2. Political transparency in the media:

The old media's influence on politicians' Twitter behavior

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Introduction

Blurry border

"Later today with my son to a football match: Heerenveen – Excelsior. It has been a long time since I was on a football stand. # Looking forward!" (Rouvoet, 02-04-2011, Twitter)

This is a Tweet posted by André Rouvoet at the time that he was a politician. Significantly, he was a political figure who made his private activities transparent through a public medium. In this way, his Tweet denotes an important change in political communication, which has taken place over the past few decades. Ever since the fifties, the old media has been blurring the border between the private and public sphere, and has increased the transparency of politicians. (Pels, 2003, p. 42) Also the new media have the potential to continue this trend, as is demonstrated by Rouvoet's Tweet.

The distinction between old and new media will be maintained in the rest of this paper. The old media are defined as non-interactive print- and electronic media, such as newspapers and TV-programs. (Chun & Keenan, 2006, p. 284) To be more precise, this paper especially focuses on the popular and commercial part of the old media. The new media will be defined as online and interactive forms of mass communication, such as weblogs, Twitter and Facebook. (Ibid, p. 3)

The fact that Rouvoet's Tweet follows the trend that is visible in various older media, makes it interesting to investigate the extent to which other politicians copy these trends as well. This can reveal how influential this trend actually is, since politics is one of the parts of society in which the distinctions between the public and private sphere is most prominent. Therefore, this paper will be centred on the research question: To what extent does the way in which Dutch politicians use Twitter, reflect the dominant trend in the majority of the old media?

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The state of the art

The blurring border between the public and private sphere in the old media is described by numerous authors, such as Van Santen and Van Zoonen (2010), McAllister (2005), Corner and Pels (2002), and Street (2001). According to them, these media adapt their form and content to the preferences of their audience, in order to attract a public as large as possible. In this way, they report on sensational stories about the private lives of politicians, rather than focussing on serious political topics. This trend is a consequence of commercialisation in the media landscape, which makes these media compete for their audience. (ROB, 2003, p. 7) A characteristic of this trend is the personalisation of politics, which can be defined as the increased focus on individual politicians, rather than on their political program. (Van Santen & Van Zoonen, 2010, p. 4) This increases the transparency of politicians, and blurs the border between the public and private sphere.

The trend in the old media is in line with a broader development in society, in which "the activities of private citizens, multinational corporations, and governments are all becoming easier for anyone to observe" (Mayes, n.d., p. 18). The new media are an impulse to the increasing presence of transparency, by offering politicians the possibility to keep their followers informed on their thoughts and activities at any moment of the day. According to Houtman & Achterberg (2010), politicians are prone to make use of these possibilities, since they might bridge the gap between citizens and politics. However, the book *Veel gekwetter weinig wol* (2011) by Aalberts and Kreijveld presents a rather pessimistic view on the effects of the new media on the relation between politicians and citizens. They point out that their influence is rather weak, since the possibilities that the new media offer are not exploited to their full extent (yet).

Methodology

As a primary source of information, I use my analysis of the Twitter behaviour of the leaders of the most important parties in the Netherlands. Twitter is a medium that suits my research, since it is easily accessible to a large audience, and has rapidly developed itself as a popular means of communication in the political world over the past few years. The political leaders are my target group, for the reason that they are the face of their party, and can be expected to be the most conscious of their public position when using this social medium. They are immediately associated with the political party they represent. I examine to what extent their use of Twitter can be compared to the trends in the old media, by taking into account the personalisation of politics, the blurring border between the public and private sphere, and the concept of transparency. Table 1 on page 12, recapitulates the results of my analysis on the relation between Tweets with a political

content and Tweets with a non-political content. These results show to what extent politicians blur the border between the public and private sphere, by discussing issues that are related to their public function as well as to their private life. Within the political messages, I make a distinction between messages about political views, and messages about political activities, since the latter makes a politician more transparent than the first. The agenda of a politician might reveal more than his political standpoints.

