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The visual frame of the political candidate on Instagram: the 2021 Catalan regional elections

El marco visual del candidato político en Instagram: las elecciones autonómicas catalanas de 2021

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ABSTRACT Social networks are tools for constructing digital identity, making online impression management possible. This study explains, in the context of the politainment age, the way in which Instagram allows political candidates to build their digital image; that is, to perform online self-representation. Specifically, the focus of this paper is the image of political candidates on Instagram during the campaign of the 2021 Catalan regional elections on February 14. It links Goffman's (1956) theory of the presentation of the self in everyday life to both current research approaches to online self-representation and Grabe and Bucy's (2009) visual framing theory. The objective is to study the type of elements employed by candidates for constructing their photographic and video stage settings and, therefore, their digital identities during the election campaign. After an operationalization of Goffman's and Grabe and Bucy's theories resulting in 27 items, a content analysis was carried out on a total of 215 Instagram posts of the eight main candidates published between 29 January and 13 February 2021. It has been observed that all political candidates show themselves in a more professional way, and it couldn't be affirmed that a certain visual frame is attached to a certain ideology. In line with previous research, our results show that the 'ideal candidate' was the predominating frame, although particularities corresponding to the 2021 Catalan context were observed. Implications to the current context of online political communication are identified and discussed.

KEYWORDS Instagram, political communication, elections, Cataluña, self-representation, visual frame.

RESUMEN Las redes sociales son herramientas de construcción de la identidad digital que posibilitan la gestión de esta. Este estudio explica, en el contexto de la era del politainment, el modo en que Instagram permite a los candidatos políticos construir su imagen digital; es decir, realizar una autorrepresentación online. En concreto, este trabajo se centra en la imagen de los candidatos políticos en Instagram durante la campaña de las elecciones autonómicas catalanas del 14 de febrero de 2021. Se relaciona la teoría de Goffman (1956) sobre la presentación del yo en la vida cotidiana con los enfoques de investigación actuales sobre la autorrepresentación online y la teoría del encuadre visual de Grabe y Bucy (2009). El objetivo es estudiar el tipo de elementos empleados por los candidatos para construir sus escenarios fotográficas y videográficas y, por tanto, sus identidades digitales durante la campaña electoral. Tras una operacionalización de las teorías de Goffman y Grabe y Bucy que dio como resultado 27 ítems, se realizó un análisis de contenido de un total de 215 posts de Instagram de los ocho principales candidatos publicados entre el 29 de enero y el 13 de febrero de 2021. Se ha observado que todos los candidatos políticos se muestran de una forma más profesional, y no se ha podido afirmar que un determinado marco visual vaya unido a una determinada ideología. En línea con investigaciones anteriores, nuestros resultados muestran que el "candidato ideal" fue el marco predominante, aunque se observaron particularidades correspondientes al contexto catalán de 2021. Se identifican y discuten las implicaciones para el contexto actual de la comunicación política online

PALABRAS CLAVE Instagram, comunicación política, elecciones, Cataluña, autorrepresentación, marco visual

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The visual frame of the political candidate on Instagram: the 2021 Catalan regional elections

1. INTRODUCTION

In addition to being one of the channels through which users establish connections with one another, social networks are conceived as ideal tools for constructing an online identity (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Against this backdrop, the control of their digital identity is central for brands, celebrities and politicians, who do this above all on Instagram. Specifically, recent studies have shown that the management of impressions is a key issue in the literature on the online self, as well as self-representation in social media content (Feher, 2021). Besides, online self-representation in social platforms is connected to current political communication strategies implemented during election campaigns. Our study draws from the premise that Instagram offers political candidates the opportunity to connect with the electorate and to build their online image; that is, to plan meticulously what images they should post and what resources they should leverage to construct a photographic stage setting.

In fact, of all the social networking sites, Instagram is a key tool for embodying political ideologies through image-based emotional communication. Owing to the fact that the visual representation of candidates is increasingly more important during election campaigns, they attempt to transmit a positive image of themselves on social media, which have provided them with a new opportunity to communicate directly with the electorate, without the mediation of journalists (Steffan, 2020). This is framed in the context of the politainment age (Nieland, 2008; Schultz, 2001, 2004, 2012; Martín-Jiménez *et al*., 2017), in which political content is presented in an entertainment format, at the expense of ideology and in favour of personification (McAllister, 2007; Campus, 2010; Bennett, 2012; Adam & Maier, 2016).

In view of the foregoing, candidates act like celebrity politicians (Street, 2004, 2018), applying techniques borrowed from the world of fame to engage the electorate (Wheeler, 2013). One of these techniques is precisely the use of social networking sites as key tools, which allow candidates to become everyday celebrity politicians by showing their most human facet (Wood, Corbett & Flinders, 2016). In this connection, McLaughlin and Macafee (2019) contend that if politicians use social media to share their stories, thoughts and feelings, the citizenry may be attracted by those stories themselves,

instead of deliberating considering the capabilities of candidates as political figures.

