 2014. (Re)performing Emotions in Diary-Interviews. *Qualitative Research* 14(3): 327–340. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794112473498

Srnicek, Nick. 2016. *Platform Capitalism*. Cambridge & Malden: Polity.

Stanyer, James. 2013. *Intimate Politics. Publicity, Privacy and the Personal Lives of Politicians in Media-Saturated Democracie*s. Cambridge & Malden: Polity.

Strandberg, Kim. 2013. A social media revolution or just a case of history repeating itself? The use of social media in the 2011 Finnish parliamentary elections. *New Media & Society* 15(8), 1329–1347. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444812470612

Strandberg, Kim, and Borg, Sami. 2020. Internet ja sosiaalinen media osana vaalikampanjaa. In Sami Borg, Elina Kestilä-Kekkonen and Hanna Wass (Eds.), Climate change in politics: *Finnish National Election Study 2019*. Publications of the Ministry of Justice, Reports and guidelines 2020:5. Helsinki: Ministry of Justice, 103–122.

Vaidhyanathan, Siva. 2018. *Antisocial Media: How Facebook Disconnects Us and Undermines Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wahl-Jørgensen, Karin 2018. The Emotional Architecture of Social Media. In Zizi Papacharissi (ed.), *A Networked Self and Platforms, Stories, Connections*. London: Routledge.

Ward, Dalston G., and Tavits, Margit. 2019. How partisan affect shapes citizens' perception of the political world. *Electoral Studies* 60(4), 1–9 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2019.04.009

Wetherell, Margaret. 2012. *Affect and Emotion: A New Social Science Understanding*. London: SAGE Publications.

Williams, Raymond. 1989[1958]. *Resources of Hope. Culture, Democracy, Socialism*. Edited by Robin Gable. London & New York: Verso.

Wilson, Ara. 2016. The Infrastructure of Intimacy. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 41(2): 247–280.

Wolfsfeld, Gadi, Segev, Elad, and Sheafer, Tamir. 2013. Social Media and the Arab Spring: Politics Comes First. *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 18(2), 115–137. https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161212471716

Wood, Matthew, Corbett, Jack, and Flinders, Matthew. 2016. Just like us: Everyday celebrity politicians and the pursuit of popularity in an age of anti-politics. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 18(3), 581–598.

Yarchi, Moran, Baden, Christian, and Kligler-Vilenchik, Neta. 2021. Political Polarization on the Digital Sphere: A Cross-platform, Over-time Analysis of Interactional, Positional, and Affective Polarization on Social Media. *Political Communication* 38(1–2), 98–139. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2020.1785067

Ylöstalo, Hanna, and Kinnunen, Heini. 2023. Instagram sukupuolittuneen politiikan alustana. *Politiikka* 65(4), 298–321. https://doi.org/10.37452/politiikka.125557

Ylöstalo, Hanna. 2025. Good vibes and collective action: gendered politics on Instagram. *Feminist Media Studies,* 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2025.2495728

Zimmerman, Don H., and Wieder, Lawrence D. 1977. The Diary: Diary-Interview Method. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 5(4), 479–498. https://doi.org/10.1177/089124167700500406

Zuboff, Shoshana. 2019. *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The fight for a human future at the new frontier of power*. London: Profile Books.

Appendices

Appendix 1: A note on the use of AI

I have used generative AI ChatGPT-4o for proofreading parts of this summarizing report as well as parts of Articles 2 and 3. Here, the prompt has been “Review this paragraph/sentence for grammatical errors and list down mistakes”. In specific paragraphs or sentences where I have struggled with my own expression, I have used the prompt “Review this paragraph/sentence for grammatical errors and improve the readability”. In practice, this has helped me to improve difficult sentence structures and replace words that are not correct in a given context. It has also helped me to choose words that better capture the intended meaning in each context. For both practical and environmental reasons, I have only fed AI those parts of the text that I felt needed revising. When revising readability through AI, I have mostly relied on my own writing and only used the idea behind the revision (e.g. sentence structure) rather than copied the generated output itself.

Appendix 2: A note on the Article III co-authoring process

Article 3 has been mostly written by me. My co-author Anu Koivunen had a major influence on the article, as Koivunen refined our argument about platforms as agonistic spaces as well as developed the idea of approaching digital everyday life through emotional and affective labor.

Appendix 3: Young politicians’ diary instruction

Kiitos, että olet päättänyt osallistua Tampereen yliopiston toteuttamaan tutkimukseen digitaalisesta arjesta! Alla on kuvaus ja ohjeistus siitä, miten aineistonkeruu käytännössä toteutetaan.