On top of the results in table 1, I will put all politicians in clusters, in which I describe their special characteristics. Additionally, I use the results of an interview with Harmen Binnema, who was elected for web-politicians of the year 2011, as a secondary source of information. On the other hand, the first part of this paper, which consists of an elaboration on the trend that is visible in the old media, is solely based on secondary sources.

Overview

In the first part of this paper, I go into the developments of the old media that are centred on the transparency trend. First, I discuss the phenomenon of commercialisation, which underlies the adaptation of form and content to the preferences of the audience. Then, I elaborate on these adaptations and their relation to the blurring border between the public and private sphere, the personalisation of politics, and transparency. In the second part of this paper, I deal with the new medium of Twitter. I give a general overview of its characteristics, and describe the current debate on the topic. This is followed by my own analysis of the Twitter behaviour of nine Dutch political leaders, presented in clusters. At the end of this paper I will provide an answer to my research question, as well as give indications for further research.

The Old Media

Commercialisation in the Old Media

"In the February 2002 finals of the 23-week *Pop Idol* 'election campaign', the two remaining candidates together polled more votes than the Liberal Democrats in the general elections. (…) Whereas politicians encounter the greatest difficulty in 'getting out the vote' in ordinary elections, the enthusiasm to vote for wannabe celebrities on reality shows (…) reaches levels that border on collective frenzy" (Corner & Pels, 2003, p. 1).

This phenomenon, which is called the voting paradox, reveals a widespread indifference to politics. The majority of the old media's audience is hardly interested in serious political topics. (Street, 2001, p. 62) Therefore, when dealing with politics, the old

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media deal with appealing and sensational issues like the private lives of politicians, rather than with their party program. To a large extent, this phenomenon can be explained by the commercialisation of these old media in particular, since the attraction of a large audience is necessary to compete on the market. (ROB, 2003, p. 7) Due to this commercialisation, the criterion of what will be discussed is not what is most important to know, but rather what the audience prefers to read or hear. (Ibid., p. 22) This often results in an increased focus on the private lives of politicians, which makes them increasingly transparent. In this part of the paper, I will further elaborate on this development, by focussing on the media changes in form and content.

The Media's Form

A substantial part of the old media adapt their form to the preferences of the audience, through the use of pictures, images, big headlines, videos and audio manipulations. (Ibid., 2010, pp. 9-15) As a consequence, information is communicated through images rather than through text. This type of transparency is more telling than written words. A politician's facial expression, body language, and clothing style often form the basis of the voting behaviour of the audience, since these aspects might expose more of a politicians' personality than a party program. (Street, 2001, p. 2) In this way, the Dutch expression 'An image reveals more than a thousand words' is one that suits the way in which politicians are presented and judged today.

The significance of the visual presentations of politicians in the media in which their transparency is increased, can be demonstrated by several examples. The trend already started in the fifties in the United States, with the presidential elections of 1952. Eisenhower's success can partly be explained by his TV performance, that he used as a tool in the election. "His exposure on television is credited with portraying him as a warm and friendly personality, in contrast to his opponent, Adlai Stevenson, who refused to follow suit and appeared aloof and detached" (McAllister, 2005, p. 6). This reveals the significance of visual media presentations, which reveal politicians' personality and make them transparent to the audience.

A more recent example to demonstrate the influence of visual appearances of politicians in the media can be found in the Netherlands. Around the year 2000, Pim Fortuyn received a lot of media attention and public support, due to his aesthetic style. He displayed himself in the media, by "sporting a shiny bald head, flashing a trademark expensive suit with a colourful tie and pochette to match, whisking around the country in a chauffeured Daimler accompanied by two lapdogs, and receiving the press in his lavish townhouse decorated with many portraits of himself" (Pels, 2003, p. 42). Fortuyn blurred

the border between the public and private sphere, by merging his private and public life into one media presentation. He knew, as no other politician, the significance of his media image, using it as a tool to realize his own goals.