This paper focuses on studying the image of political candidates on Instagram during an election campaign, specifically the 2021 Catalan regional elections. It links Goffman's (1956) theory of the presentation of the self in everyday life to both current research approaches to online self-representation and Grabe and Bucy's (2009) visual framing theory. The intention is to study the type of visual elements employed by candidates for constructing their photographic stage settings and, therefore, their online identities during election campaigns. The discussion revolves around whether there is a greater tendency towards one character or another, according to the 'visual frames' identified by Grabe and Bucy, on the basis of the visual expressions observed in the posts of the candidates running for president in the Catalan regional elections during campaigning.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Instagram and identity construction

Social networks are dynamic objects that are tweaked in response to their users' needs and their owners' objectives (Van Dijck, 2013). These objectives include showing a particular image of the self. Recent studies point to a tendency in research towards the control of digital identity and the online self. Literature recognises that the offline self is re-created to be the online self and that managing impressions is the most crucial element in the academic literature in this respect (Feher, 2021). Specifically, Instagram is an ideal platform for creating an idealised virtual existence (Caldeira, 2016). Its success lies in the communicative power of images and their potential as elements of social connection. Indeed, social interaction and self-expression figure among the main reasons for using Instagram (Lee *et al*., 2015).

Through the visual documentation of their lives on this social platform, users intentionally carry out activities aimed at presenting and preserving their identity (O'Donnell, 2018). In the online environment and since the advent of the smartphone, photography has served more for constructing identity than for remembering, thanks to photo manipulation and its potential for forming part of the public domain. The presentation of the self thus becomes one of the key roles of modern photography (Van Dijck, 2008). In this context, political candidates make the most of the power of images to construct and showcase a specific identity on their Instagram accounts.

According to Goffman (1956), who created the metaphor of social life as a performance, individuals participate in actions of presentations of the self to construct a specific identity for others (the audience) as part of their routine interactions. On this basis,

Instagram is understood here as an environment in which users can reproduce these actions online by sharing personal photographs. Studies like Stokes and Price's (2017) have acknowledged this fact. Indeed, digital photography allows for expressing and sharing identity-related aspects with others. Users no longer intend to transmit who they are, but an idealised version of themselves (Caldeira, 2016). To Goffman's mind, individuals manipulate social reality for the purpose of presenting a favourable image of themselves, while attempting to influence the impression that others might have of them. One of the main advantages that Instagram offers political candidates is the possibility of developing an image that meets the expectations of voters, employing different resources to construct their photographic stage settings and, consequently, their identities. Since the management of impressions could never be so controlled in offline interaction, Marshall (2010) created the concept of 'presentational media' to define a new setting in which the self is presented on social networking sites.

Rettberg (2018) has suggested that, in the virtual environment, the self is expressed in terms of representation (construction) more than in those of presentation (subject to interpretation), for images are far from being faithful reflections of reality: people select certain aspects of themselves, they choose what to share. This is in line with Feher (2021), who notes that an "impression" can be intentional or not, whereas a "representation" refers to the performance of actions and staging to build an image or to reach various goals by influence, namely, something intentional. According to Caldeira (2016), individuals consciously implement representation strategies when sharing images of themselves on this social networking site, for the explicit purpose of making themselves known to others in such a way that the impression that they cause on them corresponds to an ideal self. As with Rettberg, the researcher posits that photography cannot be an objective representation of reality, for it depends on a subjective point of view that plays a constructive role, deciding on what to show and what to conceal in the quest for the best representation of the idealised self. Following Goffman's principles, she indicates that the activities of users on Instagram are understood as dramatic strategies that are adopted to create that idealised image. These strategies include the personal selection of not only images, but also poses, clothing, gestures, social relations and, in short, placements in certain settings or next to elements such as other people or pets (Caldeira, 2016; Deeb-Swihart *et al*., 2017; Holiday *et al*., 2020). In the case of Instagram, this issue has aroused the interest of researchers (e.g. Gyorffy, 2013; Smith & Sanderson, 2015; Kavakci & Kraeplin, 2017; De Casas-Moreno *et al*., 2018; Calvo González & San Fabián, 2018).

Following the line of research on social media grounded in Goffman's theory of the presentation of the self (Schau & Gilly, 2003; Marshall, 2010; Smith & Sanderson, 2015; Deeb-Swihart *et al*., 2017), his front stage/dramaturgical theory lends itself to understanding behaviour on social media, for both online and offline individuals try

to project a socially acceptable image of themselves (O'Donnell, 2018). In this vein, Del Prete and Rendon Pantoja (2020) note that social networking sites enable users to position themselves in relation to others and that they seek recognition through the symbolic constructs emanating from multimedia discourses. Specifically, Marshall (2010) claims that the way of performing is a critical component of the identity of any public figure. For politicians, performing on the public stage influences the way in which the public perceive their proposals.

Over the past decades, social media have been an object of study owing to the possibilities that they offer for presenting the self and for constructing identity (Schau & Gilly, 2003; Krämer & Winter, 2008; Brivio & Ibarra, 2009; Mehdizadeh, 2010; Olszanowski, 2014; Taylor & Strutton, 2016; Shumaker *et al*., 2017; Scolere *et al*., 2018; Caldeira *et al*., 2020; Kurniawa *et al*., 2020). Notwithstanding the plentiful literature in this respect, Hollenbaugh (2021) stresses the need to enquire more deeply into self-presentation in the hypermedia age.

This study links Goffman's (1956) theory of the presentation of the self to Grabe and Bucy's (2009) visual framing theory to study the image of political candidates on Instagram (Steffan, 2020) during an election campaign. In their study of the image of political candidates on television, Grabe and Bucy introduce the concept of "framing" to define the process by which some aspects of an issue, event or person are emphasised over others in such a way as to promote a particular causal interpretation, problem construction or moral evaluation. In this process, they identify three types of "visual frames", namely, the types of characters that candidates represent depending on the stage setting that has been constructed. The literature on self-presentation on social media refers to the quest for a socially acceptable image by constructing a stage setting, which relates to Grabe and Bucy's claim that the different "visual frames" analysed influence the way in which the citizenry assess political candidates.

