

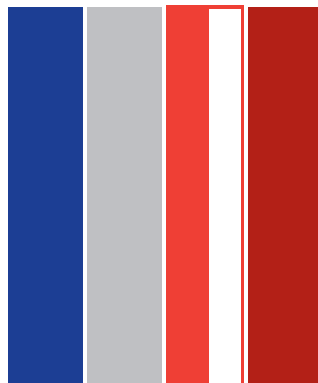
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Political communication on Facebook: Comparing the Regeringen and La Moncloa pages

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Political communication on Facebook: Comparing the Regeringen and La Moncloa pages

Dissertação realizada no âmbito do Mestrado em Ciências da Comunicação, orientada pelo
Professor Doutor Nuno Moutinho

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Membros do Júri

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Faculdade - Universidade ...

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Classificação obtida: valores

To my parents.

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Declaration of honour

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own and has not been previously used in any other course or curriculum unit of this or any other institution. References to other authors (statements, ideas, thoughts) scrupulously respect the rules of attribution and are duly indicated in the text and the bibliographical references, according to the referencing rules. I am aware that the practice of plagiarism and self-plagiarism is an academic offence.

Porto, September 2020

Priscila Dias Minussi

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Resumo

A enfraquecida confiança dos cidadãos na política incentivou os atores políticos a estabelecer uma comunicação direta com eles. À medida que as mídias sociais crescem em popularidade, instituições políticas as utilizam para obter mais autonomia na criação e disseminação de informação. Este estudo analisa o uso do Facebook, a mídia social mais popular no mundo, pelo Regeringen, o governo da Dinamarca, e por La Moncloa, o governo da Espanha. Primeiro, as teorias centrais da comunicação política são abordadas. Em seguida, as culturas de comunicação política de cada país são discutidas. Por fim, são realizadas a análise estrutural das páginas de Facebook Regeringen e La Moncloa e a categorização manual das postagens publicadas durante junho de 2020. As postagens são categorizadas de acordo com a tipologia de comunicação nas mídias sociais de governo desenvolvida por DePaula, Dincelli e Harrison (2018), que consiste no fornecimento de informações, busca de informações, diálogo online/interação offline e apresentação simbólica. Esta pesquisa visa compreender o conteúdo das postagens nas páginas do Facebook e, levando em consideração as culturas de comunicação política dinamarquesa e espanhola, discutir e comparar os resultados.

Palavras-chave: Comunicação política comparada; comunicação governamental; Facebook; La Moncloa; Regeringen

Abstract

The citizens' weakened confidence in politics has encouraged political actors to establish direct communication with them. As social media grows in popularity, political institutions have been using it for more autonomy in the creation and dissemination of information. This study analyses the use of Facebook, the most popular social media worldwide, by the Regeringen, the government of Denmark, and by La Moncloa, the government of Spain. First, the core theories of political communication are broached. Then, each country's political communication cultures are discussed. At last, a structural analysis of the Regeringen and La Moncloa Facebook pages and a manual categorization of the posts published throughout June 2020 are carried out. The posts are categorized according to DePaula, Dincelli and Harrison's (2018) typology of government social media communication, which consists of information provision, input seeking, online dialogue/offline interaction and symbolic presentation. This research aims at understanding the content of the posts on the Facebook pages and, taking into account the Danish and Spanish political communication cultures, discussing and comparing the results.

Keywords: Comparative political communication; Government communication; Facebook; La Moncloa; Regeringen

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Glossary

ESTADOS AUTONÓMICOS: The autonomous communities of Spain

FOLKETINGET: The Danish Parliament

LA MONCLOA: The Spanish central government

LANDSTINGET: The upper house of the Parliament of Denmark

PARTIDO POPULAR: The People's Party of Spain

PARTIDO SOCIALISTA OBRERO ESPAÑOL: The Spanish Socialist Workers' Party

REGERINGEN: The Danish government

UNIÓN DE CENTRO DEMOCRÁTICO: The Union of the Democratic Centre of Spain

List of abbreviations

DESI.....DIGITAL ECONOMY AND SOCIETY

INDEX

EU.....EUROPEAN UNION

PM.....PRIME MINISTER

PP.....PARTIDO POPULAR

PSOE.....PARTIDO SOCIALISTA OBRERO
ESPAÑOL

UCD.....UNIÓN DE CENTRO
DEMOCRÁTICO

Introduction

Ferrín-Pereira (2012) raised an important question: what does democracy mean to European citizens? And how do they evaluate their democracies? Democracy has been analysed in different aspects and countries have been ranked according to it but, when it comes to citizen's perception, not much was done. Scholarly work on orientations towards democracy or surveys on citizen's orientation towards democracy are rare still and it is something that impacts the stability of democratic regimes. Since citizens are the consumers of democracy, "they are the best placed to determine how they would like democracy to be and evaluate how it is functioning" (Ferrín-Pereira, 2012, p. 2). If there is any ambition in improving and expanding democracies around the world, the voice of people is a good starting point for making progress towards it.

It must be taken into consideration that people might have different ideas about the definition of democracy. "Democracy as a social and institutional practice is not the same as the ideology of democracy, neither equivalent to the ideals of liberal democracy" (Castells, 2009, p. 262). Regardless, surveys have shown a growing dissatisfaction with democracy especially among Europeans: they express not only dissatisfaction with the democracies they live in (Alliance of Democracies, Rasmussen Global, & Dalia Research, 2018) but also little trust in political institutions (Ferrín-Pereira, 2012). This scenario originates mostly from the realization of limitations and flaws of democracy as well as from the growing demands and expectations people develop towards it. "Demands for accountability, transparency, public ethics, greater political participation, and representation of people, always part and parcel of the democratic political philosophy, are increasing" (Coicaud, 2019, p. 113).

Coicaud (2019) analyses the causes of the paradoxical perception of contemporary democracy: on the one hand, the idea of democracy is still celebrated, mainly because of its international legitimacy and the citizen's participation in the exercise of power; on the other hand, it has been heavily criticised because of the way it functions, which is very different from the theoretical and ideal way democracy should. The author (Coicaud,

2019) asserts that the contrast between the ideal and reality represents the product and the result of failures of the democratic system and, ultimately, has led to disbelief and the rise of populism across the Western world.

The perception paradox on democracy is particularly intriguing in advanced democracies, like the European countries. The failure of elections in the E.U. – which extends to the rest of the Western world – in altering the status quo reinforces people's disbelief in the possibility of change through citizen's participation in politics (Coicaud, 2019). The result of that, thus, is a stronger inclination towards populist leaders.

The paradoxical aspect of lack of trust in democracy is evident in the findings of the Democracy Perception Index 2018 (Alliance of Democracies et al., 2018). The survey ranked fifty countries on how they are perceived by citizens to be delivering core democratic benefits. People were questioned about four aspects: the sense of participation in politics, trust that the government is working for the people, freedom to express opinions and access to balanced and neutral information.

Overall, the index presents a global citizen disillusionment with democracy. Surprisingly, this was identified mostly in democratic states, rather than in non-democratic ones. It showed that European democracies are amongst the countries where most people feel that the citizen's voice does not matter in politics (Alliance of Democracies et al., 2018).

The index findings could be explained by the possibility that people are more critical about their governments in democratic countries than in non-democratic ones. Such an idea is backed up by Coicaud (2019), who argues that the so-called crisis of democracy is not an indictment of democracy per se, but the unfulfillment of citizen's expectations towards it and promises of empowering principles and values.

Coicaud (2019) highlights an important aspect of the idea of democracy: in the Western world, the idea of democracy is strongly connected to capitalism and the free market. Overall, “democracy and capitalism have developed hand in hand” (Coicaud, 2019, p. 114). The 2008 financial and economic crisis was a major factor for the deepening

perception of the failure of the democratic political leadership, once it harshly affected the citizens and had major social implications, while the companies responsible for the crisis were barely held accountable for it nor were sanctioned for their misdeeds.

The role and influence of old and new media in this scenario should not be ignored. Media is “ethically and politically often failing at supporting an authentic atmosphere of informed discussion” (Coicaud, 2019, p. 115). There are many factors addressed as causes of the public disillusionment with democracy and politics, most of them are somewhat connected to the media, which influences the public's disposition and perceptions and the political agenda, and to modern political communication (Swanson, 2004).

So, what could be done about it? Regarding political communication, Nord (2007) argues that analysing and interpreting public opinion could bring benefits to enhancing democracy. Considering politics as “the result of public needs and existing preferences among citizens” (Nord, 2007, p. 93), political communication and marketing could be used as tools for enhancing democracy and, thus, earn citizens' trust.

As social media grows in popularity, political institutions have been using it for more autonomy in the creation and dissemination of information. Through government social media communication, political actors have been trying to establish direct communication with citizens and, naturally, resorting to political communication and marketing strategies.

This study analyses the use of Facebook, the most popular social media worldwide, by the Regeringen, the government of Denmark, and by La Moncloa, the central government of Spain. These governments were chosen since both countries had the best results among the European countries in the Democracy Perception Index 2018 (Alliance of Democracies et al., 2018). Besides, both countries present two distinct political communication cultures, which could lead to fruitful findings in comparative political communication research.

On the first chapter of this thesis, the core theories of political communication are elaborated. The chapter introduces the definitions of concepts such as public communication, public relations and political marketing. The concept and the development of professionalisation of political communication are explained. At last, the changes in political communication cause by the advent of the Internet and social media are discussed.

On the second chapter, the Danish and Spanish political communication cultures and the differences between them are examined. The main characteristics of each country's media systems and political cultures are reviewed and compared.

On the third chapter, the concept of comparative political communication research, which is the foundation of the investigation presented in this thesis, is explained. Methodology, research objectives and questions are described. The analysis, the separate results of the Danish and Spanish governments and the comparison between them, and the discussion are disclosed in the chapter.

Initially, an analysis of both Facebook pages' structure was conducted. The analysis was based on the researches by Maia (2019) and by Russmann, Hametner and Posch (2020). Then, a sample of posts from the Regeringen and La Moncloa Facebook pages was categorized according to the DePaula, Dincelli and Harrison's (2018) typology of government social media communication. The typology consists of four categories: information provision, input seeking, online dialogue/offline interaction, and symbolic presentation. All four categories are divided into types of communication, which are summarized in Table 2.

This study investigates to what extent the sample of the Facebook posts could be categorized within the typology. It also investigates the prevalence of topics, post formats, and the categories and types of communication on both Facebook pages. The study aims at comparing the Danish and Spanish governments social media communication and identifying the similarities and differences across both while taking into consideration

each country's cultures. At last, a brief discussion about the Facebook management and strategies deployed by the Regeringen and La Moncloa is presented.

1. Political communication

This chapter sheds light on the definition of many terms regarding politics and communication, such as public communication, institutional communication, political marketing, public relations, political communication, and its professionalisation. It is essential to recognize the differences in those definitions since they are usually mistaken or taken for synonyms.

The chapter also broaches the consequences of political communication on democracy and citizens' perception of politics. Due to the inexistence of unanimity on the impacts of the professionalisation of political communication on society, it is not intended to determine which are the correct perspectives on such impacts. The aim of this chapter is to explore these perspectives.

1.1. Public communication

Many definitions of public communication are found in scholarly literature. Brandão (2006) identifies and summarizes the five most popular ones: organizational communication, scientific communication, government communication, political communication, and civil society strategy. Considering the case study of this thesis, the concepts of organizational, government and political communications are of great relevance and, thus, are described in Chapter 1.

According to Brandão (2006), organizational communication is connected to the internal and external communications of an organization. It is a strategic and planned communication that aims at the creation of relationships with different publics as well as establishing an identity and an image of the organization. It is mainly focused on influencing public opinion and taking benefit from it, for instance, reinforcing power or legitimacy.

Government communication is about communication between government and citizens, it is mostly dedicated to promoting and fortifying citizenship. It constitutes a form of

public communication because it is a government's tool for delimiting the public agenda and for accountability (Brandão, 2006). It is about informing and helping citizens to participate in political activities and decisions (Russmann et al., 2020). Overall, it is supposed to invigorate public debate (Brandão, 2006).

. . . communication promoted by governments (federal, state or municipal) may be concerned with arousing civic sentiment . . . , inform and account for a government's achievements by publicizing programs and policies being implemented; motivate and/or educate by calling on the population to participate in specific moments of the country's life . . . ; protection and promotion of citizenship, or of calling citizens to fulfil their duties.¹ (Brandão, 2006, p. 6)

Government communication should be neutral and informative (Busch-Janser & Köhler, 2006, as cited in Russmann et al., 2020, p. 141) and autonomous of party politics, especially since it is often tax-funded. Expectedly, citizen's taxes are not to be used for party politics' marketing or persuasion. According to Gebauer (1998, as cited in Russmann et al., 2020, p. 141), government communication is defined as “public relations and information policymaking of executive offices in order to explain and justify governmental decisions”.

For many decades, governments primarily addressed the mass media for communication. Throughout the 21st century, however, the use of websites and social media, such as Facebook, has been growing in popularity. This represents increasing importance of public relations for governments: the development of digital media and communication tools led to the need of making politics more transparent to citizens. Besides, establishing a successful communication is essential for “building government-public relationships and for achieving and maintaining trust, credibility and compliance” (Russmann et al., 2020, p. 141).

¹ Translated by the author.

As for political communication, it relates to media, power, and politics. One of its biggest concerns is the use of tools and techniques for the governments' or political parties' public expression (Brandão, 2006). This is particularly important since public awareness of issues, especially political or policy issues, is closely related to the coverage given to them in the media. Political opinions are largely shaped by information provided by the mass media and the Internet (Castells, 2009).

This way, the use of Facebook by the Regeringen and La Moncloa constitutes as institutional, government and political communication. Since the latter presents to be the broadest category of the three, its concept and definitions are further developed in this chapter.

1.2. Public relations and political marketing

Considering the connection between political communication, public relations, and political marketing (Ribeiro, 2016), it is important to distinguish these different concepts.

Political marketing and public relations share a few characteristics, such as: having a focal client (an individual or an organization); relating to one or more groups of people – known as public in public relations and known as market in political marketing –; emerging as professions through the 20th century; growing fast in the number of people employed and in their structural and geographic reach; gaining importance in elections and government; concealing themselves behind the title of political consultants; and, last, being considered by many as corruptive to the spirit of democracy (Newman & Verčič, 2002).

Public relations are often reduced to media management (McNair, 1999, as cited in Newman & Verčič, 2002, p. 2), but it goes beyond that: it is also the management of internal and external communications. This aspect makes public relations a complement to marketing.

As for political marketing, it encompasses more than advertising and campaigns. Advertisements are created to garner positive perceptions of the advertiser and attain

credibility, representing a major component of modern political communication (McNair, 2007), while campaigns are a series of events designed to communicate with an audience and gain its support, being most popular before elections (Lilleker, 2006).

Political marketing also consists of the use of marketing tools “within the field of policy development, campaigning and internal relations by political parties and organisations” (Lilleker, 2006, p. 151). Among these strategic tools are market research, policy development, positioning, market segmentation, direct mail, advertising, and public relations. It targets voters, members, affiliates, donors, mass media, and opinion formers (Lilleker, 2006).

1.3. Political communication

Communication between organizations and people is central to any political system. This is especially important in democratic regimes, which sustainability depends on a sense of connectivity and transparency between the state and citizens (Brandão, 2006). As Lilleker (2006, p. 1) states it, “modern democracies need to be increasingly responsive to their publics, and at the heart of responsiveness is a dialogue”. Establishing a dialogue is a way of communicating the government's actions to society and gaining legitimacy among the citizens and compliance from them (Lilleker, 2006).

Legitimacy is a quality sought by all political structures within democratic nations since it represents the acceptance of the wielding of one's power by all – or most of – the members of society. Although extremely necessary, the attempt to gain legitimacy and compliance is often interpreted as a misguided form of persuasion, an attempt to win over others in a scenario of competitiveness between political actors.

Nonetheless, political communication should not be reduced to acquisition of power: it is also a means to diplomacy, a form of interstate communication. It has an informative function, through which one can enlighten citizens on public information, for instance, new legislation (Lilleker, 2006). It is a purposeful communication about politics (McNair, 2007) through which political institutions have the possibility of influencing the political

behaviours of citizens and framing their opportunities for action (Kunz, Moeller, Esser, & de Vreese, 2014).