In these examples, it becomes clear that the presentations of politicians in the media are strongly related to the way in which they choose to reveal personal information. It is crucial for their political success to be transparent on their personality, since citizens tend to base their voting behaviour on the personal characteristics of a politician, rather than on their party program. (ROB, 2003, p. 20)

The Media's Content

A substantial part of the old media adapts its content to the preferences of the audience, by dealing with topics such as celebrities, conflicts, sex, emotions, and movies, instead of serious topics like economics and politics. (Santen & Zoonen, 2010, p. 10) Many newspapers, magazines and TV programs "report on the private misdemeanours and sexual adventures of politicians rather than on their public, political deeds" (Street, 2001, p. 62). This phenomenon increases the transparency of politicians as well, by revealing their private life, and blurring the border between the public and private sphere.

The case of Lord Archer can serve here as an example. "In the mid1980s, Archer became Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party but was quite soon forced to resign when allegations from a prostitute appeared in the popular press and generated a very British kind of 'scandal'" (Corner, 2003, p. 71). This shows that flaws in the personality of politicians "become flaws in their political standing" (Street, 2001, p. 3), and that this kind of transparency can have far-reaching consequences. Another example of a story in which the private life of a politician is made transparent, is the affair of President Bill Clinton with his intern Monica Lewinsky. The president's private sex life suddenly became a public media concern. (Street, 2001, pp. 2-3) This shows that the media's content contributes to the blurring border between the public and private sphere, and the increased transparency of politicians.

Furthermore, many politicians contribute to blurring this border themselves, by making themselves transparent on a personal level, in order to gain citizens' votes. "On the stage at the Democratic Convention, Al Gore kissed his wife passionately" (Street, 2001, p. 1). Also the musical taste of George W. Bush was shown on the front page of many newspapers. (Ibid., p. 1) The reason why politicians take this approach is the fact that they need to receive media attention in order to attract voters. They cannot count on a vast group of loyal voters anymore. The number of floating voters is increasing, and citizens rather vote for single issues than for a political ideology. This makes voting behaviour

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unpredictable. (ROB, 2003, p. 14) Therefore, politicians are sensitive to the wishes of the old media. (Ibid., p. 5)

However, with the development of the new media, politicians have the opportunity to determine themselves what information they provide to the audience. By making their own weblog, or by creating their account on Twitter of Facebook, they can take the lead themselves. In this way, they are less dependent on the older forms of mass communication, and have more freedom to choose their own approach. This makes it interesting to investigate to what extent the old media's trend is copied in the use of the new media, since this reveals whether or not politicians want to be transparent on their private life. In the next part of this paper, I will go into the different perspectives on these new media, presented by several authors, as well as provide my own analysis of the Twitter behaviour of nine Dutch politicians.

The New Media: Twitter

Bridging the Gap

As an online and interactive form of mass communication, Twitter is part of the new media. It can be defined as "a microblogging site, originally developed for mobile phones, designed to let people post short, 140-character text updates or 'tweets' to a network of others" (Boyd & Marwick, 2010, p. 117). Twitter is easily accessible, since there are no restrictions to employ the Twitter service, and "Tweets can be posted and read on the web, through SMS, or via third-party clients written for desktop computers, smartphones, and other devices" (Ibid.). This creates an atmosphere in which real-time interaction is generated, and makes it possible to keep Twitter users up-to-date on each others messages at any moment of the day. Twitter stimulates the transparency of its users, by prompting them "to answer the question 'What are you doing?' (Ibid.). This shows that Twitter is based on a worldview in which transparency is valued above privacy, and has the tendency to blur the border between the public and private sphere.