2.2. The image of political candidates on Instagram: the existing literature

Humans are visual beings and, as such, visual political communication is very important in helping the citizenry to decide on who to vote for and in shaping their political behaviour (Lilleker, 2019). From the facial gesture of a politician to a political meme, through a TV advert, all are strategically designed to attract the public's attention (Lilleker *et al*., 2019). As Grabe and Bucy observe, "for a critical component of the electorate, which is only semi attentive to civic affairs, political decisions may be based more on affective attachments and nonverbal signals expressed by leading politicians on television than careful consideration of issue positions" (2009: 74). For this reason, since the advent of television, political candidates have striven to look good on this medium, with the intention of forging an emotional connection with viewers, while also creating symbolic

images that help them to drum up support among the electorate (Grabe & Bucy, 2009).

With the expansion of social networking sites, visual political communication has become especially relevant, above all on those fundamentally visual social networking sites, like Instagram. In this regard, Messaris (2019) indicates three key factors in the digital transformation of visual politics: the proliferation of mobile devices equipped with cameras which has prompted users to document visually their environment, photo manipulation and, lastly, the development of a technology enabling users to be selective and to avoid undesired promotional content. "Each of these three developments", Messaris summarises, "has had substantial implications for the ways in which visual media are used by politicians, by their supporters, and by their opponents" (2019: 17). In this context, politicians have become accustomed to the advantages offered by social networking sites like Instagram versus other traditional visual media like television. For Russmann *et al*., (2019: 140), "Instagram is about capturing content 'on the go' such as a top candidate talking to people on the streets and sharing a specific moment of the campaign such as people at a rally". For instance, with the aim of studying the engagement to which a particular type of image posted by a politician on Instagram gives rise, Peng (2020) analysed 59,020 images of 172 US politicians during the autumn of 2018, before concluding that it is the political face that generates the highest level of engagement: "This finding indicates that social media users react positively to images with faces primarily because they can recognize them and build a kind of social connection" (Peng, 2020: 17-18).

In this line, Instagram has become a key platform in the rising of personalization of politics. This phenomenon had already started in US television in the 1960s, driven by changes in voters, media and political parties (Garzia, 2014: 6-7). Now, with a less party-centred perspective, politicians can show themselves as ordinary humans in order to connect with the audience in social media (Poulakidakos and Giannouli, 2019; Metz, Kruikemeier and Lecheler, 2020). However, it doesn't necessarily means a privatization of politics. In this sense, Metz, Kruikemeier and Lecheler differentiate between three levels of personalization of politics in social media based on Van Santen and Van Zoonen (2010): the professional, the emotional and the private one. This personalization of politics is also a key component of the spectacularization of politics also offered by Instagram. As stated by López-Rabadán and Doménech-Fabregat, there are four characteristics in the spectacularization in social media: the centrality of the image, the simplification of the message, an intense personalization and a strategic use of private life (2021: 4-5).

Instagram is becoming a relevant platform for studying election campaigns (Filimonov *et al*., 2016). In fact, a growing number of researchers have enquired into the political

use of this social networking site, especially in recent years (Ekman & Widholm, 2017; Lalancette & Raynauld, 2017; Liebhart & Bernhardt, 2017; Muñoz & Towner, 2017; Selva-Ruiz & Caro-Castaño, 2017; Russmann & Svensson, 2017; Verón Lassa & Pallarés Navarro, 2017; López-Rabadán & Doménech-Fabregat, 2018; Parmelee & Roman, 2020; Bernardez-Rodal *et al*., 2020; Manan *et al*., 2020; Farkas & Bene, 2021; Tirado-García & Doménech-Fabregat, 2021; Gordillo-Rodriguez & Bellido-Pérez, 2021; Bellido-Pérez & Gordillo-Rodriguez, 2022). In the main, the results of these studies point to the growing importance of the figure of the political candidate on Instagram, although focusing more on public than on private contexts. At the same time, it is possible to observe a certain degree of interest in associating their image of "ideal candidates" with familiar and personal facets, as demonstrated by an analysis of the US presidential primaries (Muñoz & Towner, 2017). For the electorate, Instagram is a decisive social network because, according to Parmelee and Roman (2020), the public respondents "consider Instagram posts from political leaders who are ideologically similar to them to be the most important influence on their political views". Instagram is also a key medium for people who have grown with social media, as Generation Z. According to Parmelee *et al*. (2022), people of this generation "prefer posts that show a politician's personal side, they demand authenticity and transparency, and they need leaders to talk about politics in a way that avoids jargon"; Generation Z can also find political trust on candidate's Instagram when they talk about their personal interest and present themselves "in a personable yet professional manner".