Naturally, information can be presented in such a way that a “government also promotes itself, as caring, competent or proactive” (Lilleker, 2006, p. 12). This means political communication could be considered as political marketing or even as “permanent campaigning of the public relations state” (Davis, 2002, as cited in Lilleker, 2006, p. 12).

The expression public relations state, also known as public relations democracy, describes the scenario in which all parties’ and government communications have persuasive overtones, that “all governmental information is tinged with a party political message, and every statement is designed to say something positive about the messenger” (Lilleker, 2006, p. 168). Negrine (1996) describes it as a constant upgrade in the use of carefully crafted communication strategies by the government to ensure positive media coverage of public policies and political statements.

Certainly, media and politicians always exercise some level of persuasion over people, but in the context of a public relations democracy, persuasion becomes the main purpose. This way, one can invest in creating a good image, branding, managing news, and campaigning to legitimise a political system or to legitimise the power of one party through the government's official communication channels.

. . . public relations is [sic] normally employed to represent a single interest or cause. . . . This could be the state; however, it is suggested that actually the state has been redefined to be embodied in the party of government and its leader. (Lilleker, 2006, p. 169)

Electoral professionalism, which aims at shaping voter opinion to achieve electoral success (Lilleker, 2006), and permanent campaigning, which is the constant promotion of a party or politician (Lilleker, 2006), are two public relations strategies geared towards maximising support for the party or government. This is linked to the attempt of imposing a perception or an ideology on behalf of a single interest or cause. The ideology could be

a political program or a party's ideology, which, through governmental communication, could promote the elected party. Thus, every policy launch could include “overtly political messages embedded amongst the facts” (Lilleker, 2006, p. 170).

Some may argue that such practices of public relations are wrong and antidemocratic, that governments should only inform citizens and never try to persuade them. However, there is a disadvantage in it that should be acknowledged: the lack of investment in public relations would allow the media to completely control the political messages and influence public opinion according to its own partisan bias. Thus, public relations represent an asset for any group in power or willing to attain it (Moloney, 2004, as cited in Lilleker, 2006, p. 171).

Resuming the definitions of political communication, Pfetsch (2014b) presents a very sensible one: “a process of interaction between political actors and media actors vis-à-vis a common public audience” (p. 15). It is also defined as “the flow of messages and information that gives structure and meaning to the political process” (Pye, 1993, as cited in Pfetsch & Esser, 2012, p. 25). It comprises a process of communication throughout society that affects politics (Pye, 1993, as cited in Pfetsch & Esser, 2012, p. 25) be it through shaping public opinion or political socialization of citizens.

It is expected that political communication systems adapt to changes in society, becoming dynamic and constantly evolving. Given the current widespread use of social networks, especially Facebook, governments and political institutions can easily reach out to citizens and convey messages and information without the mediation of mass media.

Even though mass media lingers as an effective way of reaching a large audience and, thus, as an essential medium for political communication, the fact that the interests of mass media are not always in line with the politician's and political institution's interests is an obstacle for political communicators (Canavilhas, 2009). The divergence of interests has constantly led to clashes between media and politicians.

Since citizens do not ignore this clash, they become more cynical towards both politics and media. Once the trust between the three vertices of this triangle is broken, “each party seeks new forms of legitimation, in the case of the first two, or alternatives of access to information, in the case of citizens” (Canavilhas, 2009, p. 1). So, while the media's interpretation and framing² of political messages are blamed for leading to the diminishing of citizen engagement in politics, the internet grows in popularity as a communication tool between political representatives and people.

Most forms of political communication share one feature: a top-down, one-way communication from the institution to the public. But such lack of interaction, the non-existence of a two-way communication does not meet the desires of citizens that are eager to be “able to shape governmental activity and have direct input to the legislature” (Lilleker, 2006, p. 13). So the Internet represents an accessible and affordable information platform, through which one can establish a dialogue with the government and other citizens. The Internet has the potential to be a horizontal form of communication that leads to a greater feeling of democratization.

At the same time people claim for an increase in direct participation in politics, many authors hold that people hate politics (Hay, 2007), that political parties are losing loyal electorate and members (Franklin, Mackie, & Valen, 1992; Dalton & Wattenberg, 2002; Mair & van Biezen, 2001), that voter turnout is decreasing (Franklin et al., 1992) and that public disillusionment is spreading across the globe (Torcal & Montero, 2006; Dogan, 2005; Andrain & Smith, 2006). Such ideas are reinforced by the growing popularity of and support for populist and radical right parties in European countries (Norris, 2011). Overall, scholars conventionally point to growing public expectations, negative news or failing government performance as explanations for the democratic deficit (Norris, 2011).

When it comes to the broadcast media role in that scenario, Miguel (2008) highlights the characteristics of political coverage that pull citizens away from politics: the tiresome portrayal of politics as a horse race and the emphasis on political scandals or any slips by

² Media framing constitutes a predefined and narrow contextualisation of news (Lilleker, 2006).

politicians. According to Miguel (2008), this reinforces citizen's cynicism, mistrust, and apathy towards anything related to politics.

Personalisation is another media practice that is criticised, since it tries to create controversy and portrays politicians like celebrities (Lilleker, 2006), focusing on gossip and speculation. This kind of coverage could be connected to the generalized cynicism towards the political representatives. According to Miguel (2008, p. 255), there is “a vicious feedback loop between press coverage of politics, the public's expectations and the behavior of politicians”, often considered inefficient.

The difficulties in communicating politics and in creating an informed citizenry through news media should not be underestimated. Journalists are significantly bound by their unequal relationships with politicians, sources of information, editors, and media owners. When it comes to news about politics, the source of information is usually a political advisor. This means that politicians provide journalists with information that personally benefits them and/or undermines their opponents – a practice known as spin (Castells, 2009). As for the selection of what gets published, editors and media owners have the last word. Thus, journalists are likely to publish news that is interesting for the audience and does not cause retaliation from the media elite.

Since “much of politics is dull” (Rawnsley, 2005, p. 17), such complexities are likely to drive the audience away. Rawnsley (2005) expresses that the outcomes and delivery of public services do not particularly excite or outrage great swathes of audiences – which does not mean that people lack enthusiasm towards issues that affect their daily lives, but it is simply believed that most citizens' concerns are not taken very seriously by political elites. According to the author, establishing effective communication with the government depends on political influence, access to the political system, and whether one is considered legitimate by the government. Consequently, there is a general dissatisfaction with and disinterest in the political process. So, in the attempt to make news more appealing to the general audience, journalists frequently add controversy, polemic, and scandal in the coverage of politics.

Davis (2010) states that news fails democracy because of the sources and creators of information. “It is dominated by powerful and well-resourced sources and advertisers, guided down narrow avenues by journalist practices and cost questions, and altered by government and corporate pressure” (Davis, 2010, p. 153). Since most people learn about politics not through personal experience, but through the mass media, the author argues that it is only natural that political understanding is affected by media coverage. “The media provide the cues and the frameworks which determine political discourse and which influence our perception and reaction to social and political reality” (Rawnsley, 2005, p. 84). Then, if daily news lacks meaningful and consistent opinion and information on political matters, it is expected that citizens will not display a sophisticated grasp of it. Nonetheless, the media tends to deny its role as a political actor once this would compromise its nonpartisan tenet.

Subsequently, political marketing is also pointed out as guilty of reinforcing public cynicism. The intricate marketing and persuasion techniques are considered underminers of the credibility of political leaders. For instance, the use of negative advertising that attacks opponent candidates is criticized for demobilizing the electorate (Norris, 2000a). The marketing strategies used by catch-all parties and the negative news coverage of politics, together, are argued to lead inexorably to the erosion of the public's confidence in government (Swanson, 2004).

Political communication and its processes of professionalisation have also been blamed for the weakening of the relationship between people and politics. Vaidhyathan (2018) states that changes in political communication have been undermining the principle of a democratic republic and the citizen's autonomy. The author explains that citizens have been deliberately misled by political communicators, that push people's reactions to “narrowly tailored issues and concerns” (Vaidhyathan, 2018, p. 163) and let many ignore the “larger needs of society” (Vaidhyathan, 2018, p. 163).

Considering all the aforementioned factors that reinforce public disenchantment with politics, it becomes clear that political communication and its professionalisation represent for many authors the ultimate cause of it.

But Norris (2000b, 2000a) stands up for a different perspective: the virtuous circle. The author claims that political communication by the news media and the political parties is not to blame for civic disengagement. Dismissing the media malaise theory, Norris (2000a, 2000b) defends that effects of media on the audience are minimal and that the people most engaged with politics are also the greatest news consumers. She states that the professionalisation of political communication is overall positive for the relationship between citizens and government. Her position is backed up by other authors such as Kenneth Newton (1997), Christina Holtz-Bacha (1990), Inglehart (1990), and Aarts and Semetko (2003).

. . . the stimulus-response model at the heart of media malaise theory, in which negative news produces a cynical public, is too simplistic. Rather than being passive recipients of media messages, due to selective perception readers and viewers are actively screening, filtering, and surfing for news that is consistent with their prior political preferences. (Norris, 2002, p. 251)

This idea is upheld by Castells (2009), who broaches the politics of scandal in *Comunicación y poder*. The author argues that political scandals impact the voter's behaviour in different ways depending on many factors, such as the voter's cultural and institutional environments. But since the politics of scandal "works through the media and is a consequence of the dynamics of media policy, . . . most studies find a correlation between media coverage (both in trend and volume) and the assessments of social and political institutions" (Castells, 2009, p. 382).

Regarding the video malaise theory and the influence of political communication over people, Norris (2000b) supports the idea that both do not harm the relationship between citizens and government.

. . . the professionalization of political communications can be regarded as an extension of the democratic process if these techniques bind parties more closely with the concerns of the electorate. The key issue is less the increased deployment of marketing techniques per se, which is not in dispute, than their effects upon politicians and voters, which is. (Norris, 2000b, p. 8)

Norris (2000a) recognizes the increasing dissatisfaction of citizens with representative institutions as well as the difficulty in separating the public perception on the governance and public institutions from the perception of the incumbents that work at such institutions. This makes it hard to understand if the lack of trust is mostly towards politicians or the political system in general. Nonetheless, the author states that this scenario is caused by other factors, like government not attending people's expectations, the emergence of new cultural values that challenge the traditional forms of authority, and problems of effectiveness among the political institutions in general.

Still, media malaise theory continues as an “unquestioned orthodoxy” (Norris, 2000b), a common sense in the political communication scholar literature. As explained in the previous paragraphs, the so-called crisis of politics centres a lot upon the issue of communication. Thus, improving and increasing the use of political communication and marketing techniques to project greater authenticity and reconnect politicians and voters become the quintessential work of political communicators.

1.4. The professionalisation of political communication

Professionalisation should not be mistaken with professionalism, which is characterized by autonomous expertise and the service ideal (Canel & Voltmer, 2014). The concept of professionalisation “derives from the sociology of work and refers to the stages through which an occupation passes to reach the status of a profession” (Canel & Voltmer, 2014, p. 101).

Lilleker (2006, p. 30) asserts that professionalisation of political communication concerns how it “has become better, or more strategic, . . . more professional or been

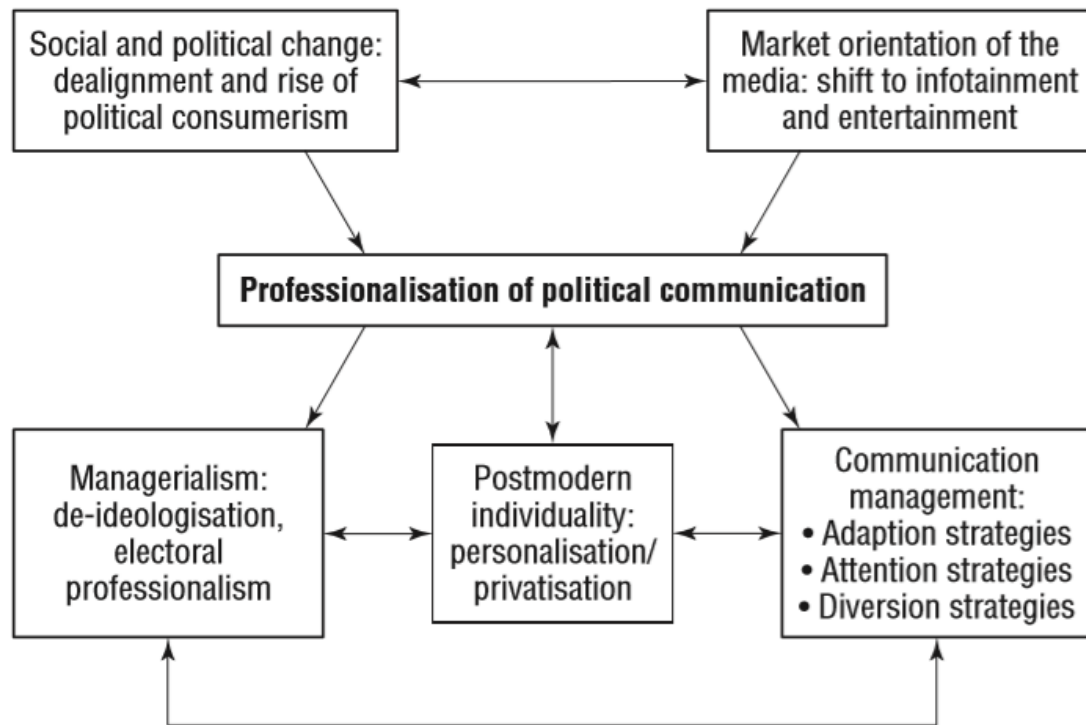
professionalised” when compared to the past. To compete in the modern information-rich society, it had to improve its technology and techniques, both adopted from the corporate advertisement. As Deacon and Golding (1994, as cited in Negrine, 1996, p. 11) state, the promotion or marketing of government has become “a central activity of modern statecraft”.

In Europe, professionalisation is related to “societal changes in the political process, in the performance of the mass media, and in the mediatisation of politics” (Hamelink, 2007, p. 180).³ As these changes develop, they link with the process of modernization in European society. Lilleker (2006) points to possible driving forces behind this process, such as the decline of voter partisanship, the rise of consumerism and the “increasing market-orientation of the media from information provider to entertainer” (Lilleker, 2006, p. 31).

As illustrated in Figure 1, these political and social changes, along with the market orientation of media, affects professionalisation, which influences and is influenced by postmodern individuality. As for postmodern individuality, it is closely connected to electoral professionalism and strategies of communication management, both shaped by professionalisation and postmodern individuality.

³ Mediatisation of politics is the personification of politics, in which media and political actors tend to focus on drama and personal conflicts instead of more complex and rational-critical information (Strömbäck, 2008).

Figure 1 - The professionalisation of political communication



Source: Lilleker (2006, p. 32).

Considering the generalized public disillusionment with politics, one wonders whether there is a relation between the growth of professionalisation and cynicism towards politics. Would professionalisation provide an adequate approach to restore public trust or would it backlash?

Hamelink (2007) hints at a likely ironic scenario: the parallel development of professionalisation of political communication and growth of electoral cynicism in many countries. The author claims that there is sufficient evidence to support that idea, notably in Europe. The professionalisation would reinforce “an elitist, representative liberal

conception of democracy ('thin democracy'), whereas this process does little to assist the development of strong, participatory, deliberative democracy" (Hamelink, 2007, p. 185).

Hamelink (2007) admits that professionalization can reasonably contribute to the quality of democratic states, but only within a limited democracy model. It can improve the functioning and legitimization of a liberal and representative democracy, but it does very little when it comes to weak civic confidence and engagement. This constitutes a democracy without citizens (Hamelink, 2007).

In that sense, the work of political communicators would be most beneficial to party elites and political leaders, not to society: professionalisation grows in importance as politics becomes the management of elite interests and political communication serves the control of information by policy elites. As for society, professionalisation reinforces the role of people "as passive supporters of those who represent them" (Hamelink, 2007, p. 186) instead of active participants. "They [practices of professional political communication] are not directed at the facilitation of the active engagement of citizens with the political management of the state. They do not contribute to the creation of a broad well-informed polity" (Hamelink, 2007, p. 186)

Blumler (2016) points to the bifurcated efficacy of the current age of political communication: while citizens may experience efficacy as "a result of being able to communicate with each other so readily" (Blumler, 2016, p. 29), most people can "rarely connect their discourses, feelings and ideas" (Blumler, 2016, p. 29) to governmental institutions. This way, efficient communication in the service of citizens, who long for meaningful participation in democracy, seems to be an intangible goal.