The new possibilities that media like Twitter offer, raise high expectations for their societal effects. Especially on a political level they might play a crucial role, since they have the potential to bridge the gap between politics and citizens, as well as to activate them on a political level. (Aalberts & Kreijveld, n.d., 'Veel gekwetter, weinig wol?') These aspects form the most important reason for politicians to use Twitter. Maxime Verhagen, for example mentioned this in one of his Tweets: "@Spartz: Showing that there does not have to be a gap between citizens and politics" (Verhagen, 14-12-2008, Twitter). Also Houtman

and Achterberg (2010) confirm that many politicians are prone to use new media for these reasons. They often use online media, since "the internet is a suitable medium to arbitrate the border between the public and private sphere" (Ibid.). Furthermore, not only individual politicians attempt to bridge the gap between politics and citizens, but the official website *150volksvertegenwoordigers.nl*, that receives financial support from *Nederland-Kennisland* and *Forum voor Democratische Ontwikkeling*, reveals a collective attempt to solve the problem as well. The goal is to increase citizen's knowledge about the politicians who represent them, to make them feel represented in a proper way. (Ibid., p. 108)

However, despite the initiatives of individual politicians and the creators of *150volksvertegenwoordigers.nl*, research by Aalberts and Kreijveld has turned out that their attempt to bridge the gap between politicians and citizens, is not very effective. An important reason for this is the fact that the Twitter does not reach the intended target group. Only a small percentage of the Dutch population employs the Twitter service, of which the majority is politically active. (Redactie NRC Next, 19-04-2011, 'Liever je vrienden dan politici in je contactenlijst') Furthermore, communication through Twitter is not always effective either. Most messages are about subjects that "cannot be explained in 140 characters" (Horstman, 10-04-2001, 'Politiek gekwetter is overgewaardeerd'), which reduces the possibility to have useful political discussions on Twitter. Moreover, most politicians react only to a selection of the Tweets they receive, which leaves many questions unanswered. (Ibid.)

Despite this, all political leaders of the most important political parties in the Netherlands have a Twitter account. They post their own Tweets, except from the Prime-Minister, whose account is taken care of by the *Rijksvoorlichtingsdienst*, the Dutch Intelligence Service. In my research, I analyse the Twitter behaviour of Maxime Verhagen, Geert Wilders, Jolande Sap, Marianne Thieme, Job Cohen, Emile Roemer, Alexander Pechtold, André Rouvoet and the Prime Minister Mark Rutte. I categorised them and put them in clusters, in which I describe the characteristics that are related to their transparency, the personalisation of politics, and the blurring border between the public and private sphere. This enables me to examine to what extent they copy the old media's trend, and what the influence is on their conceptions of transparency and privacy.

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Table 1 Relation Between Political and Non-Political Messages

March 15th – April 15th	Non-Political Messages		Political Messages		Political Activities		Total	
	Abs.	Perc.	Abs.	Perc.	Abs.	Perc.	Abs.	Perc.
Marianne Thieme	9	5%	152	80%	30	15%	191	100%
Alexander Pechtold	50	48%	38	37%	16	15%	104	100%
André Rouvoet	222	43%	244	47%	54	10%	520	100%
Emile Roemer	7	25%	14	50%	7	25%	28	100%
Jonalde Sap	1	25%	1	25%	2	50%	4	100%
Job Cohen	6	26%	3	13%	14	61%	23	100%
Geert Wilders	1	5%	17	85%	2	10%	20	100%
Maxime Verhagen	38	22%	7	44%	60	34%	176	100%
Mark Rutte	2	6%	9	27%	22	67%	33	100%

Twitter as a Political Medium: Emile Roemer and Marianne Thieme

Marianne Thieme is the leader of the *Partij van de Dieren*, the party for the animals. She tries to keep her public function and private life separated in her use of Twitter, by promoting herself as a politician. She mainly writes about news items that are related to her political views, like: "Also Turkey will most likely prohibit ritual slaughtering this year" (Thieme, 07-04-2011, Twitter) and "Luckily also some good news from Japan: rescued dog reunited with boss, three weeks after the tsunami" (Thieme, 04-04-2011, Twitter). Also Emile Roemer, who is the leader of the Socialist Party, uses Twitter in line with his public function as a politician. Seventy-five percent of his Tweets have a political content. He posts Tweets such as: "Bankers should not make a fuss about the tone of the debate, but about the bonus-culture itself!" (Roemer, 05-04-2011) and "ING headman receives 1,25 million bonus on top of his 1,35 million salary. It is a shame!" (Roemer, 17-03-2011, Twitter).