In Austria, Liebhart and Bernhardt (2017) have highlighted posts relating to the biography of Alexander Van der Bellen as a key visual strategy for presenting him as a legitimate candidate. On the other hand, the study performed by Lalancette and Raynauld on the Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau determined that the images of the politician formed part of an ongoing personalisation campaign (2017). Boulianne and Larsson have subsequently shown that Trudeau was the political candidate who generated the highest level of engagement on Instagram during the 2019 Canadian election campaign (2021). In Sweden, Filimonov *et al*. assert that the country's political candidates had a strong visual presence, but showed themselves chiefly in professional contexts—albeit in an apparently spontaneous manner (2016). Similarly, after analysing 16 Swedish political profiles on Instagram, Ekman and Widholm (2017) highlighted the lack of personal images, which were more plentiful in the case of the Sweden Democrats (SD). In their study, Manan *et al*. (2020) examined the profiles of several presidential candidates in the 2018 Malaysian elections, before concluding that the majority of posts had to do with campaign activities per se, including related graphic material, with only 5.9% of them having a personal character. In the case of Greece, Poulakidakos and Giannouli determined that while Kyriakos Mitsotakis was the candidate with most posts of a personal nature, Alexis Tsipras and Fofi Gennimata put Instagram to a strictly political use (2019).

More recently, Farkas and Bene have studied the Facebook and Instagram profiles of candidates in the 2018 Hungarian general elections, concluding that "visual communication on Instagram is much more personalized than on Facebook", after encountering the image of those politicians in two thirds of their Instagram posts (2021: 134). Personalisation on Instagram is also important, according to this last study, for the candidates occasionally appeared in casual dress and there were plenty of images of them with their families (2021). On the other hand, focusing on European radical right-wing politicians, Bast (2021) has arrived at the conclusion that Le Pen, Strache and Weidel are the politicians who display their most professional facet, and even though Farage, Grieken and Jensen also do so, they combine it more with images of a personal character (2021). In the same line of our study, Uluçay and Melek (2021) analysed Instagram profiles of the candidates to Istanbul 2019 mayoral elections to determine which visual frame predominate, also adapting Grabe and Bucy's (2009) visual framing theory. Their results show that both candidates used the Ideal Candidate frame, and occasionally, the Populist Campaigner frame.

In the case of Spain, there is a growing interest in studying the image of political candidates on Instagram. Quevedo-Redondo and Portalés Oliva (2017) considered this social networking site in terms of a permanent campaign strategy: as the 2016 Spanish general election drew near, the candidates increased the number of their posts, but there was a difference in the form or content of their messages. Analysing these same general elections, Marcos García and Alonso Muñoz (2017) found that private or personal content was practically non-existent on the accounts of the main national parties and those of their respective leaders. Nonetheless, humanising politics (the centrality of the image of the candidate) is a priority in Instagram posts. López-Rabadán and Doménech-Fabregat (2018) observed that the image projected by political leaders on Instagram during the Catalan conflict had to do, among other things, with "a marked tendency towards personalisation" and a "positive emotional appeal" (2018: 1026). In their study of the posts of Spanish members of parliament, Selva-Ruiz and Caro-Castaño noted that the new political parties, like Podemos and Ciudadanos, put Instagram to a more personal use than their traditional counterparts, although "despite the fact that there are many posts characterised by closeness and nonchalance, certain constrictions inherent to other media still persist" (2017: 913).

Similarly, in their study of the leader of Ciudadanos Albert Rivera, performed a year before the 2016 general elections, Verón Lassa and Pallarés Navarro pointed to the fact that most of the posts referred to his work as a politician, with only 20% of them being devoted to his more personal facet (2017). In a more recent study, Tirado-García and Doménech-Fabregat (2021) have determined that current political affairs are the main topic of 71,42% of the posts of Spanish political leaders on Instagram

(2021). For their part, Gordillo-Rodriguez & Bellido-Pérez (2021) have arrived at similar conclusions as regards the same elections: there was a predominance of the image of the professional candidate in opposition to the personal candidate. Moreover, the authoresses discovered that the more personal posts generated a higher level of engagement than the professional ones during the election campaign, Rivera and Iglesias being the candidates who increased the number of posts of this type more than their rivals during the election campaign in comparison to the pre-campaign period.

The Instagram activity of Vox, the most recently created party in Spain, in the context of the general elections held on 28 April 2019, was analysed by Aladro Vico and Requeijo Rey (2020). In the same line, the study of Pallarés-Navarro and Zugasti (2022) shows that Twitter and Instagram profiles of Santiago Abascal, the leader of Vox, included some features of populism during 10 November 2019 general elections, also concluding that Instagram posts showed the human side of the candidate.

At a regional level in Spain, the use of Instagram during elections in Andalusia (Carrasco Polanco *et al*., 2020) and Valencia (Marcos García *et al*., 2020) has been researched. Regarding our object of study, Catalonia, the political view of the independence conflict on Instagram has been the topic of López-Rabadán and Doménech-Fabregat (2018), as it was mentioned above. In the same sense, Cartes Barroso (2018) analyses the use of Instagram by Catalan political leaders during the independence referendum of 1 October 2017, concluding that pro-independence parties are the ones that more actively use this social network.

3. OBJECT OF STUDY, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The research objective is to analyse the visual frames predominating on the Instagram feed of the main candidates running for president in the 2021 Catalan regional elections. The reason of choosing this region as the object of our study is because it has been the focus of Spanish political life since 2017, and its movement for independence has been followed by international media since then. At that time, newspapers as The Guardian (2/10/2017), Time (25/09/2022), and BBC (2/11/2017) covered the event.