What would be left for political communication, then, is the operation of democratic institutions, to maintain the idea that the efficient operation of these institutions equals democracy and that citizens are offered real choices and participation in politics (Hamelink, 2007).

1.5. The four ages of political communication

Although political communication comprehends much more than political campaigning, the latter usually is the main object of scholarly study. Nonetheless, many authors (Blumler, 2013; Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999; Gibson & Römmele, 2001; Strömbäck & Kiousis, 2014) identify four different ages of political communication and campaign.

Table 1 - The four ages of political communication

	First age	Second age	Third age	Fourth age
Period	From 1850 to 1960.	From 1960 to 1990.	From 1990 to 2008.	Since 2008.
Prime communication channel	Printed press, face-to-face interactions.	Limited-channel television.	Multi-channel television and the Internet.	Multi-channel television, Internet (particularly Web 2.0).
Key target audience	Partisans, party members.	Masses.	Target groups.	Individuals.

Source: table adapted from Melanie Magin, Nicole Podschuweit, Jörg Haßler and Uta Russmann (2016, p. 1700).

Along the ages, the relationship between politics and media has changed.

Throughout the first age, “much political communication was subordinate to relatively strong institutions and beliefs” (Blumler, 2016, p. 23). The political parties and politicians used mostly the printed press and face-to-face interaction as a means of communication with citizens. The class-divided audience was taken for passive participants in the debate of the political elites (Aagaard, 2016). So, the messages were directed mostly to partisans and party members.

During the second age, a more balanced relationship between political actors and media was established: a continuous negotiation took place between politics and media to define the political agenda, visibility and media coverage of politics (Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999). This was due to the limited channel network television, which became the prime political communication medium (Blumler, 2016) among the mass audience and the mediator of communication between politicians and citizens. At the same time, organized

interest groups attained a stronger influence by direct participation in the government's decision making (Aagaard, 2016).

As for the third age, multi-channel television, 24-hour news channels and the Internet provided citizens with abundant sources of news and information. This created an increasing competition among media organizations while a broad range of political actors tried to participate in mediated communication: private enterprises, interest groups, think tanks, unions, new political parties, and others (Aagaard, 2016). According to Blumler (2016), political communication was reshaped by five main trends: “intensified professionalizing pressures; increased competitive pressures; anti-elitist populism; centrifugal diversification; and changes in how people receive politics” (Blumler, 2016, p. 24). Broadcast media lost its position as the only mediator between politicians and citizens. Although it continued as the main source of information due to its widespread use, citizens could turn to the internet to access political parties' websites and politicians could reach people through emails. This enabled the sharing of different information to target groups, known as the personalization of content.

The fourth and the third ages have a similar feature: the ever-expanding communication abundance due to advances of the information and communications technology, especially the Internet. But, unlike the predecessor ages, in which there were a relative uniformity, coherence and simplicity, the fourth age is characterized by complexity, multiplicity, variety, and crosscurrents (Blumler, 2016).

The start of the fourth age is associated with the pre-election campaign of Barack Obama in 2008. The former North American president made use of his website and social media for marketing and fundraising throughout the campaign. That is precisely what characterizes the fourth age of political communication: politicians taking control over communication through their channels, mostly social media, in which they can create messages and select the receivers of the message (Blumler, 2016). This increased the competition for attention and the fragmentation of the public sphere, which lead to a “selective exposure by people to communications in line with their own beliefs, tending

to reinforce them thereby” (Blumler, 2016, p. 28) and contributing to polarization in politics.

The fourth age was possible through the emergence of different digital media platforms and its interconnectedness, great availability of information, and communication in networks (Aagaard, 2016). “Whereas in the past political leaders and their strategists geared up to cover and intervene in television, radio and press outlets, now they are involved to a considerable extent in multidimensional impression management” (Blumler, 2016, p. 27).

1.6. Political communication on the Internet

The global expansion of network communications brought many changes to political communication. The Internet brought with it “a series of hopes with respect to the opening up of new avenues for democratization” (Pfetsch & Esser, 2004, p. 15) and the possibility of electronic democracy.

The technopolitics thesis posits that the Internet, the blogosphere, and interactive social media provide new opportunities to make political processes public. They provide citizens with autonomous platforms of communication. Personal media can become mass media. Digital devices allow populations – individuals and collective actors – to perform as proactive agents in political communication, not merely as mostly passive and reactive receivers as in the classic model. To be democratic and political, messages must incorporate notions of authorship with the public of prosumers instead of mere consumers. Digital technopolitics might alter the contours of representative democracies by giving space to deliberative and participatory innovations, including nonmediated (apart from news media) ways of communicating with representatives . . . (Sampedro, 2011, p. 433)

People expect organizations, including political institutions, to be keen on building a relationship with them and being accountable through the web. This way, an opportunity arises for political communicators to bypass the old media by using information

communication technologies (ICTs) when reaching to citizens and trying to improve citizen engagement in politics.

Davis (2010) points to a few aspects of the Internet that, contrary to common expectations, are hindering the ideals of citizen participation and engagement in politics.

First, the ordinary citizen uses the Internet mostly for leisure and consumption purposes, rather than political purposes. Overall, “the majority of citizens in stable democracies only seek to be minimally informed of, or engaged with, institutional politics” (Davis, 2010, p. 103) and, as pointed out by Lilleker (2006), politics is a minor attraction among Internet users.

Second, access to information and communication technology is still very unequal within and between nations, creating a digital divide. It was predicted that the expansion of access to the Internet would lead to a new kind of class division, in which many would lack skills and willingness to develop competence to use the network (Meyer & Hinchman, 2002). This would be aggravated by economic barriers that prevent one from purchasing the technology. In this scenario, two classes would arise: users and non-users (Meyer & Hinchman, 2002).

Those who are well-informed about and intensively involved in political affairs will only enhance both of these advantages by adroit use of the net and thereby put even more distance between themselves and the rest of society. . . . A comparison of network user-groups in European countries shows that those who use it most are precisely the young, well-educated, high-income professionals who tend to work in cutting-edge fields, and who already understand how to maintain their independence from the old mass media while enjoying them actively. By contrast, the internet is still an alien world for those strata – not necessarily older people – who are politically and socially passive, attracted exclusively to the products of mass culture, with relatively lower levels of income and education. (Meyer & Hinchman, 2002, p. 120)

Third, the design of the Internet encourages users to select and follow sites in a way that forms a filter bubble, in which one has reduced contact with content and information that are opposite or alternative to one's particular point of view (Sustein, 2001, as cited in Davis, 2010, p. 101). Since people can create their public sphere online, they are allowed “to be their own information filters; they select what to access, how and when” (Lilleker, 2006, p. 120). The consequences of this are often the polarization and fragmentation of society into interest groups.

It may be argued that the difficulties in acquiring an ICT such as a mobile phone and access to the Internet no longer apply in the current days – at least on the Western world. The price of this technology has become much more accessible and, particularly in Europe, its use is quite widespread (European Commission, 2020a, 2020b). And just like the alphabets and the printing presses, the Internet does have a democratising potential in the long term, once properly understood by and available to most people (Rheingold, 1993). It cannot be denied that the low financial, spatial, and temporal cost of political information available online does bring exciting opportunities to encourage the level and intensity of popular accountability and government transparency, which are the core of the representative democratic theory.

However, the idea of using the Internet mostly for leisure and consumption still applies and, thus, the generalized access to the Internet does not equal a stronger and more significant citizen engagement in politics neither means there is much quality of online information. Brandenburg (2006, as cited in Davis, 2010, p. 103) reinforces the latter idea and expresses that the public discontent does not denote that people are demanding “inclusion in a deliberative system that affords active participation” (Brandenburg, 2006, as cited in Davis, 2010, p. 103). Still, it is important to acknowledge that this is a controversial statement.

Bearing in mind these three aspects, Davis (2010) concludes that new media has contributed to the weakening of an already fragile communication between political elites and citizens. The same political elite tendencies of the pre-Internet age are still evolving

in the new media age: the public is becoming further distant from the political centre. That way, the expansion of new media has not yet become a useful tool for engaging the citizens that have turned away from politics. Besides, as Meyer and Hinchman (2002) claim, the internet would likely be used predominantly as “a new technical system for distributing old-fashioned mass communications content” (Meyer & Hinchman, 2002, p. 121).

Rawnsley (2005) argues exactly the opposite: people are willing for more participation in politics. The author sensibly backs up Norris’ (2000a) perspective:

We should not expect the Internet to solve all the problems . . . – apathy, ignorance, unwillingness to engage in political process – because the Internet may simply reinforce inequalities that prevent certain groups of citizens believing that their participation counts. The Internet is an instrument of communication that is most useful to, and used by, citizens already interested in the processes and institutions of modern politics: it is another vehicle of participation, not a panacea for the problems in democratic government. (Rawnsley, 2005, p. 196)

Therefore, the Internet can help to strengthen governance, but it should not be expected to engineer political change. In fact, many other changes must take place in society for improving democratisation, such as freedom of the press and of assembly, electoral competition, and accountability (Rawnsley, 2005).

1.7. Government social media communication

In the public sector, social media initiatives are growing in popularity and are a response to the demands of citizens, who have “increased and matured expectations towards public agencies in terms of responsiveness, information delivery, and service provision” (Medaglia & Zheng, 2017, p. 496). Governments worldwide are using social media for many purposes, such as reaching out to citizens and stakeholders, sharing information across and within political agencies and governments, disseminating information about the government operations, enhancing citizen participation and government transparency,

and generally performing communication functions that advance the public good and increase public value (Medaglia & Zheng, 2017; DePaula et al., 2018).

The benefits of social media for governments include efficiency, due to the possibility of communicating directly to people and save money that would be spent on other types of media; accountability, through the sharing of information regarding the government activities; and citizen involvement and trust, which are enhanced through giving opportunities of participation to citizens (Picazo-Vela, Gutiérrez-Martínez, & Luna-Reyes, 2012).

Studies show that the transformation of social media strategies can lead to an increase in citizen engagement in political activism (Sandoval-Almazán & Gil-Garcia, 2014) and that interactions on social media between government and citizens do affect citizens' perception of government transparency, efficiency, and corruption (Feeney & Welch, 2016; Valle-Cruz, Sandoval-Almazan, & Gil-Garcia, 2016).

Other studies, such as Vaidhyanathan's (2018) *Antisocial media: How Facebook disconnects us and undermines democracy*, critique social media, especially Facebook, and its impact on politics and democracy. Vaidhyanathan (2018) argues that Facebook is engineered to promote content that causes strong reactions on the users and that, through the algorithms, it filters information in a way that generates a filter bubble, a situation in which people only sees content that conforms to and reinforces their own beliefs.

Since engagement on Facebook is measured by the number of likes, reactions, shares, comments and clicks, extreme and polarizing messages, often false and misleading, and news that strike people's emotions are considered by the algorithm as the most engaging ones. Thus, these types of message reach more people than sensible and fact-checked ones and, consequently, generate more responses and engagement. Furthermore, Facebook users tend to judge the trustworthiness of information based on who shared it rather than its source or author (Vaidhyanathan, 2018). This way, Facebook rewards users with the display of content they want to see and believe in instead of content that differs

from one's personal beliefs and that, possibly, could invigorate discussion and strengthen democratic attitudes among citizens.

Political segregation, the fraying of civil discourse, and the erosion of trust in civic institutions is a fact of life around the world. So the narrowing of our field of vision, the filtering of information to that which emboldens our confidence in the beliefs we already hold, and the segregation of citizens into polarized camps all steadily undermine the potential for republican governance and reasonable discourse about important matters. (Vaidhyanathan, 2018, p. 91)

Vaidhyanathan (2018) points out the focus on self-promotion and self-presentation on Facebook, which applies to personal profiles as well as to corporate and political pages. Expectedly, the content published on Facebook profiles and pages is carefully selected by its owners and managers, therefore, the goal is not the promotion of complex discussion and accurate portrayal of reality. In fact, this social media is used for presenting and promoting people, groups and/or organizations.

Besides, Facebook is said to offer citizens a sense of connection with politics and empowerment. Through the platform, citizens feel like they can express their opinions and beliefs and think their voices are being heard. But such perception is not real and the empowerment is simply a simulation (Vaidhyanathan, 2018). "Every political interaction is a quiz, a poll, a click, a share, a comment, a like, an email, an online petition, a donation via text message, or a request for more attention" (Vaidhyanathan, 2018, pp. 164-165).

In fact, since the use of Facebook is mostly for self-presentation and self-promotion, a real connection and empowerment do not thrive.

In addition, Vaidhyanathan (2018) highlights the importance of distinguishing communication from conversation. Facebook allows communication, but it does not foster conversation or deliberation. Actually, Facebook favours declaration and sparks shallow reaction among people. Nonetheless, the author understands that there is political power in declaration and reaction, but "they are not enough to pursue anything more than

stronger declaration, fiercer reaction, and strong blowback” (Vaidhyanathan, 2018, p. 144).

In sum, Vaidhyanathan (2018) explains that Facebook destabilizes politics more than it enlightens or enhances deliberative politics. Because of the way it filters content and fosters strong reaction in the users, Facebook is a powerful tool for motivation but it is useless for deliberation: it can be deployed to make people rise up against oppressive governments as much as it can help people support them. The author (Vaidhyanathan, 2018) elucidates that many people believe that social media has the power to spread freedom and promote democracy, but this does not mean that all social media users actually stand up for these ideals.

It can be argued that social media, similarly to the Internet (see Subchapter 1.6), is used mostly for leisure and, therefore, does not represent the most useful tool for engaging citizens. Nevertheless, its potential for connecting people and governments should not be underestimated: on a global scale, people are spending more time on social media than ever, thus, it is more likely that people would check a government’s social media page for information rather than accessing other media, such as TV or radio. Besides, experts have been studying the positive aspects of social media. For instance, Yi, Oh, and Kim (2013) uphold that social media has encouraged open governments and Bertot, Jaeger, and Hensen (2012) show how social media became a central component of e-governments.⁴

There is a lack of comprehensive efforts to map and systematize research on government social media. Although there is literature review in the e-government field, it tends to fall short of focusing specifically on the changes that social media brings to the communication between government and citizens (Medaglia & Zheng, 2017). The most recent literature on social media in government has predominantly focused on Web 2.0 or Government 2.0 concepts (Criado, Sandoval-Almazan, & Gil-Garcia, 2013). But

⁴ Norris and Moon (2005, p. 64) define e-government as "the electronic provision of information and services by government 24 hours per day, seven days per week".

research on social media is very close to research on open government and transparency as well as citizen participation (Criado et al., 2013). Therefore, it is important to map government social media research since it could enable public managers to improve practices and offer better services (Medaglia & Zheng, 2017).

Medaglia and Zheng (2017) propose a framework and a future research agenda in this field. In their study, the authors identified common repeating themes and gathered them in six categories: social media platform properties, user characteristics, user behaviour, context, social media effects, and social media management. The latter category, which focuses on the activity of a government on social media, is my object of study.

Studies on government social media management tend to focus on the strategies and policies devised by public agencies to use social media, analysing the presence of public agencies on social media platforms, or on content analysis. Studies focusing on government social media strategy aim at mapping the objectives that public agencies try to achieve using social media. (Medaglia & Zheng, 2017, p. 499)

DePaula et al. (2018) also contributed to the research on government communication on social media through the creation of a typology. The authors argue that a great portion of the government's use of social media is for symbolic and presentational purposes. Social media are not tools for democratic transparency and citizen participation only, but also “tools for self-presentation, the exchange of symbolic gestures, and the marketing of products and services” (DePaula et al., 2018, p. 99). To the previous existing framework of a three-category model of push, pull, and networking communication – which relates to the open government goals of transparency, participation, and collaboration respectively –, the authors include a fourth category: symbolic and presentational communication. This type of communication concerns self-promotion and marketing.

Research from consumer psychology offers evidence suggesting that the way information is presented influences the way citizens perceive their government. For example, it has been shown that shorter and less detailed messages and content tend to evoke more

positive evaluations of the objects they discuss (Porumbescu, 2016). Besides, research argues that citizens' use of public sector social media accounts for information tends to draw their attention toward more general and desirable aspects of the actions taken by the public sector while it draws attention away from questions of how it is taking action and making decisions. Then, the turn of attention to the positive aspects and greater use of public sector media accounts should lead to higher levels of satisfaction and trust (Porumbescu, 2016).