However, even though Roemer and Thieme use Twitter in line with their public function, they still give their Tweets a personal touch. Thieme does this, by using smileys and little jokes. "@Sibelle65 200.000 voters is a hand full? Then you have very big hands! ;-)" (Thieme, 30-03-2011, Twitter). Roemer does this, by personally welcoming his followers. "@HeiressofEgypt: Welcome, nice that you are following me."(Roemer, 29-03-2011, Twitter) and "@Supersnu Hello Simon, welcome. You are my 10.000st follower. Nice to welcome you!" (Roemer, 31-03-2011, Twitter).

Still, especially Roemer's use of Twitter cannot be defined as personalised, since he does not portray himself as a private individual, and even mentions his party program to stress the importance of his political party. Examples are: "Closure special epilepsies schools http://ow.ly/4oLRK in contradiction with SP motion http://ow.ly/4oLTe." (Roemer, 29-03-2011, Twitter) and "@kriskeijser The public transport can be improved, indeed. Have a look at our previous plans for better public transport. http://tinyurl.com/617kjns" (Roemer, 31-03-2011, Twitter).

Concluding, it can be stated that Roemer and Thieme contradict the old media's trend in their use of Twitter, and do not blur the border between the public and private sphere. Furthermore, even though some Tweets have a personal touch, they are not aimed at personalisation. They mainly use Twitter is to promote issues on their political agenda, and make themselves transparent on a political level.

Twitter as a Personal and Political Medium: Alexander Pechtold and André Rouvoet

Alexander Pechtold is the leader of *D66*, a progressive social-liberal party. He blurs the border between the public and private sphere, by publicly discussing issues related to his private life, such as: "For the first time at Indoor Brabant. Winner Eric van der Vleuten... Well, the horse has won off course" (Pechtold, 26-03-2011, Twitter) and "Yesterday evening premiere movie 'Alle tijd'. Dreary movie, that does not make you sad, but makes you live your life in a conscious way." (Pechtold, 07-04-2011, Twitter). Also André Rouvoet, who was the leader of the *ChristenUnie* at the time I analysed his Tweets, discusses both public and private issues on Twitter. His Tweets reveal the personalisation of politics, in the sense that he extensively displays his personal characteristics, hobbies, and family life. This can be demonstrated by Tweets such as: "Came along two former residences: Maarssenbroek (from our wedding in '86) and Tienhoven (as a student on a farm) # good memories." (Rouvoet, 15-04-2011, Twitter) This shows that Rouvoet blurs the border between the public and private sphere as well.

According to Harmen Binnema, web-politician of the year 2011, this is exactly what makes Twitter appealing. "People want to know something about your personality. Politics and private live are mixed up in Twitter. Therefore, Twitter provides a complex view of who you are, otherwise it is not interesting" (Binnema, 03-05-2011, interview).

Rouvoet and Pechtold make themselves fully transparent on Twitter. They use the medium as a private person, as well as a public politician. This can be demonstrated by the fact that they discuss personal subjects, as is outlined above, as well as political issues. Examples are: "@Rnolled Officially only providing information, this in relation

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to immediate threat of war. Normally the cabinet of ministers does take a majority into account" (Pechtold, 30-03-2011, Twitter) and "@Esterouwehand You are repeating yourself...It is not about 'extra suffering'. And freedom of religion is here at stake." (Rouvoet, 12-04-2011, Twitter) This shows that they make themselves fully transparent on a public as well as private level.