Kirjoita tai tallenna äänitiedostoina kokemuksiasi vähintään kerran päivässä siitä, millaista digitaalinen arkesi on. Suositeltu päiväkirjajakson pituus on kymmenen päivää. Toivomme päiväkirjaa pidettävän vähintään seitsemän päivän ajan. Voit tallentaa päiväkirjaan tekstin ja äänen ohella kuvia, piirroksia ja videoita, jos niin haluat. Valitse sellainen ilmaisutapa, joka itsellesi sopii parhaiten. Voit myös vaihtaa käyttämääsi ilmaisutapaa eri päivinä. Päiväkirjaviikon puolessa välissä hankkeen tutkija ottaa sinuun yhteyttä sähköpostitse ja tiedustelee, miten päiväkirjan pitäminen on siihen asti sujunut. Tuolloin sovitaan myös päiväkirjan palauttaminen ja haastattelun ajankohta.

Sinun toivotaan raportoivan ajatuksiasi, tunteitasi ja kokemuksiasi siitä, miltä julkinen toiminta ja arki tämän ympärillä tuntuvat päiväkirjajakson aikana. Kiinnitä erityistä huomioita sosiaalisen median, digitaalisten palvelujen, laitteiden ja sovellusten käyttöön. Voit sisällyttää päiväkirjaasi kuvauksia erilaisista arjen digitaalisista kohtaamisista, keskusteluista ja vuorovaikutustilanteista. Voit esimerkiksi kertoa siitä, miten teet julkaisupäätöksesi ja avata syitä eri julkaisualustojen käytölle. Voit kertoa, miten ja millaisissa tilanteissa pidät yhteyttä oman poliittisen verkostosi, aktivistiverkoston tai some-seuraajien kanssa. Voit lisäksi kirjoittaa eri profiilien käytön merkityksestä itsellesi.

Muita esimerkkejä mahdollisista päiväkirjassa käsiteltävistä aiheista:

- omat kokemukset, ajatukset ja tunteet poikkeustilassa suhteessa poliittiseen toimintaan tai aktivismiin
- tilanteet, joissa ajattelet yksityisyyttäsi tai sen rajoja
- yksityiselämän, julkisen elämän ja työn yhteenkietoutuminen
- tiedonhaku, tiedon jakaminen tai tiedon välttely poikkeustilanteessa
- sosiaalisen median käyttöön liittyvät tilanteet, jolloin esim.
    - pohdit, teetkö jostain asiasta some-päivityksen vai et
    - päädyit tekemään päivityksen, vaikka et olisi halunnut
    - jätit julkaisematta jo kirjoitetun päivityksen
    - ilahduit, hämmästyit, pelästyit tai vihastuit siitä, millaisia reaktioita päivityksesi saa aikaan
    - pohdit jonkun kollegan tekemää some-päivitystä tai päivityksen saamaa vastaanottoa
    - huomasit käyttäneesi liikaa aikaa toisen ihmisen some-päivityksen tai -kommentin parissa

Päiväkirja voi sisältää myös muita aiheita, joita osallistujat pitävät tärkeinä oman poliittisen identiteetin, aktivisti-identiteetin tai poikkeustilanteen näkökulmasta. Suosituksena on, että kirjoitat päiväkirjasi anonymisoiden henkilöt, joista kirjoitat. Voit joko kirjoittaa päiväkirjaa suoraan mainitsematta ketään henkilöitä nimeltä tai anonymisoida päiväkirjan ennen palauttamista.

Noin viikon sisällä päiväkirjajakson päättymisestä sinua haastatellaan vapaamuotoisesti päiväkirjasta ja sen herättämistä ajatuksista keskustellen. Lisäksi sinua haastatellaan siitä, miltä päiväkirjan pitäminen tuntui. Haastattelut nauhoitetaan ja toteutetaan lähtökohtaisesti etäyhteydellä.

Appendix 4: Gender minority social media users' diary instruction

Taltioi mieleenpainuvia digitaalisia sisältöjä, keskusteluja ja näihin liittyviä tuntemuksia vähintään kerran päivässä. Voit esimerkiksi ottaa sisällöistä kuvakaappauksia ja liittää nämä osaksi Word-dokumenttia, Google Docsia tai muuta valitsemaasi tekstinkäsittelyohjelmaa.

Toivomme, että sisältöjen taltioinnin ohella kerrot myös siitä, miksi valikoit juuri nämä sisällöt päiväkirjaasi ja millaisia tuntemuksia niiden valikointiin liittyi. Pyrkimys ei siis ole taltioida kaikkea digitaalista toimintaa osaksi päiväkirjaa, vaan keskittyä asioihin, joiden kautta alustojen sisällöt ja niille syntyvät ja rakennetut yhteisöt ovat merkityksellisiä sukupuolellesi ja/tai identiteetillesi.

Jos tuotat päiväkirjajakson aikana sisältöjä itse, osallistut keskusteluihin, otat kantaa tai esimerkiksi vaikutat yhteiskunnallisesti yhdellä tai useammalla alustalla, kerro myös näistä tilanteista ja ajatuksistasi niihin liittyen.

Kannustamme päiväkirjassa myös täysin vapaaseen kerrontaan, vaikka tämä ei liittyisikään tiettyihin sisältöihin!