This way, studying the ways that government present information on Facebook, for instance, could be extremely helpful in refining the government's social media strategies and, therefore, enhance citizens evaluation of their government and support of democracy.

2. Danish and Spanish political communication cultures

Understanding political communication as an interaction between political and media actors concerning a public audience means that the political and media systems are of great relevance for grasping political communication cultures. It is in the different structural contexts of political and media systems that such interaction takes place and presents a subjective dimension to it, a pattern of interaction internalized in the attitudes of the actors. Thus, comprehending the political communication culture of a country denotes the identification of attitudinal patterns, the description of “the orientations, attitudes and norms of actors in political communication roles of both [politics and media] sides of the exchange” (Pfetsch, 2014b, p. 15).

According to Pfetsch, Mayerhöffer, and Moring (2014), political communication culture is shaped by national context and is “an attitudinal concept which implies that we capture the relevant objects that constitute the political communication system of a country” (Pfetsch, Mayerhöffer, & Moring, 2014, p. 77). Among these relevant objects, the authors point to a country's political culture as well as media and political systems. Thus, the main characteristics of such objects in Spain and Denmark are detailed in this chapter and the main characteristics of both countries are resumed in comparison tables in Appendixes A, B and C.

As shown in the previous chapter, the basic function of political communication is to establish a constant flow of information between citizens and political leaders and groups. It aims at the stimulation of public debate, public opinion, and political participation. But, to ensure that this flow of information works and maintains stability, it needs to be safeguarded by political institutions through regulations and laws. Plus, it needs to be internalized in the subjective orientations by the political and media actors (Pfetsch, 2014a). Therefore, this chapter also broaches on the efforts and measures to set up and maintain the efficacy of political communication in Spain and Denmark.

2.1. Denmark

2.1.1. Danish media culture

The media system in Denmark is a Democratic Corporatist Model, which is characterized by an active but limited state role on media and historical coexistence of commercial media and media connected to social and political groups. Hallin and Mancini (2004) classify Denmark as a Democratic Corporatist Model because of the interaction between interest organizations, state, and civil society – a relationship that is elaborated further in this chapter.

Media laws and regulations became a political issue in Denmark only after the Second World War (Kjaer, 2000, as cited in Esmark & Ørsten, 2008, p. 34). Henceforth, the state has embraced the responsibility of ensuring and supporting the democratic function of the media. The control of public service is distributed among social and political groups and is extended to other kinds of socially relevant groups, such as trade unions and religious organizations (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). A great share of media revenue is made by a small number of large Danish-owned companies and by a limited number of international companies (The Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces, 2019).

Lately, the conventional TV coverage has been shrinking and the share of households with no TV signal has been increasing. Radio listening is also decreasing. News sites became more popular than printed newspapers among readers. Despite the decline in traditional media consumption, 61% of the population watched TV every day, 71% listened to the radio on a daily basis and 33% read a printed daily newspaper in 2018 (The Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces, 2019).

Over the years, media consumption became increasingly digital and Internet-based while social media progressively grew in popularity. This development was seen in every age group and among all the social media platforms, with most Internet users using at least one social network (The Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces, 2019).

Facebook plays a big part in this scenario. For instance, in 2018, 27% of citizens between 12 and 75 years old referred to Facebook as one of their preferred sources of news and background information and more than half of Internet users between 16 and 89 years old accessed Facebook every day. This represents about three times as many users as any other mainstream social media platform (The Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces, 2019).

Concerning the digital media culture, Denmark ranks well among 28 European Union (EU) Member States in the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2020 (European Commission, 2020a). The fourth generation of broadband cellular network technology (4G) coverage reaches 100% of the population and Denmark is very advanced on 5G technology. Fewer than 2% of the population have never used the Internet and only three out of ten people lack basic digital skills. Overall, Denmark is above the European average in the digital skills, digitization of businesses and digital public services indicators (European Commission, 2020a).

The Danish government has allocated approximately €134 million (euros) until 2025 to the implementation of a strategy to equip the population for the future digital economy (European Commission, 2020a). Dating from early 2018, the Strategy for Denmark's Digital Growth consists of initiatives to integrate the use of new technologies and enhance the digital skills of the Danish citizens.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the government managed a website to inform citizens about the measures taken to combat the virus and provide updates on the status of infected patients.⁵ On the website, citizens could voluntarily report whether they have had Covid-19 symptoms and have online video consultations with practitioners. Besides, the government posted national information campaigns on many social media platforms (European Commission, 2020a).

⁵ The website is available on <http://www.coronasmitte.dk/>.

When it comes to digital public services, Denmark ranks well. The country is going through its sixth generation of the e-government strategy, known as the Digital Strategy 2016-2020, which enhances the digitization of the public sector. The interaction between citizens and public authorities through the Internet is above the EU average. In 2019, a pact was signed to create digital guidance for citizens for a better user experience of the e-government platforms (European Commission, 2020a).

2.1.2. Danish political culture

Denmark is a parliamentary democracy and has been a member of the European Union since 1973. It transitioned from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy in 1848, although substantial monarchy traces remained until the constitutional revision in 1953. The revision ended bicameralism and the upper chamber of parliament, known as the *Landstinget*, which was supportive of the royal power (Esmark & Ørsten, 2008).

Ever since, the parliament consists of only one chamber, the *Folketinget*, which gathers representatives from Denmark, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands (Esmark & Ørsten, 2008). Elections are held every four years and are based on proportional representation, in which political parties need at least 2% of the total number of votes. Thus, Danish politics is characterized as consensus politics, in which social groups are central to the political process, and a multi-party system, an aspect that distinguishes Denmark from most Western democracies dominated by two-party politics, such as Spain. The Danish consensus politics is characterized by the sharing of power among the political parties that compromise and cooperate with the government, the separation of power between legislative and executive, and proportional representation (Esmark & Ørsten, 2008).

Denmark has a solid history of corporatism (Esmark & Ørsten, 2008) that is sustained by three pillars: “an ideology of social partnership, centralized and concentrated interest group formation, and voluntary and quasi-formal bargaining and coordination between state bureaucracy, interest groups and political parties” (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 54). Since the late 19th century, a system of negotiation between capital sanctioned by the state

and organized labour has taken place in the country and is known as the Danish model in political system and culture (Esmark & Ørsten, 2008).

Since the 1970s, Danish politics has been going through a process of decentralization: autonomous regional and local authorities, and quasi-independent taxation rights (Esmark & Ørsten, 2008). As in many democracies around the world, there is a high level of electoral volatility in Denmark. Loyalty to political parties based on their ideologies became outdated among the Danish people. Membership numbers in political parties have also been in decline (Esmark & Ørsten, 2008).

2.1.3. Danish political communication culture

A study about the relations between media and politics in Europe shows that Danish politicians became “quite comfortable and friendly” (Pfetsch, 2014a, p. 4) when dealing with the media. Denmark, as well as the other Nordic countries, are characterized by highly professional media relations and a media-driven political communication culture based on beliefs in strong independent media as political forces. This differs from Southern European countries, like Spain, where the media struggles with political and economic pressures. The mediatization of politics is perceived as high by Danish politicians. In contrast, Danish journalists are hesitant in regarding as highly relevant the journalistic role of an active commentator of politics (Pfetsch et al., 2014).

Pfetsch et al. (2014) classify Denmark as a strategic political communication culture, in which “the interaction of media and politics is predominantly framed as a strategic power game” (Pfetsch et al., 2014, p. 95). Politicians have a strong influence over the public agenda by using public opinion polls and backstage strategies of agenda-setting. While in Spain there is a rather positive outlook on public opinion polls, voting and polls are met with scepticism by the Danish population but still important factors for policymaking.

2.2. Spain

2.2.1. Spanish media culture

The media system in Spain is a Polarized Model, which is characterized by a strong state role on media, the small historical development of commercial media, and the incorporation of media into party politics (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). The control of media activity usually rests with the state and the courts but there are also self-regulation mechanisms reinforced by associations, such as the *Asociación de Autorregulación de la Comunicación Comercial* (Association for the Self-Regulation of Commercial Communication) (Salaverría & Baceiredo, 2017).

Salaverría and Baceiredo (2017) show examples of the close relationship between media and political parties: in 2017, the regional presidents of Catalonia and of Navarre and dozens of members of the national and regional parliaments that were journalists started a career as politicians. It is a phenomenon known as the revolving doors, in which politicians hold managerial positions in the media and journalists turn into politicians. This scenario led to a growing perception by citizens that the media is guided mainly by political interests and business clientelisms, not much by public service ideals (Salaverría & Baceiredo, 2017).

Throughout the 2000s, changes were made in the public broadcasting service. In 2006, the channels' independence, public nature, and service became guaranteed by the legislation. The chief post was no longer appointed by the government, it became governed by an executive body elected by the Parliament. In 2008, the advertising income was suppressed, which turned the general state budget into the main source of income (Canel, 2013).

Spanish media landscape consists of private press and a system of public and commercial broadcasting. Public broadcasting is controlled directly by the government and is divided among the political parties by proportional representation (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Media concentration and partisan press are the norms. The private media ownership is

divided into five groups: Atresmedia, Mediaset España, Prisa y Vocento (Salaverría & Baceiredo, 2017). As for public media, it consists mainly of audiovisual corporations of national and regional scope. Some local governments own radio and tv channels, and print and digital publications. For instance, 12 of the 17 autonomous regions have their own audiovisual corporation (Salaverría & Baceiredo, 2017).

Public institutions influence media through subsidies to private media and the concession of institutional publicity. This represents a constant controversy in Spain: national and regional public institutions are usually blamed for interference on media, including granting of public aid to private media and the control over its editorial line (Salaverría & Baceiredo, 2017). It is worth mentioning that, throughout the campaign season before elections, political news in the government's broadcast channels are restricted and paying for propaganda on tv is prohibited (Castells, 2009).

Spanish newspaper readership and circulation rate presents to be lower than the European average, but tv and radio are massively popular (Canel, 2013). For the past years, newspaper readership and tv audience decreased while the Internet use increased. This might explain the increasing expenses of online government communication (Canel, 2013).

Regardless, political and media actors consider as highly relevant the active commentator role of journalists. Surveys point to a change in journalistic paradigm: it seems that journalists are moving from a partisan-ideological paradigm towards a more adversarial-apolitical one (Canel, 2013, p. 139).

As for the digital media culture, Spain performs well in connectivity. The fourth generation of broadband cellular network technology (4G) coverage reaches 95% of the population, which is very close to the EU average (96%) (European Commission, 2020b). In 2016, social networks were used by 91% of Internet users in Spain (Arena & The Cocktail Analysis, 2016, as cited in Salaverría & Baceiredo, 2017, para. 8). Facebook was the most used platform, with 88% penetration and 49% of its users checking out the news during the week (Salaverría & Baceiredo, 2017).

2.2.2. Spanish political culture

Spain lived tumultuous years throughout the 20th century and was under a dictatorship from 1939 until 1975, the year that Franco, the former Spanish dictator, passed away. This meant the end of the Francoist period and the start of the democratic transition in Spain. The first democratic elections were held in 1977. In the following couple of years, a complex and delicate negotiation took place and the Spanish Constitution was approved by referendum. Then, in 1979, the first constitutional general elections were held. Back then, the *Unión de Centro Democrático* (UCD) party was elected and remained in power until 1982. But from 1982 on, the *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE) and the *Partido Popular* (PP, People's Party) have been alternating in power (Canel, 2013).

Since 1978, Spain has been a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system, in which both chambers are elected by citizens. It is characterized as a decentralized territorial organization with a system of autonomous communities (*Estados autonómicos*), in which there are seventeen autonomous communities. The national state's autonomy is possible since each state has its legislature, executive and judiciary infrastructure. The Spanish majoritarian politics is characterized by a winning party – usually PSOE or PP – that concentrates power, two-party system, cabinet dominance, plurality voting system, and a clear distinction between government and opposition (Canel, 2013).

Being a multiparty system means that the method of proportionality for allocating seats in parliament makes it hard for third national parties to get seats while makes it easy for nationalist and pro-independence parties. This way, two major parties and an average of eight nationalist and pro-independence parties form the parliament, which means that an absolute majority is hard to reach (Canel, 2013).

The prime minister (PM), known as the *Presidente* of the Government of Spain, is elected by parliament. The PM is responsible for the parliament's agenda, schedule, and outcomes as well as for the structure and organizational chart of the government. The PM decides the communication structures and resources, such as priority of ranks and

resources, and the personal relationship between official communicators and the prime minister (Canel, 2013). Every new government issues a decree defining government communication functions, which has consistently been treated as management of media relations (Canel & Sanders, 2014). Due to the great influence over communication matters, the PM is the most important political figure for the media (Canel, 2013).

The aforementioned aspect and the inexistence of coalition government in Spain bring important implications for government communication: the central government has to tailor its messages according to different languages and cultural specificities of the different autonomous regions, the communication of central government public policies has to compete with communication from the autonomous regions' governments, and the central government ministers have to travel to the autonomous regions to directly reach out to citizens (Canel, 2013).

2.2.3. Spanish political communication culture

Pfetsch et al. (2014) classify Spain as a traditional political communication culture, in which “media reporting on political issues is under the constant struggle of political and economic outside pressures” (Pfetsch et al., 2014, p. 96). Such designation is shared by the other Southern European countries, which present a strongly politicized pattern of political communication dominated by the premises of politicians (Pfetsch et al., 2014). The Spanish political communication elites acknowledge the importance of commercial and political pressures on political reporting (Pfetsch et al., 2014).

The political influence of the media is regarded as substantial but, unlike Denmark, backstage strategies are unusual. It is believed that politicians develop the ability to apply pressure to the media without adapting to their requirements (Pfetsch et al., 2014). Recent scholarly research shows that Spanish government communication faces a few challenges, such as establishing useful mechanisms for avoiding the government's partisan and self-promotion type of communication, mechanisms that foster transparency and the use of the Internet for more meaningful interaction with citizens (Canel, 2013).

The system of government communication was developed in the 1978 Constitution (Canel, 2013). The organizational chart of government communication has undergone many formulations throughout the years, changing from a state secretary as the spokesperson to a position where the spokesperson holds the highest rank in the chart after the prime minister. But, in short, the design, organization, and legislation regarding the Spanish government communication are rooted in the position of the state as the prime conveyor and manager of information (Canel, 2013).

The country is very advanced in the provision of digital public services, performing above the European Union average. The implementation of a digital-by-default strategy throughout the central public administration led Spain to rank second position on the European digital public services rank. There is a high level of online interaction between public authorities, citizens, and businesses, with 82% of Internet users actively engage with e-government services (European Commission, 2020b). It is worth mentioning the government's effort to tackle online misinformation about the Covid-19 with a website and a chatbot for trustworthy information about the pandemic.⁶ According to the DESI 2020, Spain's "investment in open government data is an example to follow for large EU economies" (European Commission, 2020b, p. 13).

On the other hand, digital skills indicators in Spain are low compared to the European average: almost half of the population lacks basic digital skills and 8% have never used the Internet (European Commission, 2020b). The government has been working on a national strategy to ensure that all citizens, especially workers, women and elders, reach the required level of digital skills and have the increasing level of skills needed to live in today's labour market and society. This strategy is scheduled to be implemented in the summer of 2020 (European Commission, 2020b).

⁶ The website is available on covid19.gob.es.

3. Methodology and analysis

On this chapter, the concept of comparative political communication research is explained and the methodology, research objectives and questions are described. Then, the case study, results, discussion and limitations are disclosed.

This study analyses the use of Facebook, the most popular social media worldwide, by the Regeringen, the government of Denmark, and by La Moncloa, the central government of Spain. These governments were selected since both countries had the best results among the European countries in the Democracy Perception Index 2018 (Alliance of Democracies et al., 2018).

Regarding the analysis of the Facebook pages, this specific social media was chosen due to its reach and influence worldwide. Although the Facebook pages analysed in this thesis have fewer followers than the Regeringen's and La Moncloa's Twitter profiles, the latter has a significant amount of automated accounts, known as bots (Vaidhyanathan, 2018). In 2018, Twitter had only 350 million registered accounts while Facebook had 2.2 billion (Vaidhyanathan, 2018).

Facebook has more features than Twitter, which allows more complex and detailed analyses. Compared to other social media, Facebook is very focused on image and video formats, and its like and reactions buttons tend to foment the publishing of highly emotional, strongly reactive content that often arouses the users.