Since these last elections were held on 14 February 2021, the study time frame runs from 29 January to 13 February 2021. These elections were held after a period of confrontation between the Spanish state and Catalonia, resulting from the Catalan parliament's proclamation of the region's independence on 1 October 2017, following a public referendum. This led to early regional elections on 21 December 2017. After being held, the proclamation of independence was declared illegal and several politicians were convicted for sedition. Quim Torra, the presidential candidate of the party

Esquerra Republicana, was sworn in as president of the Catalan regional government in May 2018. Subsequently, in 2020, he was disqualified for failing to comply with the law during the general elections held in April 2019, it thus being necessary to call new elections in Catalonia, which are the object of study here.

The data were collected on March 2021 by the authors of this paper. A total of 216 Instagram posts of the eight main candidates were considered, which coincides with the universe when taking into account the 15 days of election campaign. However, the candidate of Partido Popular, Alejandro Fernández, only posted one photo in this period, so it was determined that this photo was not sufficient to reach general conclusions about the visual frame of the candidate. Because of that, 215 was the final sample analysed. Despite being a small sample, it is enough for addressing the main research objective of our study, since it is reduced to the electoral period in Catalonia. Besides, future research lines contemplate the possibility of creating a comparative study to coming regional elections thanks to results presented here. Both the distribution of the posts and the ideology of the party represented by each of the candidates are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of posts analysed and the ideology of each party. Source: own elaboration

Candidate	No. of posts	Political party	Ideology
Salvador Illa (@salvador_illa)	30	Partido Socialista de Cataluña (Socialist Party of Catalonia, hereinafter PSC)	Centre-left Not separatist
Pere Aragonés (@perearagones)	15	Esquerra Republicana de Cataluña (Republican Left of Catalonia, hereinafter ERC)	Left Separatist
Ignacio Garriga (@garriga_ignacio)	39	Vox	Far right Not separatist
Laura Borràs (@laura_borras_ castanyer)	71	Junts per Catalunya (Together for Catalonia, hereinafter JxCat)	Centre/centre-right Separatist
Jessica Albiach (@jessicaalbiach)	25	En Comú Podem (In Common We Can, hereinafter ECP-PEC)	Left Not separatist
Carlos Carrizosa (@carrizosa.carlos)	25	Ciudadanos	Centre-right Not separatist
Dolors Sabater (@mdolorssabater)	10	Candidatura de Unidad Popular (Popular Unity Candidacy, hereinafter CUP)	Left Separatist
Total of posts	215		

Of these eight parties, five also have seats in Congress, namely, the national parliament (PSOE, PP, Ciudadanos, Podemos and VOX), none of which defend the independence of Catalonia, although Podemos does have a markedly Catalanist profile. As to the other three Catalan parties per se (ERC, JxCat and CUP), they are all in favour of the region's Independence, which forms the core of their respective political programmes. Although the PSC candidate Salvador Illa had won the elections, it was Pere Aragonés (ERC) who received sufficient support to be sworn in as president of the Catalan regional government in May 2021.

To meet the main research objective, the following secondary objectives were established:

OS1: To determine whether the political candidates present themselves on Instagram in a more professional or personal way, according to Goffman's (1956) front stage/dramaturgical theory.

OS2: To determine whether or not the professional or personal self employed by each candidate corresponds to a specific ideology.

OS3: To analyse to what extent Catalan leaders use the ideal candidate as a visual frame on Instagram, according to the theory proposed by Grabe and Bucy (2009).

OS4: To analyse to what extent Catalan leaders use the populist campaigner as a visual frame on Instagram, according to the theory proposed by Grabe and Bucy (2009).

OS5: To determine whether or not the predominant visual frame employed by each candidate corresponds to a specific ideology.

Also, after the literature review, two hypotheses can be proposed. On the one hand, according to seminal studies of Spanish elections in social media context, like Marcos García and Alonso Muñoz's (2017) and Selva-Ruiz and Caro-Castaño's (2017), and taking into account the more recent analysis of Tirado-García and Doménech-Fabregat's (2021) and Gordillo-Rodriguez & Bellido-Pérez's (2021), we can set that:

H1: The political candidates present themselves on Instagram in a more professional than personal way.

On the other hand, following Muñoz & Towner (2017), who shed light on the importance of the ideal candidate in the US elections, and Uluçay and Melek (2021), who directly apply Grabe and Bucy's (2009) visual frames to the Turkish elections and conclude that the ideal candidate's frame is the more common one, it can be stated that:

H2: The political candidates present themselves on Instagram mostly following the visual frame of the ideal candidate, instead of the populist campaigner.

A quantitative methodology was employed to meet the research objectives: specifically, a content analysis performed on the posts of each one of the candidates. The analysis considered all kind of content posted on the Instagram feed, be it photographs, graphic materials, selfies or video selfies; the procedure was to locate in them every item listed in Table 2. As already observed in the theoretical framework section, Goffman's (1956) theory of the presentation of the self was combined with Grabe and Bucy's (2009) visual framing theory when conducting the analysis. It was thus possible to take into account Goffman's front stage/dramaturgical theory, according to which people develop performances of self-presentation in front of an audience, as it was a dramaturgical representation. Following Goffman's metaphor of "life as a theatre", the "front stage" was analysed. Applied to the online environment of Instagram, the following variables were studied: performance (e.g. campaign/party event, private event, solidarity event, etc.) and setting (e.g. meeting hall, street, workplace, home, etc.). In parallel, two of the three visual frames proposed by Grabe and Bucy (2009) were considered: "the ideal candidate" and "the populist campaigner". Each of the visual frames is divided into two subdimensions or profiles; and each of the profiles is expressed through different visual manifestations. As to the former, variables relating to the "statesmanship" (e.g. the use of patriotic symbols) and "compassion" (e.g. the presence of children and family) profiles were analysed. With regard to the visual frame of "the populist campaigner", variables relating to "mass appeal" (e.g. the presence of celebrities) and "ordinariness" (e.g. dressing casually or engaging with ordinary folk) profiles were examined. The third visual frame proposed by Grabe and Bucy (i.e. "the sure loser"), however, was not considered in the analysis because, according to previous studies, it is highly improbable that political candidates will construct their identity on Instagram in accordance with it (Steffan, 2020). Table 2 offers a summary of this methodology.