In conclusion, Pechtold and Rouvoet copy the old media's trend, by using Twitter as a public politician as well as a private individual. They make themselves fully transparent and contribute to the personalisation of politics.

Twitter for Political Transparency: Job Cohen

Job Cohen is the leader of the *Partij van de Arbeid*, the social-democratic labour party. The majority of his Tweets are related to his political activities. He posts Tweets such as "I am at Standpuntnl later today. Topic of discussion: the cabinet is too dependent on the SGP" (Cohen, 14-04-2011, Twitter) and "Celebration of the 10th anniversary of gay marriages in Best. Beautiful piece of music, Best at its best!" (Cohen, 01-04-2011, Twitter). However, Cohen's tone is rather personal, informal, and sometimes even spontaneous, like the following tweets: "@spekkie70 Don't worry!" (Cohen, 01-04-2011, Twitter) and "@Arnosspot Off course! Little mistake!" (Ibid.). In this way, he contributes to the personalisation of politics, by taking a personal approach.

Hence, it can be concluded, that Cohen's use of Twitter tends to affirm the trends in the old media. He primarily uses Twitter to keep his followers informed on his life as a politician, and makes himself transparent in a personal way. However, he can be distinguished from Pechtold and Rouvoet, in the way that he does not extensively discuss his private life. In this way, his use of Twitter does not resemble the old media's trend as much as his two colleagues.

Twitter as a Static Medium: Mark Rutte and Geert Wilders

Mark Rutte is the Prime-Minister as well as the leader of the *VVD*, a conservative-liberal political party. Rutte's use of Twitter is highly impersonal, since he does not post his Tweets himself, but chooses to let the Dutch Intelligence Service to take care of his Twitter account. Furthermore, the account does not follow anyone else, nor replies to the messages of its followers. Also Geert Wilders, who is the leader of the *Partij van de Vrijheid*, the Freedom Party, uses Twitter in an impersonal way. Even though he writes his own messages, he does interact with his followers either.

Both Rutte and Wilders keep the public and private sphere separated, by mainly discussing political issues. It is clear that the Prime-Minister's Twitter account is created

to make him transparent on his political activities. The Tweets are full of quotes, agenda points, and links to pictures and documents with background information. Examples are: "In bus to Doetinchem, where, despite of the crisis, a new residential district and connecting road are built. Picture: http://is.gd/2TJ4Mf" (Rijksvoorlichtingsdient, 13-04-2011, Twitter) and "about death Osama Bin Laden: 'Important strike to Al Quaida, but the fight against terror is not over yet.'"(Rijksvoorlichtingsdients, 02-05-2011, Twitter). Wilders uses Twitter in line with his public function as well, but only to make his political views clear. He posts tweets such as: "No Moroccan cultural centre in Amsterdam! http://bit.ly/fzkX3r" (Wilders, 18-03-2011, Twitter) and "Survey De Hond: Islam and democracy do not go well together: half of ALL respondents agree with this! Also 2/3rd of the members of VVD and CDA! Great!" (Wilders, 24-03-2011, Twitter)

All in all one can conclude, that both Wilders and Rutte contradict the old media's trend. Rutte's account makes him transparent on a political level, but hardly reveals anything about his private life. In this way, the border between the public and private sphere remains intact. Moreover, his account is highly impersonal due to the fact that he does not post his own Tweets. Furthermore, Rutte and Wilders both approach Twitter statically, by only posting direct messages, and not following any other Twitter users. This makes them go against the trend in the old media.

Twitter as a Promotional Medium: Jolande Sap

Jolande Sap is the leader of *Groen Links*, a green left-wing political party. She only posted four Tweets in a month's time, therefore, illustrating that she hardly ever makes use of the new medium. Nevertheless, the fact that she organized a Twitter conference on the third of February (2011), shows that she tries to open herself up to the questions and concerns of her followers. During the conference, she answered questions about the police training mission in Afghanistan. (Groenlinks website, n.d., 'Twitter-spreekuur Jolande Sap').