Besides, Facebook's influence on society is imminent. "In terms of actual influence on actual human beings, there is no digital or social media company with the reach and power of Facebook. It is unique in human history" (Vaidhyanathan, 2018, p. 102). In sum, Facebook is the platform used by more than two billion people to follow friends as well as governmental institutions, to conduct their political lives and share interests and beliefs.

The case study was chosen as the research method since it allows an in-depth analysis of the objects of study (Pardal & Correia, 1995), which are the Regeringen and La Moncloa Facebook pages. The case study is a fruitful method for social sciences research (Coutinho, 2018) and, although it does not allow a generalization of the findings, the case study in this thesis represents a potential starting point to future research, to thorough investigations. This thesis' case study is a descriptive one (Bruyne et al., 1991, as cited in Pardal & Correia, 1995, p. 23), in which the objects of study are comprehensively examined.

Quantitative and qualitative analyses were carried out. Both analyses were complimentary and represented a productive exploration of various aspects of the objects of study.

Regarding the qualitative analysis, a sample of Facebook posts was categorized within the DePaula's et al. (2018) typology of government social media communication. The posts formats (text and link, image, video, and lives) and content, as well as the structure of both Facebook pages, were analysed.

Regarding the quantitative analysis, the results of the categorization of the posts sample were calculated and the content patterns on both Facebook pages were revealed. The analysis of these patterns was essential for a proper comparison between the Regeringen and La Moncloa pages.

Due to the restrictions in accessing and gathering large amounts of Facebook data, it was not possible to conduct an automated analysis. Since the Cambridge Analytica scandal in 2018, Facebook announced stronger surveillance of applications that collect information on the platform, such as Netvizz – a widely known tool used tool in previous investigations (Bastos & Walker, 2018). For this reason, it was chosen to manually collect the data available to Facebook users on the Regeringen and La Moncloa Facebook pages.

The restrictions and its implications also influenced the selection of a time frame. It was decided to analyse all posts published between June 1st, 2020 and June 30th, 2020, which

was the month prior to July 2020, in which the analyses were carried out. This decision led to a quite not proportional analysis between the Regeringen and La Moncloa Facebook pages since the former had only 15 posts and the latter had 128 posts. Still, such a difference in the number of posts was considered a relevant aspect to be analysed and a contribution to the findings in this research. As a cursory observation of both Facebook pages shows, the Regeringen posts considerably less frequently than La Moncloa.

Direct and non-participant observation of the objects of study was carried out in this investigation. Direct observation represents the collection of information, in which the researcher does not address the subjects concerned in the study (Quivy & Campenhoudt, 2005). In this thesis, the analyses were conducted in a systematized way, following frameworks based on previous research.

3.1. Comparative political communication research

Political communication is best studied through comparative research, through the analysis of different cultural perspectives, since its form varies between them (Graber, 1993, as cited in Pfetsch & Esser, 2004, p. 3). All in all, comparative political communication is always a cultural comparison and the value of that comparison lies in the fact that one observation alone has no meaning unless it is compared with other observations (Pfetsch & Esser, 2004).

One crucial question regarding this kind of comparative research would be: “What always applies regardless of the contextual influences?” (Pfetsch & Esser, 2004, p. 8). This question highlights the importance of the context in which a phenomenon is being studied. Such importance is also indicated by Gurevitch and Blumler (2004), who state that the comparative research aims to shed light not only on the object of study but, most importantly, on the systems in which they are being examined and how it affects the object or phenomena.

Swanson (2004) argues that “modern political communication is shaped by some transnational trends that have led to structurally similar but by no means identical

consequences in each country” (p. 46). This applies especially to countries that have advanced media systems, like Denmark and Spain. These countries take transnational trends and shape them in locally appropriate ways, which means each one manifests those trends in different ways. The author highlights that “particular political cultures, institutions, actors, histories, and circumstances” (Swanson, 2004, p. 46) are reflected by the practices of political communication in each country.

Besides, the nature of political systems, media structures and public opinion must be taken into consideration (Nord, 2007). Thus, analysing these features makes the interplay between transnational and national trends very productive for research in the field. Overall, the contribution of this kind of comparative study lies in revealing those transnational trends and similarities, which is only possible when one steps back from a particular country and takes a broader view (Swanson, 2004).

It is important to note the thin line distinguishing political communication and public relations comparative research: while comparative research in public relations is concerned with the effectiveness of practices and identifying and establishing professional standards and values, comparative research in political communication tends to be more theoretical and focus mostly on concerns such as “the relationship between power and communication in different political and media systems” (Canel & Voltmer, 2014, p. 105). More importantly, it generally adopts “a more critical approach to the relationship between professional communication and democracy when compared to public relations research” (Canel & Voltmer, 2014, p. 106).

3.2. Research objectives

This study analyses the government social media communication on the Regeringen, the Danish national government, and La Moncloa, the Spanish national government, Facebook pages. Through an analysis of the text, visual, and audiovisual contents of the posts published between June 1st, 2020 and June 30th, 2020, the posts were manually categorized according to the DePaula’s et al. (2018) framework.

The results of the categorization are analysed from the perspective of each country's political communication culture characteristics, which are discussed in Chapter 2. Overall, this research aims to understand the communication with citizens that both governments are trying to establish through Facebook while taking into consideration each country's particularities. In addition, the Facebook management and strategies deployed by the Regeringen and La Moncloa are investigated and discussed based on Facebook's (n.d.) guidelines for government, politics, and advocacy.

3.3. Research questions

The research questions are:

- To what extent can the sample of the Facebook posts of the Regeringen and La Moncloa be categorized within DePaula's et al. (2018) framework?
- Which is the dominant category on each Facebook page?
- Which category had the most engagement among Facebook users?
- What similarities and differences can be observed across both Facebook pages?
- To what extent do the pages follow Facebook's (n.d.) guidelines for best practices for government, politics, and advocacy?
- Which government makes the most competent use of its Facebook page?

3.4. Methodology

First, a structural analysis of both Facebook pages was conducted by examining the following criteria: name, web address (URL), creation date, number of followers and likes, "about" section, links, home page information (evaluation, contact information and category), and profile and cover pictures. The analysis table was based on the works by

Maia (2019, p. 117) and Russmann et al. (2020, pp. 146-147) and is summarized on Tables 3 and 5.

Then, each Facebook post published between June 1st, 2020 and June 31st, 2020 was categorized according to the DePaula's et al. (2018) framework. The unit of analysis was each Facebook post. A total of 143 posts were analysed: 15 posts are from the Regeringen page and 128 posts are from the La Moncloa page. The framework consists of four categories: information provision, input seeking, online dialogue/offline interaction, and symbolic presentation. All four categories are divided into types of communication, which are summarized in Table 2.

Expectedly, messages can present “information beyond the denotative value of the text” (Watzlawick et al., 1967, as cited in DePaula et al., 2018, p. 102), which means that posts could often be double coded. This applies especially when analysing Facebook, a platform that allows posting texts without character limits and attaching images, videos, and links. Thus, a plurality of messages expressed in a single post was expected.

An example of a double coding situation are posts categorized as symbolic acts, which usually are a form of meta-communication that references to cultural values, and as favourable presentation, which reports positive activity performed by the government. Since symbolic messages are not neutral, they tend to present a favourable image of the government as well. Yet, I attempted to reduce double coding and I applied the categories as mutually exclusive as possible.

Table 2 - Summary of definition and coding rules for each type of communication

Information provision	
	Public service announcements: Providing recommendations for safety, public health, and well-being (e.g., “check your heat for the winter”; “eat vegetables”; “don't smoke”).
	Operations & events: Content related to operations of the agencies, programs and/or policy, as well as event information. Must have date/ time or link to more information.

	Social sharing: Provision of content related to the mission of the department but not in regards to its operations or policies. Informative content that may be of interests to others (e.g., a news article about global warming from the Environmental Department).
Input seeking	
	Citizen information: Explicitly asking for feedback on a topic, participation in a survey or poll. Seeking input to help solve a crime, but where the response to input is not clear.
	Fundraising: Posts that refer to fundraising efforts or are asking for donations and contributions to a cause. Need not be directly related to the agency's mission.
Online dialogue/ Offline interaction	
	Online dialogue: Response by the department to a user comment on a department post.
	Offline discussion: Event to discuss particular policy issue, creating a forum for discussion, and/or invitation to the community to meet government officials.
	Offline collaboration: Asking individuals to become involved in a government-related activity; help carry out or volunteer for a project, program of the government department.
Symbolic presentation	
	Favourable presentation: Seeks attribution of likability, competency or worthiness. Reporting of positive activity performed by the department, with positive imagery or self-referential language of gratitude (e.g. “we have the best”; “we accomplished so much this year”).
	Political positioning: Taking a clear stance on a political issue (e.g., “rights of women should be supported”; “marriage equality law should be passed”).
	Symbolic act: Expressing congratulations, gratitude, condolences. It includes the celebration of holidays or trivia questions; references to cultural symbols (e.g. 4th of July, football game).
	Branding & marketing: Elaborate presentation of features (e.g. in video production) of item or service, including a list of prices and/or qualities of an item with intention to attract individuals to acquire.

Source: table adapted from DePaula et al. (2018, p. 102).

Information provision is a one-way communication strategy that provides accurate public information to people (DePaula et al., 2018). It is usually associated with transparency. Within this category, there are three types of communication: operations & events, public service announcements, and social sharing. Operations & events consist of factual content disclosed by the government about activities, such as policy changes, program details, and event announcements. Public service announcements are messages that aim at raising public awareness about an issue or to persuade citizens to act and improve the public well-being (Shoemaker, 1989, as cited in DePaula et al., 2018, p. 99). Social sharing is a form of providing factual and valuable information related to the mission of the political institution but without reference to government actions (DePaula et al., 2018).

Input seeking is a form of requesting feedback from governments' stakeholders and, potentially, the public at large (DePaula et al., 2018). This category reflects the interest on the part of the government in understanding its constituency, possibly leading to an improvement of public services. Briefly, the intention behind this category is to obtain information from citizens. Examples include asking people to answer a survey or to make donations. Within this category, there are two types of communication: citizen information and fundraising. The former represents the request for information from citizens and the latter represents the request for donations (DePaula et al., 2018).

Online dialogue/offline interaction is a two-way communication between governments and citizens (DePaula et al., 2018). Such interaction has the potential of consolidating the relationship and collaboration between both actors. It is understood as a networking strategy of social media communication (Mergel, 2013, as cited in DePaula et al., 2018, p. 100), in which citizens are enabled to get involved in the creation of public services through an online dialogue or offline interaction, such as offline meetings and activities of collaboration and discussion of public service. Overall, it enhances the level of participatory and direct democracy. Within this category, there are online dialogue, offline discussion, and offline collaboration. These three types of communication respectively represent dialogue in digital platforms, references to external activities of

engagement and discussion, and invitations for co-creating government services (DePaula et al., 2018).

Symbolic presentation consists of impression management, the construction of an identity through the conveyance of symbolic content (DePaula et al., 2018). Within this category, there is favourable presentation, political positioning, symbolic act, and branding & marketing.

Favourable presentation refers to the government's intent to create a specific image of the organization and influence the citizen's perception about it (DePaula et al., 2018). Through this approach, governments seek the attributes of likability, competency, and worthiness: likability is promoted through messages that boast about one's qualities while competency is nurtured by self-promotion, and worthiness is "sought via exemplification of certain facts" (DePaula et al., 2018, p. 100). Favourable presentation is a type of impression management and public relations, a way of promoting the political institution (DePaula et al., 2018).

Political positioning refers to the expression of political positions of political identity. DePaula et al. (2018) distinguish favourable presentation from political positioning: the first reports positive activity performed by the institution with positive imagery or self-referential language of gratitude while the latter is a clear stance on an issue.

Symbolic act consists of expressions of congratulations, gratitude, and condolences (DePaula et al., 2018). For instance, the celebration of holidays or cultural symbols. It is related to the exchange of cultural references and the use of images that are not explicitly or strictly political (DePaula et al., 2018).

Branding & marketing is the presentation of features of item or service in a way that attracts people into acquiring it (DePaula et al., 2018). It requires a development of the organizational identity and branding, and persuasive rhetoric focused on beneficial claims and sales offers. "Although the use of branding and marketing by governments may be limited, these activities can serve many useful purposes, including attracting stakeholders

to obtain a specific product or service, as well as promotion of a particular municipality itself” (DePaula et al., 2018, p. 101).

3.5. Analysis

3.5.1. The Regeringen Facebook page analysis

The analysis of the Regeringen Facebook page structure is resumed in Table 3. The analysis was carried out on July 20th, 2020.

Table 3 - The Regeringen Facebook page structure analysis

Name		Regeringen
Web address (URL)		https://www.facebook.com/regeringDK
Creation date		September 12 th , 2017.
Followers		11.288
Likes		9.470
Profile picture		An image of Regeringen's logo in red letters within a grey circle and white background.
Cover photo		A photo of the prime minister standing with the ministers.
Home page information	Evaluation	Non-applicable.
	Category	Governmental organization.
	Contact information	Telephone number (33923300) and email (stm@stm.dk).
“About” section		“This is the official Facebook profile of the Danish government. This is the official Facebook account for the Danish Government. For contact: write to stm@stm.dk.” ⁷
Links to the official website		One link.
Links to other social media		No links.

Source: created by the author.

⁷ Translated by the author. Original text: “Dette er den officielle Facebook-profil for den danske regering. This is the official Facebook-account for the Danish Government. For kontakt: skriv til stm@stm.dk.”

The Regeringen Facebook page was created on September 12th, 2017, when Lars Løkke Rasmussen was the Prime Minister of Denmark. Although Mette Frederiksen became the Prime Minister on June 27th, 2019, the same Facebook page has been used since September 2017. It has a blue verification badge, which confirms the page is authentic. And, as recommended by Facebook's (n.d.) guidelines for government, politics and advocacy, the Regeringen page has a personalized URL (address of a World Wide Web page).

There were no updates in the cover photo neither in the profile photo throughout June 2020 and, on the page, there were no links to other social media profiles, such as the Regeringen's Twitter and Instagram.

In a cursory analysis, it was observed that the Regeringen's Twitter profile (<https://twitter.com/regeringdk>) had more than 38.000 followers, which is more than the Facebook followers, and the Regeringen's Instagram profile (<https://www.instagram.com/regeringdk/>) had more than 10.000 followers, which is slightly less in comparison to Facebook. Still, neither social network had links to Facebook, Twitter or Instagram included in the bio, the description sector. Only a link to the Regeringen's official website, email and telephone number were indicated on the Regeringen's Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts.

Table 4 presents the extent to which the different categories and types of posts were used by the Regeringen on Facebook throughout June 2020. A total of 15 posts were published throughout the month, which represent an average of 0,5 posts per day. There was no regularity in the frequency of posting and there was not more than one post per day. Only on one occasion, June 18th, two posts were published on the same day. A table that presents all the analysed posts and its links in in Appendix D.

From the total 15 posts, 11 posts (73,33%) are categorized as information provision: 9 (60%) are categorized as operations & events and 3 (20%) are categorized as public service announcements. Only one post is double coded as operations & events and public service announcements. This is the reason why percentages exceed 100%.

From the total 15 posts, 5 (33,33%) posts are categorized as symbolic presentation: 2 (13,33%) posts are categorized as favourable presentation, 1 (6,66%) is categorized as symbolic act, and 2 (13,33%) posts are categorized as political positioning. No posts are categorized as branding & marketing.

There are no posts categorized as input seeking neither as online dialogue/offline interaction.

The categorization of each post is in Appendix E.

Table 4 - Distribution of posts on the Regeringen page across types of communication and categories

Types of communication	Categories	Number of posts (% of total posts)
Information provision		11 (73,33%)
	Public service announcements	3 (20%)
	Operations & events	9 (60%)
	Social sharing	0 (0%)
Input seeking		0 (0%)
	Citizen information	0 (0%)
	Fundraising	0 (0%)
Online dialogue/ Offline interaction		0 (0%)
	Online dialogue	0 (0%)
	Offline discussion	0 (0%)
	Offline collaboration	0 (0%)
Symbolic presentation		5 (33,33%)
	Favourable presentation	2 (13,33%)
	Political positioning	2 (13,33%)
	Symbolic act	1 (6,66%)
	Branding & marketing	0 (0%)

Note. Because one post falls into two categories, percentages exceed 100%.