Table 2. Summary of the methodology employed. Source: own elaboration based on Goffman (1956) and Grabe and Bucy (2009)

Author	Theory		Items
Goffman (1956)	Front stage/dramaturgical		Performance Setting
Grabe and Bucy (2009)	*Visual frames*	*Subcategories*	*Visual expressions*
	The ideal candidate	Statesmanship	Political elite Patriotic symbols Progress symbols Entourage Campaign paraphernalia Political confetti Suit
		Compassion	Children Family Adoring people Religious symbols Affinity gestures Citizen interaction without physical contact Citizen interaction with physical contact
	The populist campaigner	Mass appeal	Celebrities Large audience Approving audience Interaction with crowds
		Ordinariness	Rolled sleeves Casual dress Tracksuit Ordinary people Physically active

The codification was carried out by the authors of this paper after a two-coder reliability test applying Krippendorff's alpha, which result was α = 0,92, reaching then the minimum standard reliability in content analysis (α= 0,80). All items listed in Table 2 were evaluated (27 items), and many of them (15 items) showed a maximum average reliability index (α= 1). The following ones reached a α= 0,9 of agreement: "political elite", "entourage", "campaign paraphernalia", "adoring people", "citizen interaction with physical contact" and "interaction with crowds". However, certain disagreement (resulting in α=0,8) was detected in four items, which were: "physically active", "citizen interaction without physical contact", "progress symbols" and "approving audience". The more problematic items were "rolled sleeves" and "casual dress", which obtained a α= 0,7 each of them. However, the two coders met after knowing the results of the reliability test and they detected and solved the problem in the classification of the clothes, creating a guide for these two items.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main goal of this paper was to analyse the visual frames predominating on the Instagram profiles of the main candidates running for president in the 2021 Catalan regional elections. The analysis performed in this study shows that the predominant visual frame in this case was the 'ideal candidate'. In view of the results of the analysis, however, not all the visual expressions of this frame were found in the posts analysed.

Table 3 shows the results for the 'performance' and 'setting' variable, according to Goffman's theory.

Table 3. Performance (Goffman). Source: own elaboration

Candidates	Campaign or party event	Solidarity event	Protest event	Private event	Other	Not applicable	Total
Carlos Carrizosa	80,00%	4,00%	0,00%	12,00%	0,00%	4,00%	**100,00%**
Dolors Sabater	90,00%	0,00%	0,00%	10,00%	0,00%	0,00%	**100,00%**
Ignacio Garriga	89,74%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	10,26%	**100,00%**
Jessica Albiach	84,00%	0,00%	0,00%	4,00%	4,00%	8,00%	**100,00%**
Laura Borràs	95,77%	0,00%	0,00%	1,41%	0,00%	2,82%	**100,00%**
Pere Aragonés	86,67%	0,00%	6,67%	6,67%	0,00%	0,00%	**100,00%**
Salvador Illa	60,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	40,00%	**100,00%**
Total	**85,19%**	**0,46%**	**0,46%**	**3,70%**	**0,46%**	**9,72%**	**100,00%**

This study had as a secondary objective (OS1) to determine whether the political candidates present themselves in a more professional or personal way, according to Goffman's (1956) front stage/dramaturgical theory. Analysing the 'performance' and 'setting' variables (Table 3, Table 4), it can be seen how the predominant performance (Table 3) of the candidates was the campaign or party rally: from 60% in the case of Illa to 95,77% in the case of Borràs. These findings are consistent with the type of setting (Table 4), as the most used was the meeting hall (31,94% of the overall total), particularly in the case of Borràs (42,25%), Illa (43,33%) and Albiach (44%, Image 1). However, the street is the predominant setting in the case of some of the candidates, with Garriga (53,85%, Image 2), Carrizosa (40%) and Sabater (30%) leading the field. It is also worth noticing that Sabater (CUP) represents herself at home in 20% of her posts (Image 3). These results showed no significant differences in relation to the ideology of the candidates. This could be related to the newness of the party, since Garriga (Vox) and Carrizosa (Ciudadanos) are part of the "new politics" in Spain.