Päiväkirjassa voit käyttää apunasi näitä somekäyttöön liittyviä huomioita:

- ilahduit, liikutuit, vihastuit tai tulit surulliseksi vastaan tulleesta sisällöstä
- näit hauskan, samaistuttavan, kekseliään tai ärsyttävän meemin

- seurasit tai osallistuit keskusteluun jollain alustalla, sovelluksessa tai palvelussa
- pohdit, teetkö jostain asiasta päivityksen tai osallistutko keskusteluun, vai et
- päädyit tekemään päivityksen tai osallistumaan keskusteluun, vaikka et olisi halunnut
- jätit julkaisematta jo kirjoitetun päivityksen
- ilahduit, hämmästyit, pelästyit tai vihastuit siitä, millaisia reaktioita päivityksesi tai kommenttisi sai aikaan
- pohdit tuttavasi tai seuraamasi henkilön tekemää päivitystä tai päivityksen saamaa vastaanottoa
- huomasit käyttäneesi liikaa tai liian vähän aikaa somen parissa

Päiväkirjaa suositellaan pidettävän viikon (7 päivää) ajan, mutta myös lyhyempi päiväkirjajakso riittää. Voit kertoa kokemuksistasi myös tallentamalla äänitiedostoja tai videoita.

Halutessasi voit peittää päiväkirjassa esiintyvien yksityishenkilöiden nimet tai nimimerkit. Päiväkirjasi visuaalisissa sisällöissä esiintyviä yksityishenkilöitä, kuvia itsestäsi tai mitään muuta yksityishenkilöiden tunnistamisen mahdollistavaa sisältöä ei tuoda tutkimusjulkaisuissa esille.

Noin viikon sisällä päiväkirjajakson päättymisestä sinua haastatellaan vapaamuotoisesti päiväkirjasta ja sen herättämistä ajatuksista keskustellen. Haastattelut nauhoitetaan ja toteutetaan lähtökohtaisesti etäyhteydellä.

Appendix 5: Main interview questions for the MPs

1. Haastattelun aloitus

Kerro edellisestä työpäivästäsi.
Oliko päivä mielestäsi tyypillinen työpäivä?
Onko päiväohjelmaasi varattu hetkiä, jolloin seuraat tai käytät somea tai muita digitaalisen median alustoja?
Käytätkö alustoja näiden hetkien ulkopuolella?

2. Alustat

Mitä sosiaalisen median alustoja käytät? Missä paikoissa ja millä laitteilla käytät alustoja?
Kuvaile suhdettasi eri somealustoihin.
Mitä alustoja pidät mieluisimpina sinulle? Miksi? Entä epämieluisimpina?
Mitä päivität someen? (kerro esimerkki)
Kuvaile omaa toimintaasi somessa? Onko sinulla somepersoona?
Käytätkö muita digitaalisen median työkaluja kuten blogeja, uutiskirjeitä tai podcasteja?
Kontrolloitko eri laitteiden tai alustojen käyttöä esimerkiksi aikarajoituksin?

3. Strategiat ja apu

Millainen poliittinen viestintä on mielestäsi vaikuttavaa?
Miten haluaisit kehittää itseäsi poliittisena viestijänä?
Kohdennatko viestiäsi strategisesti eri somealustoilla?
Saatko puolueelta koulutusta, tukea tai materiaaleja digitaalisten alustojen käyttöön, millaista?
Millainen rooli eduskunta-avustajallasi on sometoimintasi kannalta? Jaatteko vastuuta tilien hallinnassa?
Hyödynnätkö saatavilla olevaa dataa tai data-analytiikkaa päivitysten tekemisessä?

4. Digitaalisen median koetut hyödyt ja haitat

Pidätkö sometoimintaa joiltakin osin yksityisenä?
Millaisia hyötyjä digitaalisten- ja somealustojen käytöllä on sinulle?
Anna esimerkki tilanteesta, jossa olet kokenut jonkin somekanavan sinulle haitalliseksi.
Oletko kohdannut häirintää sosiaalisessa mediassa? Anna esimerkki viimeisimmästä tilanteesta.
Koetko verkon turvalliseksi tilaksi?
Oletko joutunut kommentoimaan digitaalisessa mediassa jotain asiaa, jota et olisi halunnut kommentoida?
Oletko joutunut koskaan käyttämään kriisiviestintää digitaalisessa mediassa?
Miten pidät yllä tietoturvaasi?

5. Lopetus

Onko sinulla kysyttävää lopuksi? Tuleeko mieleen jotain, jota en tajunnut haastattelussa kysyä?

TURUN
YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU

Painosalama, Turku, Finland 2025

ISBN 978-952-02-0205-7 (PRINT)
ISBN 978-952-02-0206-4 (PDF)
ISSN 0082-6987 (Print)
ISSN 2343-3191 (Online)