Source: created by the author.

A great variety of topics covered on the 15 posts was observed. Immigration/asylum and changes in policies due to the Covid-19 were the prevailing ones. The tables that resume the topics and the number of posts that cover each topic can be found in Appendixes G and H respectively.

The Facebook post with more likes and reactions (the extension of the like button) concerned the celebration of high school graduation in Denmark. The post presented a video in which Pernille Rosenkrantz-Theil, the Education Minister of Denmark, provides information about the student's celebration. The second most popular post concerned safety regulations regarding the Covid-19. The post presented an image, text and link providing information about safety. At last, the third most popular concerned a 2-minute cutout of Mette Frederiksen's, the Prime Minister of Denmark, speech at the *Folketing*, the Danish Parliament. In the video, the Prime Minister reflects on the Covid-19 pandemic. The two most popular posts are categorized as public service announcements and the third one, as political positioning. The table that presents the total of likes, reactions, comments, and shares in each post is in Appendix F.

All posts presented a short text. Most posts included a link to the Regeringen website that provided more information and had a video attached.

From the total 15 posts, only 2 posts did not present a video. It was noted that most videos were recorded especially for social media and lasted between 30 and 60 seconds. The videos individually portrayed the Prime Minister and the ministers and most of them presented the Regeringen logo at the end, which reinforces the videos' authorship. All videos had text and subtitles in the Danish language.

Most posts presented a link: out of the 15 posts, 8 posts presented a link to the Regeringen's official website and 3 posts presented links to different ministries (Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Immigration and Integration Affairs and Ministry of Higher Education and Science).

3.5.2. La Moncloa Facebook page analysis

The structural analysis of the La Moncloa Facebook page is resumed in Table 5. The analysis was carried out on July 20th, 2020.

Table 5 - The La Moncloa Facebook page structure analysis

Name		La Moncloa
Web address (URL)		https://www.facebook.com/Palacio delaMoncloa
Creation date		January 2 nd , 2012.
Followers		250.351
Likes		101.572
Profile picture		Three different images of the La Moncloa logo were used during June 2020.
Cover photo		Three different cover photos were used during June 2020.
Home page information	Evaluation	Non-applicable.
	Category	Governmental organization.
	Contact information	Official website (http://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/).
“About” section		“Official website of the Government of #Spain. http://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/ ”. ⁸
Links to the official website		http://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/
Links to other social media		Twitter (http://www.twitter.com/desdelamoncloa) and YouTube (http://www.youtube.com/user/lamoncloa).

Source: created by the author.

The La Moncloa Facebook page was created on January 2nd, 2012, shortly after Mariano Rajoy became the Prime Minister of Spain. Rajoy was the Prime Minister until June 2018, when Pedro Sánchez, the current Prime Minister, took office. The La Moncloa Facebook page has been used continuously since January 2012. Following Facebook’s (n.d.) guidelines for government, politics, and advocacy, La Moncloa has a personalized URL (address of a World Wide Web page) and has a blue verification badge, which confirms the page is authentic.

Throughout June 2020, the page had three different cover photos. Until June 4th, 2020, the cover photo of the Facebook page was a black image with the Spanish Government’s (*Gobierno de España*) logo on the bottom. On June 5th, 2020, the cover photo was updated

⁸ Translated by the author. Original text: “Página oficial del Gobierno de #España. <http://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/>”.

to a message of hope in the fight against the Covid-19.⁹ Later on June 28th, 2020, a message related to gay pride was used as the cover photo.¹⁰

As for the profile picture, the La Moncloa logo was maintained during the month. Until June 4th, 2020, the La Moncloa logo was in grey and blue against a white background and a black ribbon loop was on the right side – an expression of grief for the people who died due to the Covid-19. Then, on June 5th, 2020, a plain image of the La Moncloa logo in grey and blue against white background became the new profile picture. At last, on June 6th, 2020, the La Moncloa logo was in grey and blue within a white circle, which was against a light grey background.

In a cursory analysis, it was noted that the La Moncloa's Twitter profile (<https://twitter.com/desdelamoncloa>) had more than 730.000 followers, which is more than the Facebook followers, and the La Moncloa's Instagram profile (<https://www.instagram.com/desdelamoncloa/>) had more than 48.000 followers, which is considerably less in comparison to the Facebook page. The YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/lamoncloa>) presented the lesser number of followers among all: around 7.000 followers. Still, the YouTube channel was the only platform that indicated links to the website and to all of La Moncloa's social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram). As for the Twitter and Instagram accounts, only the official website link was included on the bio, the description sector.

Table 6 presents the extent to which the different categories and types of posts were used by La Moncloa on Facebook throughout June 2020. A total of 128 posts were published throughout the month, which represents an average of 4 posts per day. A table that presents all the analysed posts and its links in in Appendix I.

From the total 128 posts, 115 posts (89,84%) are categorized as information provision: 99 (77,34%) are categorized as operations & events, 17 (13,28%) are categorized as

⁹ The message was: "We stop this virus together. Stopping the coronavirus is everyone's responsibility. If you protect yourself, you protect others" (translated by the author).

¹⁰ The message was: "Now more than ever, pride!" (translated by the author).

public service announcements, and 2 (1,56%) are categorized as social sharing. Three posts were double coded as operations & events and public service announcements. This is the reason why percentages exceed 100%.

From the total 128 posts, 13 (10,15%) posts are categorized as symbolic presentation: 4 (3,12%) posts are categorized as favourable presentation, 2 (1,56%) are categorized as symbolic act, 4 (3,12%) posts are categorized as political positioning, and 4 (3,12%) posts are categorized as branding & marketing.

There were no posts categorized as input seeking neither as online dialogue/offline interaction.

A total of 4 posts are double coded: 3 posts are double coded as public service announcements and as operations & events, and 1 post is double coded as favourable presentation and as symbolic act.

The categorization of each post is in Appendix J.

Table 6 - Distribution of posts on the La Moncloa page across types of communication and categories

Types of communication	Categories	Number of posts (% of total posts)
Information provision		115 (89,84%)
	Public service announcements	17 (13,28%)
	Operations & events	99 (77,34%)
	Social sharing	2 (1,56%)
Input seeking		0 (0%)
	Citizen information	0 (0%)
	Fundraising	0 (0%)
Online dialogue/ Offline interaction		0 (0%)
	Online dialogue	0 (0%)
	Offline discussion	0 (0%)
	Offline collaboration	0 (0%)
Symbolic presentation		13 (10,15%)
	Favourable presentation	4 (3,12%)
	Political positioning	4 (3,12%)
	Symbolic act	2 (1,56%)
	Branding & marketing	4 (3,12%)

Note. Because one post falls into two categories, percentages exceed 100%.
Source: created by the author.

La Moncloa published 128 posts throughout June 2020. A great variety of topics covered on the posts was observed. Expectedly, the COVID-19 was the prevailing topic, representing around 48% of the total posts. The rest of the posts concerned diverse topics such as gender violence, recycling, consumer rights, environment, economy, and tourism. A table that resumes the topics and the number of posts that cover each topic can be found in Appendix M.

The three Facebook posts with more likes and reactions (the extension of the like button) concerned the Covid-19. All three posts are categorized as operations & events. The most popular post was a live of a press conference held by Pedro Sánchez, the Prime Minister of Spain. The second most popular one was an announcement made by Pedro Sánchez recorded in a video. At last, the third most popular one was a live of the Pedro Sánchez's speech at the Congress of Deputies of Spain. A table that presents each posts' total of likes, reactions, comments, and shares is in Appendix K.

Except for the Facebook lives, all posts presented a descriptive text. The texts were usually very long and presented many bullet points, emojis, and hashtags. From the total 128 posts, 56 (43,75%) posts presented images, usually more than one image in each post. Some posts had Spanish ministries tagged in the text.

From the total 128 posts, 74 (57,81%) posts presented a link for more information: 43 posts had at least one link to the La Moncloa official website, 29 posts had links to other official government institutions' website (e.g., ministries and the Official State Gazette), 1 post had a link to the European Union website and, 1 post had a link to the Global Citizen Festival website. It was noted that a few links directed to document pages and presentation slides. From the 74 posts with links, 15 posts indicated more than one link: 2 posts had 3 links and 13 posts had 2 links.

On the page, 37 (28%) posts had a video attached. It was noted that most videos were a compilation of speeches of the Prime Minister or press conferences held by ministers. The videos individually portrayed the Prime Minister and the ministers. The duration of the videos varied: it ranged from seconds to an hour.

3.5.3. Comparing the Regeringen and La Moncloa Facebook pages

Notwithstanding the disparity in the average of posts per day, the proportional use of types of communication are somehow similar between both Facebook pages: information provision is the most used type of communication and symbolic presentation is the second most used one. None of the pages published input seeking neither online dialogue/offline interaction posts.

As for the categories, the similarities linger: public service announcements is the most used category, followed by operations & events. Favourable presentation, political positioning, and symbolic act represent a significant part of the total posts on both pages. Unlike the Regeringen, La Moncloa published a few posts categorized as social sharing and branding & marketing. This was expected since the Spanish page had much more posts than the Danish one.

Table 7 summarises and compares the results of the analysis of both Facebook pages.

Table 7 - Comparison between the Regeringen's and La Moncloa's use of types of communication and categories

Types of communication	Categories	Denmark: Number of posts (% of total posts)	Spain: Number of posts (% of total posts)
Information provision		11 (73,33%)	115 (89,84%)
	Public service announcements	3 (20%)	17 (13,28%)
	Operations & events	9 (60%)	99 (77,34%)
	Social sharing	0 (0%)	2 (1,56%)
Symbolic presentation		5 (33,33%)	13 (10,15%)
	Favourable presentation	2 (13,33%)	4 (3,12%)
	Political positioning	2 (13,33%)	4 (3,12%)

	Symbolic act	1 (6,66%)	2 (1,56%)
	Branding & marketing	0 (0%)	4 (3,12%)

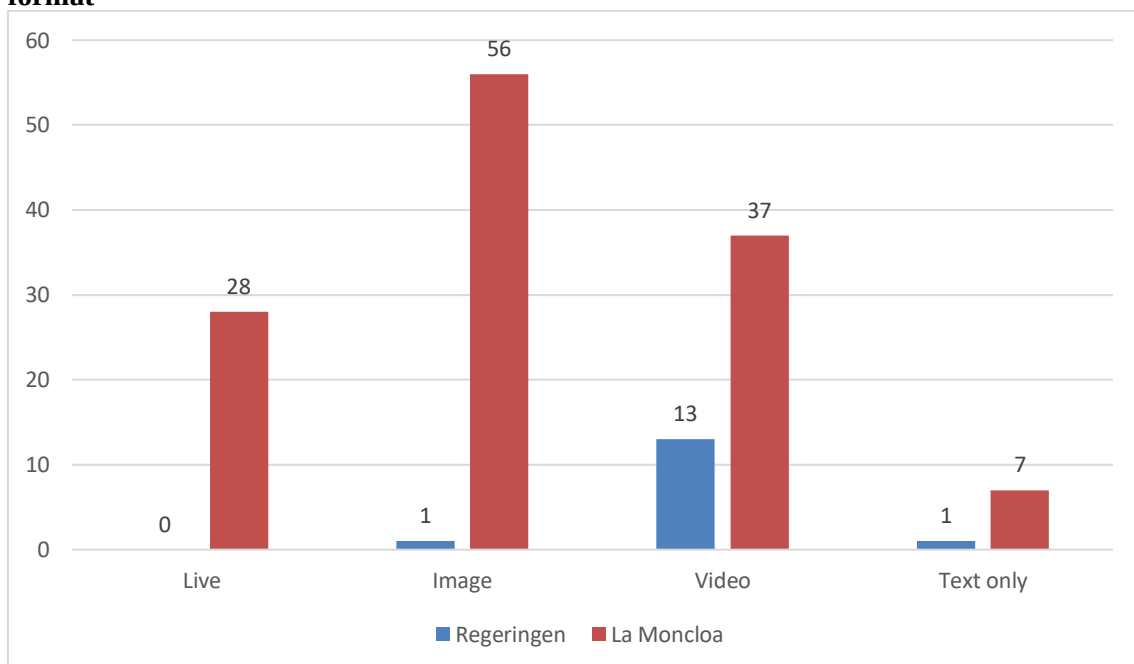
Note. Because one post falls into two categories, percentages exceed 100%.

Source: created by the author.

The Graphic 1 compares the use of different post formats on both Facebook pages. It was observed that La Moncloa made use of more formats than the Regeringen. It was noted that La Moncloa used mostly images in its posts but also made considerable use of lives and videos. As for the Regeringen, videos represent the vast majority of posts. Images and text and links were barely used on the Danish page.

The format of each post on the Regeringen and La Moncloa Facebook pages are in Appendixes G and L respectively.

Graphic 1 - Comparinon between the Regeringen's and La Moncloa's Facebook posts format



Source: created by the author.

3.6. Discussion

This study shows that all 143 posts analysed on the Regeringen and La Moncloa Facebook pages fit the types and categories of communication presented on DePaula's et al. (2018) typology of government use of social media.

It was found that the majority of messages on both pages refer to information about government operations, policies, and events. This reflects previous findings that government use of social media is mostly for information provision purposes (DePaula et al., 2018; Golbeck, Grimes, & Rogers, 2010; Mergel, 2013; Zheng & Zheng, 2014).

Consistently with DePaula's et al. (2018) and Vaidhyanathan's (2018) works, it was found that Facebook is less a tool for collaboration and interaction than a tool for self-presentation and symbolic acts. On both Facebook pages, posts categorized as symbolic presentation were very usual while no posts were categorized as online dialogue/offline interaction. It should be highlighted that this is not necessarily a negative trait since the exchange of symbolic gestures can help build relationships between governments and citizens (DePaula et al., 2018).

On the Regeringen page, there were only 2 posts (13,33% of total posts) about the Covid-19. It is possible that the Danish government decided to focus on providing important information about the pandemic on other platforms, such as the government's official website dedicated to the pandemic or broadcast media, instead of Facebook. Still, considering the categorization of the sample of posts, the main goal of the Danish page seems to be the provision of information to the citizens.

Regarding the photos used on the Regeringen Facebook page, the profile photo featuring the government's logo shows its intention to be a non-partisan communication platform on Facebook, not centred on the Prime Minister figure. This is reinforced by the cover photo and the posts published throughout June 2020, which equally present the current Prime Minister and the ministers. The lack of links to other official Regeringen's social networks, such as Twitter and Instagram, demonstrates little articulation between them.

Since more than half of the posts analysed on the Danish page presented links to the Regeringen's official website, it is possible to assume that the Regeringen avoids sharing the traditional media's news and pursues autonomy when framing information. This perspective is reinforced by the fact that the Danish institution also records, edits, and adds subtitles – which is considered as a good practice (Facebook, n.d.) – to the videos that are published on the Facebook page.

Based on Facebook's (n.d.) guidelines for best practices, the Regeringen Facebook page is evaluated as fairly managed. On the one hand, publishing mostly short videos with subtitles, short text messages, and links to the Regeringen's website are effective strategies on social media. On the other hand, Facebook (n.d.) advises publishing varied types of content, such as photos, videos, and text, and publishing original as well as shared content, which means content created by the Regeringen and by others. However, neither aspects were observed on the Regeringen page.

Besides, it is advisable to post frequently, ideally every day, in order to connect with the audience (Facebook, n.d.). This aspect is especially important during a crisis, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, when the recommendation would be to post many times a day (Facebook, n.d.). At last, the Regeringen would be advised to make use of lives, which are considered an effective way of communicating important information (Facebook, n.d.).

Overall, the management of the Regeringen Facebook page could be improved. Considering the positive interaction between Danish citizens and public authorities through the Internet (European Commission, 2020a) and the use of Facebook as the preferred source of news (The Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces, 2019), the Regeringen could publish content that fosters citizen participation in politics, facilitates the access to the government's online platforms besides the Regeringen's website, and provides concise information about the Covid-19.

On the La Moncloa page, 62 (48,43%) posts concerned the Covid-19. Although the Spanish government managed a website dedicated to the pandemic and provided

information through other platforms, it still relied on Facebook as a channel for updating citizens about the situation in the country. Similarly to the Regeringen, the main goal of the La Moncloa page seems to be the provision of information to the citizens.