This shows that Sap rather uses Twitter as a promotional tool, instead of a interactive online medium. Furthermore, the fact that she is hesitant to reveal aspects related to her private life, and mainly discusses political issues, leads to the conclusion that she does not copy the old media's trend. She primarily uses Twitter in her function as a politician, for political and promotional goals.

Twitter as a Strategic Medium: Maxime Verhagen

Maxime Verhagen is the leader of the *CDA*, a Christian-Democratic party. Even though Verhagen was ridiculed for his use of Twitter during the *Oudejaarsconference*, he mainly uses Twitter in line with his public function, demonstrated by the fact that the vast

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majority of his Tweets have a political content. He uses Twitter in a strategic way, to create a positive image of himself and his political party. Verhagen posts tweets like: "Good that the EU decided to have a stress-test for all 143 nuclear power plants. When our safety is at stake, we should leave nothing to coincidence" (Verhagen, 21-03-2011, Twitter) and "Good that the economy keeps on growing and that the government's deficit decreases, but the problems on the labour market will be a challenge" (Verhagen, 22-03-2011, Twitter). By posting Tweets, such as above, it seems that Verhagen tries to influence public opinion in favour of his policies.

As such, it can be stated that Verhagen does not blur the border between the public and private sphere, nor contributes to the personalisation of politics, since he mainly uses Twitter in line with his public function as a politician. He uses it as a strategic device, to realise his own political goals. In this way, he contradicts the trend in the old media too.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that, even though the old media's trend is very dominant in the traditional forms of mass communication, it is not necessarily present in the use of Twitter by Dutch politicians. Thus, to answer my research question, the influence of the trends in the old media on the way in which the politicians of my analysis exploit the Twitter service, is rather weak. Most of the politicians still value privacy above transparency. Only the politicians Pechtold and Rouvoet clearly confirm the trend in their use of Twitter. They blur the border between the public and private sphere, by discussing political issues as well as their private life. Moreover, the manner in which Cohen uses Twitter, reveals some characteristics of the old media's trend. He primarily uses Twitter to keep his followers informed on his life as a politician, and makes himself transparent in a personal way. Nevertheless, many other politicians rather oppose the trend. Roemer and Thieme use Twitter mainly in line with their public function. Also Verhagen contradicts the old media's trend, by using Twitter as a strategic device to realise his own political goals. Furthermore, Sap's use of Twitter reflects her political and promotional intensions. In this way, her Twitter behaviour does not reveal much similarities with the trend in the old media either. The same goes for Wilders and Rutte, who use Twitter in a static and political way.

Concluding, the trend that is dominant in the old media, is not as influential in the new media. The majority of the politicians I analysed, use Twitter in a way that contradicts the tabloidisation trend rather than confirms it. The border between the public and private sphere is often maintained, since most politicians hardly reveal anything related

to their private life. As such, they are mainly transparent on a political level. Still, many politicians tend to be informal on Twitter, by making a joke or using popular language, which indicates the personalisation of politics. However, the fact remains that most of them use it as a political device.

Still, this might change in the future, since Twitter is a fairly new phenomenon, which has not developed itself to a full extent yet. The amount of users might expand in the future. New research might reveal whether Twitter and other new media generate changing perceptions on transparency and privacy. They offer their users the possibility to inform their followers on their thoughts and activities at any moment of the day, and even prompt them to reveal this information by the way in which they are constructed. Accordingly, they are based on a worldview in which transparency is valued over privacy. My analysis of the Twitter behaviour of politicians today, reveals that most of them are not willing to give up their privacy (yet), in order to be fully transparent. Still, politicians like Pechtold and Rouvoet, who extensively discuss their private life, seem to have an alternative view on privacy and transparency, that might be the trend in the future. This makes it interesting to investigate the long-term effects of the new media, on the way in which these concepts are perceived, as a basis for future research. This provides an insight in how the development of new technological devices influences our norms and values.

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