Table 4. Type of setting (Goffman). Source: own elaboration

	Candidates							
Setting	**Carrizosa**	**Sabater**	**Garriga**	**Albiach**	**Borràs**	**Aragonés**	**Illa**	**Total**
Meeting hall	20,00%	0,00%	15,38%	44,00%	42,25%	26,67%	43,33%	**31,94%**
Meeting hall and street	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	1,41%	0,00%	0,00%	**0,46%**
Workplace	4,00%	20,00%	0,00%	20,00%	7,04%	20,00%	3,33%	**7,87%**
Media studio	4,00%	10,00%	5,13%	8,00%	18,31%	20,00%	6,67%	**11,11%**
Street	40,00%	30,00%	53,85%	8,00%	23,94%	13,33%	3,33%	**26,39%**
Private transport	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	4,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	**0,46%**
Public transport	0,00%	10,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	**0,46%**
Industry	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	6,67%	0,00%	**0,46%**
Commerce	16,00%	0,00%	2,56%	0,00%	1,41%	0,00%	0,00%	**2,78%**
Wilde nature	4,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	**0,46%**
Home	4,00%	20,00%	0,00%	4,00%	1,41%	13,33%	0,00%	**3,24%**
Other	8,00%	10,00%	0,00%	0,00%	1,41%	0,00%	3,33%	**2,31%**
Not applicable	0,00%	0,00%	23,08%	12,00%	2,82%	0,00%	40,00%	**12,04%**
Total	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**

Image 1. Jessica Albiach's post. Source: Instagram @jessicaalbiach

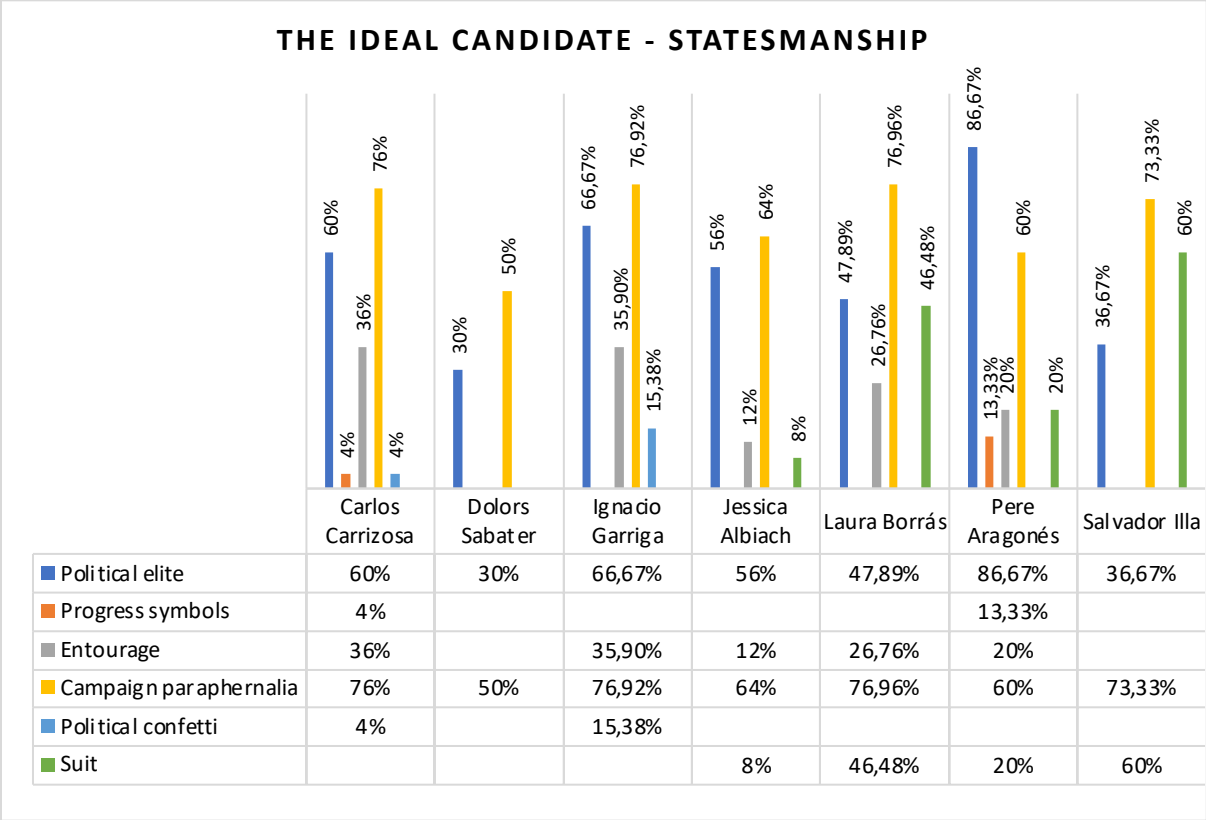
Image 2. Ignacio Garriga's post. Source: Instagram @garriga_ignacio

Image 3. Dolors Sabater's post. Source: Instagram @mdolorssabater

According to the data, all political candidates show themselves in a more professional way, since the performance in the majority of the posts analysed (85,19%) was a campaign or party event. Nevertheless, as to the setting of the posts, the results are slightly different: despite the meeting hall being the most frequent scenario (31,94%),

the street has a relevant role (26,39%), since Garriga, Carrizosa and Sabater show themselves on the streets in most of their Instagram posts, thus humanizing their profile in a certain way. The results of our study are similar to previous investigations, which highlighted the lack of personal context in candidates' Instagram profiles all over the world (Filimonov *et al*., 2016; Ekman and Widholm, 2017; Manan *et al*., 2020), and in Spain (Marcos García and Alonso Muñoz, 2017; Tirado-García and Doménech-Fabregat, 2021; Gordillo-Rodriguez & Bellido-Pérez, 2021; Bellido-Pérez & Gordillo-Rodriguez, 2022). In this sense, H1 (The political candidates present themselves on Instagram in a more professional than personal way) can be confirmed. These findings also reveal that the kind of profile (more professional or more personal) constructed by candidates on Instagram has no connection with their ideology. As stated, humanization is only observed (though slightly) in the profiles of Garriga (far right, non-separatist), Carrizosa (centre-right, non-separatist) and Sabater (left, separatist). Thus, it couldn't be affirmed that the self presented on Instagram, be it professional or personal, is attached to a certain ideology (OS2).