Considering the balance of likes, it is possible to infer that residents of Spain and Denmark were more interested in the government's announcement about the Covid-19 than other topics addressed on the Facebook page throughout June 2020. Besides, posts that contained a video or a live stream showed to be the most popular ones on both pages.

Regarding the profile pictures and cover photos used throughout June 2020, it could be assumed that La Moncloa intends on being a non-partisan communication platform on Facebook, not centred on the Prime Minister figure. But, according to analyses presented in this thesis, the content of the Facebook page is significantly focused on Pedro Sánchez, the current Prime Minister, and such content showed to be the most popular among the Facebook users.

A reasonable articulation between La Moncloa's official social media was observed: links to the official website, YouTube channel, and Twitter profile were indicated on the Facebook page. The website link was placed in three different sections on the Facebook page: on the "additional information", "additional contact information" and "about". Although La Moncloa has an official Instagram profile, it was not indicated on the Facebook page or on the Twitter and Instagram profiles. Therefore, it is assumed that the official website has predominant importance in relation to social media platforms. This assumption is reinforced by the fact that the majority of links indicated on the analysed posts from the La Moncloa Facebook page leads to the official website.

Regarding the most popular Facebook posts, the fact that the three most popular posts on the La Moncloa page are focused on the Prime Minister of Spain is indicative of his role as the most important political figure and as the main conveyor of information in Spain (see Chapter 2). This aspect is consistent with Canel's (2013) point of view, that establishing useful mechanisms for avoiding the government's partisan and self-promotion type of communication has presented to be a problem in Spain.

On the La Moncloa page, all posts' content was created by La Moncloa or other Spanish governmental institutions. This shows that the institution has control over the content that is published on Facebook. Thus, it is possible to assume that La Moncloa avoids sharing the traditional media's news on the Facebook page and pursues autonomy when framing information. Besides, it was noted a strongly politicized, partisan, and self-promotion type of communication, which has been pointed out by many authors (Canel, 2013; Pfetsch, 2014a, 2014b; Salaverría & Baceiredo, 2017), on the Facebook page.

The posts' content shows La Moncloa's intention to inform and to be accountable to citizens. However, the long descriptive texts, the lengthy, and non-edited lives and press conferences, and a large number of links and images per post are likely to drive some Facebook users away and impact the communication effectiveness.

In sum, the La Moncloa Facebook page considerably follows Facebook's guidelines for governments (Facebook, n.d.). The use of hashtags, emojis, and bullet points; tagging the Spanish ministries; publishing posts on daily basis; and posting short videos and images are positive practices that La Moncloa should continue doing.

Although La Moncloa shows to be proactive on Facebook, there are several aspects that could be improved. Based on Facebook's (n.d.) guidelines, it would be recommended the video editing of lives and press conferences, in order to gather only the highlights of these events and present it in a short video; indicating only one link in each post; shortening the descriptive texts; and creating content that is easily read and adding links that are easily accessible through the Facebook app for mobile phones, which represents 63% of Facebook usage in relation to the desktop version (Facebook, n.d.).

Overall, the plurality of topics broached on Facebook posts, the average of posts per day, and the use of varied posts formats show that La Moncloa manages and uses the Facebook page in a more professionalised way than the Regeringen.

Conclusion

This thesis investigated the government social media communication performed by the Regeringen, the government of Denmark, and by La Moncloa, the central government of Spain, on their respective Facebook pages. The starting point of this study was the questioning of how governments are communicating with citizens on Facebook, the most popular social media platform in the world.

First, the objects of study were selected: the governments of Denmark and Spain. Both governments were chosen due to their respective countries' results in the Democracy Perception Index 2018 (Alliance of Democracies et al., 2018), which presented the citizen's perception of democracy in fifty countries. Then, a literature survey was carried out to establish the parameters for the analysis.

The researches by Maia (2019) and by Russmann et al. (2020) were used as references for the creation of a framework for the analysis of both Facebook pages structure. As for the analysis of the content of the Facebook posts, the typology of government social media communication designed by DePaula et al. (2018) was selected as a reference.

Based on the review of researches concerning government communication and social media, the following research questions were set: (1) To what extent can the sample of the Facebook posts of the Regeringen and La Moncloa be categorized within DePaula's et al. (2018) framework?; (2) Which is the dominant category on each Facebook page?; (3) Which category had most engagement among Facebook users?; (4) What similarities and differences can be observed across both Facebook pages?; (5) To what extent do the pages follow the Facebook (n.d.) for government, politics, and advocacy's guidelines for best practices?; and (6) Which government makes the most competent use of its Facebook page?

The above-mentioned questions were answered through the manual categorization of the Regeringen and La Moncloa Facebook pages according to DePaula's et al. (2018) typology, the analysis of both page's structure according to the framework created based

on Maia (2019) and by Russmann et al. (2020), and the manual registration of data available on the Facebook pages, such as posts formats, likes, comments, shares, and views.

The objective of this research was to compare the Regeringen's and La Moncloa's use of Facebook, the management and strategies deployed by them to communicate with citizens. The individual analysis of the Facebook pages generated results that were interpreted according to each country's political communication cultures, which were described in Chapter 2, and to the Facebook's (n.d.) guidelines for best practices for governments. At last, the comparison of the results from both pages was carried out and discussed.

It was discovered that Facebook is used by the Regeringen and La Moncloa mostly for information provision purposes. All analysed posts fitted the DePaula's et al. (2018) typology of government social media communication, which showed that most posts on both pages refer to information about government operations, policies and events.

A similarity in the proportionality of types of communication used by both governmental institutions was identified: apart from information provision being the most used type of communication, symbolic presentation was the second most used one. This means that impression management and the construction of an identity through the conveyance of symbolic content were the additional purposes of the use of Facebook by the Regeringen and La Moncloa.

Another similarity was the absence of input seeking and online dialogue/offline interaction posts. This shows that Facebook was not used by the governments of Denmark and Spain as a tool for collaboration and interaction with citizens.

Understandably, the findings of this research cannot be generalised or applied to other objects of study. Still, the above-mentioned aspects support Vaidhyathan's (2018) perspective that social media, particularly Facebook, do not foster a true connection

between citizens and politics. Facebook is less used for deliberative politics and more for self-presentation and self-promotion.

The observation of the information available on the Facebook pages, the resulting consolidation of data regarding the frequency in publishing posts, posts formats and content, and the page's structures led to the understanding that La Moncloa makes a more competent use of this social media compared to the Regeringen.

It is believed that the investigation carried out in this thesis contributes to the development of the government's use of social media research. Literature review shows that the investigation of political communication on social media is usually focused on political parties and on campaign season. So, considering the increasing limitations Facebook imposes on the collection of data, this research presented constructive frameworks based on previous researches for Facebook pages analysis. Although it is acknowledged that Facebook constantly changes its features, the frameworks resumed in this thesis could be used and adapted for further research, including research carried out during the non-campaign season and focused on political organizations, instead of political parties.

In addition, this thesis is a contribution to the review of research on government social media, especially research that addresses the changes that social media brings to the communication between government and citizens. Since research on social media is very close to research on open government and transparency as well as citizen participation (Criado et al., 2013), government social media research presents to be indispensable to the improvement of government's communication practices.

The limitations of this study include the impossibility of accessing and gathering a large amount of Facebook data as well as accessing the Facebook analytics tool, which is only available to the managers of the pages. Since the Cambridge Analytica scandal in 2018, Facebook announced stronger surveillance of applications that collect information on the platform, such as Netvizz – a widely known tool used tool in previous investigations (Bastos & Walker, 2018). Therefore, it was not possible to conduct an automated analysis neither to access the analytics data of the Regeringen and La Moncloa pages. At the

moment, Facebook offers only highly restrictive research options for users. Thus, the analysed posts were gathered and categorized manually by the author of this thesis.

Other limitations include the impossibility of investigating other popular social media platforms, such as Twitter, and of analysing of the interaction between the governmental institutions and the citizens, for instance, through comments and replies. Including these kinds of analysis would require an investigation that transcends a master thesis.

Regarding recommendations for future research, analysing other social media platforms, such as Twitter and Instagram, and comparing them with the Facebook analysis could lead to a fruitful investigation. The investigation of what types and topics of posts are most interesting for citizens is another recommendation since researching citizen's perception of the government use of social media represents a relevant matter for today's democracies.

Overall, this thesis represents a contribution to the comparative political communication research field. Since comparative political communication comprises of cultural comparison, its value lies in the fact that one observation alone has no meaning unless it is compared with other observations (Pfetsch & Esser, 2004). Therefore, the results of this investigation are potentially useful for further comparative studies of different objects of study.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

Comparison Between the Danish and Spanish Media Systems

	Denmark: Democratic Corporatist Model	Spain: Polarized Pluralist Model
Newspaper industry	High newspaper circulation and early development of mass-circulation press.	Low newspaper circulation; elite politically oriented press.
Political parallelism	Traditionally external pluralism, especially in national press, and a strong party press; during the last decades a shift toward neutral and commercial press and internal diversity; politics-in-broadcasting system with substantial autonomy for the media.	High political parallelism; external pluralism, commentary-oriented journalism; parliamentary or government model of broadcast governance – politics-over-broadcasting systems.
Journalistic professionalization	Strong professionalization, and with institutionalized systems for self-regulation.	Weaker professionalization; instrumentalization.
Role of the state in the media system	Strong state intervention but with equally strong protection for press freedom; press subsidies; strong public service broadcasting.	Strong state intervention; . . . periods of censorship; "savage deregulation".

Source: table adapted from Hallin and Mancini (2004, p. 67).

Appendix B

Comparison Between the Danish and Spanish Political Systems

	Denmark: Democratic Corporatist Model	Spain: Polarized Pluralist Model
Political history; patterns of conflict or consensus	Early democratization, moderate pluralism, patterns of consensus.	Late democratization; polarized pluralism.
Consensus or majoritarian government	Predominantly consensus, especially in the Nordic countries.	Both.
Individual versus organized pluralism	Organized pluralism; history of segmented pluralism; democratic corporatism.	Organized pluralism; strong role of political parties.
Role of the state	Strong welfare state; significant involvement of the state in democratic corporatism.	Dirigisme, strong involvement of state and parties in economy; periods of authoritarianism.
Rational legal authority	Strong development of rational-legal authority.	Weaker development of rational-legal authority; clientelism.

Source: table adapted from Hallin and Mancini (2004, p. 68).

Appendix C

Comparison Between the Danish Consensus Politics and Spanish Majoritarian Politics

Denmark: consensus politics	Spain: majoritarian politics
Power sharing.	Winning party concentrates power.
Separation of power between legislative and executive.	Cabinet dominance.
Multiparty system.	Two-party system.
Proportional representation.	Plurality voting system.
Compromise and cooperation between opposing forces.	Clear distinction between government and opposition.

Source: table adapted from Hallin and Mancini (2004, p. 51).

Appendix D

List of the Analysed Posts from the Regeringen Facebook Page

Post number	Date	Link
1	June 1 st , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/regeringDK/posts/3832475150157062
2	June 2 nd , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/regeringDK/posts/3835991533138757
3	June 3 rd , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/regeringDK/posts/3840031409401436
4	June 9 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/regeringDK/posts/3863811073690136
5	June 11 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/regeringDK/posts/3871514982919745
6	June 12 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/regeringDK/posts/3875251695879407
7	June 15 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/regeringDK/posts/3887449481326295
8	June 16 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/regeringDK/posts/3891309950940248
9	June 18 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/regeringDK/posts/3900461376691772
10	June 18 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/regeringDK/posts/3900757876662122
11	June 22 nd , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/regeringDK/posts/3917213315016578
12	June 23 rd , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/regeringDK/posts/3922797167791526
13	June 25 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/regeringDK/posts/3931030360301540
14	June 26 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/regeringDK/posts/3934013810003195
15	June 29 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/regeringDK/posts/3946986998705876

Source: created by the author.

Appendix E

Categorization of the Analysed Posts from the Regeringen Facebook Page

Post number	Type	Code
1	Operations & events	Information provision
2	Operations & events	Information provision
3	Public service announcements	Information provision
4	Public service announcements	Information provision
5	Operations & events	Information provision
6	Favourable presentation	Symbolic presentation
7	Operations & events	Information provision
8	Public service announcements + Operations & events	Information provision
9	Operations & events	Information provision
10	Favourable presentation	Symbolic presentation
11	Political positioning	Symbolic presentation
12	Symbolic act	Symbolic presentation
13	Operations & events	Information provision
14	Operations & events	Information provision
15	Operations & events	Information provision

Source: created by the author.

Appendix F

Engagement on the Analysed Posts from the Regeringen Facebook Page

Post number	Reactions	Comments	Shares
1	42	6	5
2	30	7	7
3	174	49	59
4	108	29	16
5	24	1	3
6	17	2	4
7	57	44	3
8	49	12	1
9	35	7	3
10	31	5	5
11	99	16	19
12	39	13	1
13	17	13	1
14	74	7	1
15	54	17	2

Note. Data collected on July 20th, 2020.

Source: created by the author.

Appendix G

Analysed Posts Formats and Topics from the Regeringen Facebook Page

Post number	Format	Link(s) indication	Topic
1	Text + Video	Yes	Asylum/Immigration
2	Text + Video	Yes	Government affairs
3	Text + Video	No	Students crossing
4	Text + Image	Yes	Covid-19
5	Text + Video	Yes	Employment
6	Text + Video	No	Government affairs
7	Text	Yes	Economy
8	Text + Video	Yes	Recycling
9	Text + Video	No	Environment
10	Text + Video	Yes	Education
11	Text + Video	Yes	Covid-19
12	Text + Video	No	School break/Summer vacations
13	Text + Video	Yes	Aviation
14	Text + Video	Yes	Asylum/Immigration
15	Text + Video	Yes	Asylum/Immigration

Source: created by the author.

Appendix H

Quantity of Posts Concerning Each Topic Broached on the Regeringen Facebook Page

Topic	Quantity of posts
Asylum/Immigration	3
Covid-19	2
Government affairs	2
Economy	1
Recycling	1
School break/Summer vacations	1
Environment	1
Education	1
Students crossing	1
Employment	1
Aviation	1

Source: created by the author.

Appendix I

List of Analysed Posts from La Moncloa Facebook Page

Post number	Date	Post
1	June 1 st , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3163147217078264
2	June 1 st , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=3385507758167620&ref=watch_permalink
3	June 1 st , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3164109226982063
4	June 1 st , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3163362913723361
5	June 1 st , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3163999710326348
6	June 2 nd , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3166428006750185
7	June 2 nd , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3166267603432892
8	June 2 nd , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3165618116831174
9	June 2 nd , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3166294990096820
10	June 2 nd , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3166018263457826
11	June 2 nd , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=571852993471042&ref=watch_permalink
12	June 3 rd , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=178194380278685&ref=watch_permalink
13	June 3 rd , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=2758372594449134&ref=watch_permalink
14	June 3 rd , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3169588643100788
15	June 3 rd , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3169028119823507
16	June 4 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3172125749513744
17	June 4 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=857195098122444&ref=watch_permalink
18	June 4 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3171108452948807
19	June 4 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3171100369616282

20	June 4 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3172096999516619
21	June 4 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3171104122949240
22	June 5 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=861590577694066&ref=watch_permalink
23	June 5 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=271872027298537&ref=watch_permalink
24	June 5 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3174180569308262
25	June 5 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=2833258163462611&ref=watch_permalink
26	June 5 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3174471802612472
27	June 5 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3174643162595336
28	June 6 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3174702639256055
29	June 6 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3174700435922942
30	June 7 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=1863912280407059&ref=watch_permalink
31	June 7 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3179166225476363
32	June 8 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3182347681824884
33	June 8 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=4550843541608332&ref=watch_permalink
34	June 8 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3181691721890480
35	June 8 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3181642555228730
36	June 8 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3181491725243813
37	June 9 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=2985629154878623&ref=watch_permalink
38	June 9 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=2969766306445339&ref=watch_permalink
39	June 9 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3184425524950433
40	June 9 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3184408978285421

41	June 9 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3183924308333888
42	June 10 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=289535902431194&ref=watch_permalink
43	June 10 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3186935698032749
44	June 10 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3186916141368038
45	June 10 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3186918774701108
46	June 11 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3189407844452201
47	June 11 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=258644801905895&ref=watch_permalink
48	June 11 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3190128177713501
49	June 11 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3189262844466701
50	June 12 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=3001544846599216&ref=watch_permalink
51	June 12 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3190271551032497
52	June 12 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3192390124153973
53	June 12 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3192482994144686
54	June 13 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3192690070790645
55	June 13 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3192655984127387
56	June 13 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3192707200788932
57	June 14 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=1687636541402263&ref=watch_permalink
58	June 14 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3192734020786250
59	June 14 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3197927163600269
60	June 15 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=611883389533496&ref=watch_permalink
61	June 15 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3200164076709911

62	June 15 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3199565786769740
63	June 15 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3199847953408190
64	June 15 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3199749176751401
65	June 16 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=261412105136933&ref=watch_permalink
66	June 16 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=268669430915049&ref=watch_permalink
67	June 16 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3202581866468132
68	June 16 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3202597629799889
69	June 16 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3203018889757763
70	June 16 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3202080036518315
71	June 17 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=191298505560875&ref=watch_permalink
72	June 17 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3204950969564555
73	June 17 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3204949609564691
74	June 17 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3204780929581559
75	June 17 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3205790136147305
76	June 18 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=275947786842440&ref=watch_permalink
77	June 18 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3207774082615577
78	June 18 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3207362102656775
79	June 18 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3207787912614194
80	June 18 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3208312055895113
81	June 19 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3210786772314308
82	June 19 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=265266211392333&ref=watch_permalink

83	June 19 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3210748955651423
84	June 19 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3210154395710879
85	June 19 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3209894335736885
86	June 20 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3213743498685302
87	June 20 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=3050043488418485&ref=watch_permalink
88	June 20 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3210764875649831
89	June 20 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3210858452307140
90	June 21 st , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3213542605372058
91	June 21 st , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3213514865374832
92	June 22 nd , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3217994424926876
93	June 22 nd , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3218447188214933
94	June 22 nd , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3217793018280350
95	June 22 nd , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3218233524902966
96	June 22 nd , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3218176244908694
97	June 23 rd , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=603786213584132&ref=watch_permalink
98	June 23 rd , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3142020489190937
99	June 23 rd , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3221777537881898
100	June 23 rd , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3221140944612224
101	June 23 rd , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3221475461245439
102	June 23 rd , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3218912021501783
103	June 24 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3223452337714418

104	June 24 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=269015940870395&ref=watch_permalink
105	June 24 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3223552657704386
106	June 24 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3223176211075364
107	June 24 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3223343974391921
108	June 25 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3225909084135410
109	June 25 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3227067797352872
110	June 25 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3223606211032364
111	June 25 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3226410267418625
112	June 26 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=2962574340446119&ref=watch_permalink
113	June 26 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3229187800474205
114	June 26 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3229089163817402
115	June 26 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3229151887144463
116	June 26 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3228634680529517
117	June 27 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3229315790461406
118	June 27 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3229397827119869
119	June 28 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3235954376464214
120	June 29 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3239042129488772
121	June 29 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3239058389487146
122	June 29 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3239037666155885
123	June 30 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3241278132598505
124	June 30 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=272270410711690&ref=watch_permalink

125	June 30 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=2665996503645018&ref=watch_permalink
126	June 30 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3241649072561411
127	June 30 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3241627862563532
128	June 30 th , 2020	https://www.facebook.com/PalaciodelaMoncloa/posts/3241646195895032

Source: created by the author.

Appendix J

Categorization of Analysed Posts from the La Moncloa Facebook Page

Post number	Type	Code
1	Operations & events	Information provision
2	Public service announcement	Information provision
3	Operations & events	Information provision
4	Operations & events	Information provision
5	Operations & events	Information provision
6	Operations & events	Information provision
7	Operations & events	Information provision
8	Operations & events	Information provision
9	Operations & events	Information provision
10	Operations & events	Information provision
11	Public service announcement	Information provision
12	Operations & events	Information provision
13	Operations & events	Information provision
14	Operations & events	Information provision
15	Operations & events	Information provision
16	Operations & events	Information provision
17	Operations & events	Information provision
18	Operations & events	Information provision
19	Public service announcement	Information provision
20	Operations & events	Information provision
21	Operations & events	Information provision
22	Operations & events	Information provision
23	Public service announcement	Information provision
24	Operations & events	Information provision
25	Symbolic act	Symbolic presentation
26	Operations & events	Information provision
27	Political positioning	Symbolic presentation
28	Operations & events	Information provision
29	Operations & events	Information provision

30	Social sharing	Information provision
31	Operations & events	Information provision
32	Public service announcement	Information provision
33	Operations & events	Information provision
34	Operations & events	Information provision
35	Operations & events	Information provision
36	Operations & events	Information provision
37	Operations & events	Information provision
38	Operations & events	Information provision
39	Operations & events	Information provision
40	Operations & events	Information provision
41	Public service announcement	Information provision
42	Operations & events	Information provision
43	Operations & events	Information provision
44	Operations & events	Information provision
45	Operations & events	Information provision
46	Operations & events	Information provision
47	Operations & events	Information provision
48	Operations & events	Information provision
49	Branding & marketing	Symbolic presentation
50	Operations & events	Information provision
51	Public service announcement	Information provision
52	Operations & events	Information provision
53	Operations & events	Information provision
54	Operations & events	Information provision
55	Operations & events	Information provision
56	Operations & events	Information provision
57	Operations & events	Information provision
58	Operations & events	Information provision
59	Political positioning	Symbolic presentation
60	Operations & events	Information provision
61	Operations & events	Information provision

62	Operations & events	Information provision
63	Operations & events	Information provision
64	Operations & events	Information provision
65	Operations & events	Information provision
66	Operations & events	Information provision
67	Operations & events	Information provision
68	Operations & events	Information provision
69	Operations & events	Information provision
70	Social sharing	Information provision
71	Operations & events	Information provision
72	Operations & events	Information provision
73	Operations & events	Information provision
74	Operations & events	Information provision
75	Operations & events	Information provision
76	Operations & events	Information provision
77	Operations & events	Information provision
78	Operations & events	Information provision
79	Branding & marketing	Symbolic presentation
80	Operations & events	Information provision
81	Operations & events	Information provision
82	Operations & events	Information provision
83	Operations & events	Information provision
84	Public service announcement + Operations & events	Information provision
85	Public service announcement + Operations & events	Information provision
86	Symbolic act + Favourable presentation	Symbolic presentation
87	Operations & events	Information provision
88	Public service announcement	Information provision
89	Operations & events	Information provision
90	Operations & events	Information provision
91	Public service announcement	Information provision
92	Public service announcement	Information provision

93	Branding & marketing	Symbolic presentation
94	Operations & events	Information provision
95	Public service announcement	Information provision
96	Public service announcement	Information provision
97	Operations & events	Information provision
98	Operations & events	Information provision
99	Favourable presentation	Symbolic presentation
100	Operations & events	Information provision
101	Operations & events	Information provision
102	Public service announcement	Information provision
103	Political positioning	Symbolic presentation
104	Operations & events	Information provision
105	Operations & events	Information provision
106	Operations & events	Information provision
107	Operations & events	Information provision
108	Operations & events	Information provision
109	Operations & events	Information provision
110	Operations & events	Information provision
111	Branding & marketing	Symbolic presentation
112	Operations & events	Information provision
113	Operations & events	Information provision
114	Operations & events	Information provision
115	Operations & events	Information provision
116	Operations & events	Information provision
117	Operations & events	Information provision
118	Public service announcement	Information provision
119	Political positioning	Symbolic presentation
120	Operations & events	Information provision
121	Public service announcement + Operations & events	Information provision
122	Operations & events	Information provision
123	Favourable presentation	Symbolic presentation
124	Favourable presentation	Symbolic presentation

125	Operations & events	Information provision
126	Operations & events	Information provision
127	Operations & events	Information provision
128	Operations & events	Information provision

Source: created by the author.

Appendix K

Engagement on the Analysed Posts from La Moncloa Facebook Page

Post number	Reactions	Comments	Shares
1	2000	1000	2800
2	1400	1700	201
3	1300	241	181
4	210	26	53
5	348	334	117
6	974	426	112
7	752	103	401
8	576	449	109
9	347	156	118
10	189	62	18
11	1400	1900	194
12	2900	4600	500
13	1200	1200	149
14	1200	530	253
15	426	155	376
16	3600	1600	514
17	1300	1400	216
18	905	526	452
19	471	113	357
20	430	272	117
21	207	87	93
22	1200	1700	209
23	1100	1200	185
24	865	160	496
25	783	653	139
26	520	227	90
27	296	54	86
28	764	568	1500
29	544	314	119

30	2500	5100	491
31	301	101	133
32	2000	495	256
33	1500	1200	194
34	836	537	331
35	508	155	291
36	336	49	174
37	1800	6100	299
38	1400	2500	293
39	906	405	1000
40	786	146	339
41	248	41	83
42	1500	2000	256
43	1000	445	466
44	430	376	209
45	155	38	37
46	1800	768	224
47	1000	1600	171
48	453	613	140
49	282	75	143
50	1200	2100	253
51	909	414	836
52	782	331	84
53	426	108	151
54	968	526	798
55	828	142	264
56	189	8	113
57	4400	5700	942
58	1000	840	1100
59	665	123	177
60	1900	1600	363
61	629	202	408

62	528	219	488
63	401	68	64
64	229	38	80
65	1400	1200	228
66	1200	2500	223
67	616	315	276
68	529	72	230
69	301	63	52
70	144	7	102
71	1400	1300	211
72	301	220	240
73	174	54	107
74	173	33	56
75	167	35	25
76	930	1000	176
77	372	183	177
78	221	33	54
79	204	24	132
80	68	11	25
81	1500	784	158
82	1300	1300	378
83	706	156	198
84	244	123	71
85	164	22	46
86	2300	934	268
87	1500	2100	429
88	966	274	338
89	592	240	165
90	512	113	395
91	497	88	315
92	472	72	459
93	246	50	95

94	228	104	116
95	185	66	101
96	78	22	15
97	1000	2000	244
98	491	167	162
99	489	291	142
100	225	22	104
101	157	49	71
102	104	7	63
103	1400	692	535
104	848	907	159
105	377	203	564
106	247	44	44
107	215	28	72
108	2000	318	420
109	616	200	230
110	444	139	288
111	173	19	52
112	1200	1200	268
113	611	262	102
114	541	129	424
115	448	130	201
116	320	218	239
117	265	17	88
118	218	45	76
119	1300	413	181
120	354	57	92
121	261	14	79
122	202	27	48
123	1800	386	408
124	1600	1100	329
125	962	2000	227

126	269	54	61
127	220	6	87
128	143	6	49

Note. Data collected between July 20th and 23rd, 2020.
Source: created by the author.

Appendix L

Analysed Posts Formats, Link Indication, and Topics from La Moncloa Facebook Page

Post number	Format	Link(s) indication	Topic
1	Text + Image	Yes	Minimum income
2	Live	No	Covid-19
3	Text + Video	No	Covid-19
4	Text	Yes	Digital service
5	Text + Image	Yes	Credit/Financing
6	Text + Video	No	Covid-19
7	Text + Image	Yes	Recycling
8	Text + Image	Yes	Covid-19
9	Text + Image	Yes	Economy
10	Text	Yes	Government affairs
11	Live	No	Covid-19
12	Text + Live	No	Covid-19
13	Live	No	Covid-19
14	Text + Video	No	Covid-19
15	Video	Yes	Minimum income
16	Text + Video	Yes	Covid-19
17	Live	No	Covid-19
18	Text + Video	Yes	Minimum income
19	Text + Video	No	Covid-19
20	Text + Image	Yes	Covid-19
21	Text + Video	Yes	Consumer rights
22	Live	No	Covid-19
23	Live	No	Covid-19
24	Text + Image	Yes	Covid-19
25	Live	No	Covid-19
26	Text + Video	No	Covid-19
27	Text + Video	No	Environment
28	Text + Image	Yes	Minimum income
29	Text + Image	Yes	Credit/Financing

30	Live	No	Covid-19
31	Text + Image	Yes	Covid-19
32	Text + Video	No	Covid-19
33	Live	No	Covid-19
34	Text + Image	Yes	Minimum income
35	Text + Image	Yes	Covid-19
36	Text + Image	No	Environment
37	Live	Yes	Covid-19
38	Live	No	Covid-19
39	Text + Image	Yes	Covid-19
40	Text + Image	Yes	Youth rights
41	Text + Video	No	Covid-19
42	Live	No	Covid-19
43	Text + Image	Yes	Minimum income
44	Text + Image	Yes	Housing
45	Text + Image	Yes	Social security
46	Text + Image	Yes	National defence
47	Live	No	Covid-19
48	Text	Yes	Education
49	Text + Video	Yes	Tourism
50	Live	No	Covid-19
51	Text	Yes	Covid-19
52	Text + Video	No	Covid-19
53	Text + Image	Yes	Covid-19
54	Text + Image	Yes	Covid-19
55	Text + Image	Yes	Youth rights
56	Text + Image	Yes	Agriculture
57	Live	No	Covid-19
58	Text + Image	Yes	Minimum income
59	Text + Video	No	Sign language
60	Live	No	Covid-19
61	Text + Image	Yes	Sustainable mobility

62	Text + Video	Yes	Minimum income
63	Text + Image	Yes	Sustainable mobility
64	Text + Image	Yes	Covid-19
65	Live	No	Covid-19
66	Live	No	Finances
67	Text + Image	Yes	Finances
68	Text + Image	Yes	Education
69	Text + Video	No	Covid-19
70	Text	Yes	Tourism
71	Live	No	Covid-19
72	Text + Image	Yes	Minimum income
73	Text + Video	Yes	Gender violence
74	Text + Video	Yes	Sustainable mobility
75	Text + Image	No	Covid-19
76	Live	No	Covid-19
77	Text + Image	Yes	Tourism
78	Text + Image	Yes	Tourism
79	Text + Video	No	Tourism
80	Text + Image	Yes	Credit/Financing
81	Text + Image	Yes	Covid-19
82	Live	No	Covid-19
83	Text + Video	Yes	Covid-19
84	Text + Image	Yes	Covid-19
85	Text + Video	Yes	Environment
86	Text + Video	No	Covid-19
87	Live	No	Covid-19
88	Text + Video	No	Covid-19
89	Text + Image	Yes	Covid-19
90	Text + Video	Yes	Covid-19
91	Text + Video	No	Covid-19
92	Text + Video	No	Covid-19
93	Text + Video	No	Tourism

94	Text + Video	Yes	Minimum income
95	Text + Image	Yes	Covid-19
96	Text + Image	Yes	Elections
97	Live	No	Energy
98	Text + Image	Yes	Education
99	Text + Video	No	Gay pride
100	Text + Image	Yes	Energy
101	Text	Yes	Covid-19
102	Text + Image	Yes	Covid-19
103	Text + Image	No	Gay pride
104	Live	No	Covid-19
105	Text + Image	Yes	Social security
106	Text + Video	No	Government affairs
107	Text + Image	Yes	Energy
108	Text + Image	No	Government affairs
109	Text + Image	Yes	Covid-19
110	Text + Image	Yes	Covid-19
111	Text + Video	Yes	Covid-19
112	Live	No	Employment
113	Text + Video	No	Minimum income
114	Text + Image	Yes	Employment
115	Text + Image	Yes	Employment
116	Text + Video	Yes	Minimum income
117	Text + Video	Yes	Energy
118	Text + Video	No	Gender violence
119	Text + Image	No	Gay pride
120	Text + Image	Yes	Employment
121	Text + Video	Yes	Traffic safety
122	Text	Yes	Covid-19
123	Text + Image	No	Gay pride
124	Live	No	Government affairs
125	Live	No	Covid-19

126	Text + Image	Yes	Covid-19
127	Text + Image	Yes	Agriculture
128	Text + Image	Yes	Employment

Source: created by the author.

Appendix M

Quantity of Posts Concerning Each Topic Broached on the La Moncloa Facebook Page

Topic	Quantity of posts
Covid-19	62
Minimum income	12
Tourism	6
Employment	5
Energy	4
Gay pride	4
Government affairs	4
Credit/Financing	3
Education	3
Environment	3
Sustainable mobility	3
Agriculture	2
Finances	2
Gender violence	2
Social security	2
Youth rights	2
Consumer rights	1
Economy	1
Elections	1
Housing	1
National defence	1
Recycling	1
Digital service	1
Sign language	1
Traffic safety	1

Source: created by the author.