Moving on to the strategies implemented by the candidates for constructing the visual frames (OS3 and OS4), the predominant one was the 'ideal candidate', specifically, in the 'statesmanship' facet. Three visual expressions of this category are most clearly observed in the posts analysed: 'political elite', 'campaign paraphernalia' (Image 4) and 'patriotic symbols' (Table 5).



	Carlos Carrizosa	Dolors Sabater	Ignacio Garriga	Jessica Albiach	Laura Borrás	Pere Aragonés	Salvador Illa
Political elite	60%	30%	66,67%	56%	47,89%	86,67%	36,67%
Progress symbols	4%					13,33%	
Entourage	36%		35,90%	12%	26,76%	20%	
Campaign paraphernalia	76%	50%	76,92%	64%	76,96%	60%	73,33%
Political confetti	4%		15,38%				
Suit				8%	46,48%	20%	60%

Image 4. The ideal candidate – Statesmanship. Source: own elaboration

All the candidates portrayed themselves accompanied by 'political elite' in some of their posts. Nevertheless, there were differences. The number of posts showing 'political elite' was larger in the case of Carrizosa (60%, Image 5), Albiach (65%), Garriga (66,67%) and Aragonés (86,67%, the highest of all, Image 6), while only Sabater (30%) and Borràs (47,89%) appeared in this guise in less than half of their posts. By the same token, all the candidates, from Sabater (50%) to Garriga (76,92%), used 'campaign paraphernalia' in the majority of their posts (Image 7). There were no significant differences as to ideology with respect to the use of 'political elite' or 'campaign paraphernalia'.

Image 5. Carlos Carrizosa's post. Source: Instagram @carrizosa.carlos

Image 6. Pere Aragonés' post. Source: Instagram @perearagones

Image 7. Salvador Illa's post. Source: Instagram @salvador_illa

Table 5. Patriotic symbols ("Ideal candidate" frame, 'statesmanship' subcategory)
Source: own elaboration

	Patriotic Symbols ("Ideal candidate" frame, 'statesmanship' subcategory)					
Candidates	**Spanish symbols**	**Spanish + regional symbols**	**Pro-Independence symbols**	**Regional symbols**	**None**	**Total**
Carlos Carrizosa	0,00%	76,00%	8,00%	4,00%	12,00%	**100,00%**
Dolors Sabater	0,00%	0,00%	100,00%	0,00%	0,00%	**100,00%**
Ignacio Garriga	82,05%	0,00%	7,69%	2,56%	7,69%	**100,00%**
Jessica Albiach	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	100,00%	**100,00%**
Laura Borràs	1,41%	0,00%	90,14%	1,41%	7,04%	**100,00%**
Pere Aragonés	0,00%	0,00%	33,33%	0,00%	66,67%	**100,00%**
Salvador Illa	3,33%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	96,67%	**100,00%**
Total	**15,74%**	**8,80%**	**39,35%**	**1,39%**	**34,72%**	**100,00%**

In the case of patriotic symbols, all the candidates, except for Albiach, used them (Table 5). Pro-independence symbols were predominant (39,35%), although we identified the absence of symbols in 34,72% of the total number of posts. These findings are nevertheless polarised. While Illa portrayed symbols in only 3,33% of his posts (all of them Spanish), Sabater included only pro-independence symbols in all of her posts and Borràs (Image 8) used separatist symbols in practically all of her posts (90,14%). The case of Carrizosa (Image 9) is worth noting because both Spanish and regional symbols appeared in 76% of his posts. As to Spanish symbols, Garriga stood out because of his greater use of them (82,05% of his posts). Of the rest of the candidates, only Illa (3,33%) and Borràs (1,41%) employed Spanish symbols, albeit on very few occasions. According to the data, ideology couldn't be said to be relevant as to the use of patriotic symbols in the posts analysed (which has no influence when analysing the type of visual frame).

Image 8. Laura Borràs' post. Source: Instagram @laura_borras_castanyer

Image 9. Carlos Carrizosa's post. Source: Instagram @carrizosa.carlos

Other variables included in the 'statesmanship' subcategory were few and far between. This was the case of economic-technological 'progress symbols', which only appeared in the posts of Carrizosa (barely 4% of the overall total) and Aragonés (13,33%), plus 'political confetti', only used by Carrizosa (4%) and Garriga (15,38%). Regarding 'entourage', all the candidates except Sabater and Illa employed it, especially Carrizosa and Garriga (Image 10) in around 36% of them. The 'suit' or formal attire variable was only observed in four of the seven candidates studied. Illa (Image 11) was the candidate who appeared most in formal dress (60% of his posts), but this was not clearly predominant in the rest of the candidates (Borràs, 46,48%; Aragonés, 20%; and Albiach, merely 8%).

Image 10. Ignacio Garriga's post. Source: Instagram @Garriga_ignacio

Image 11. Salvador Illa's post. Source: Instagram @salvador_illa

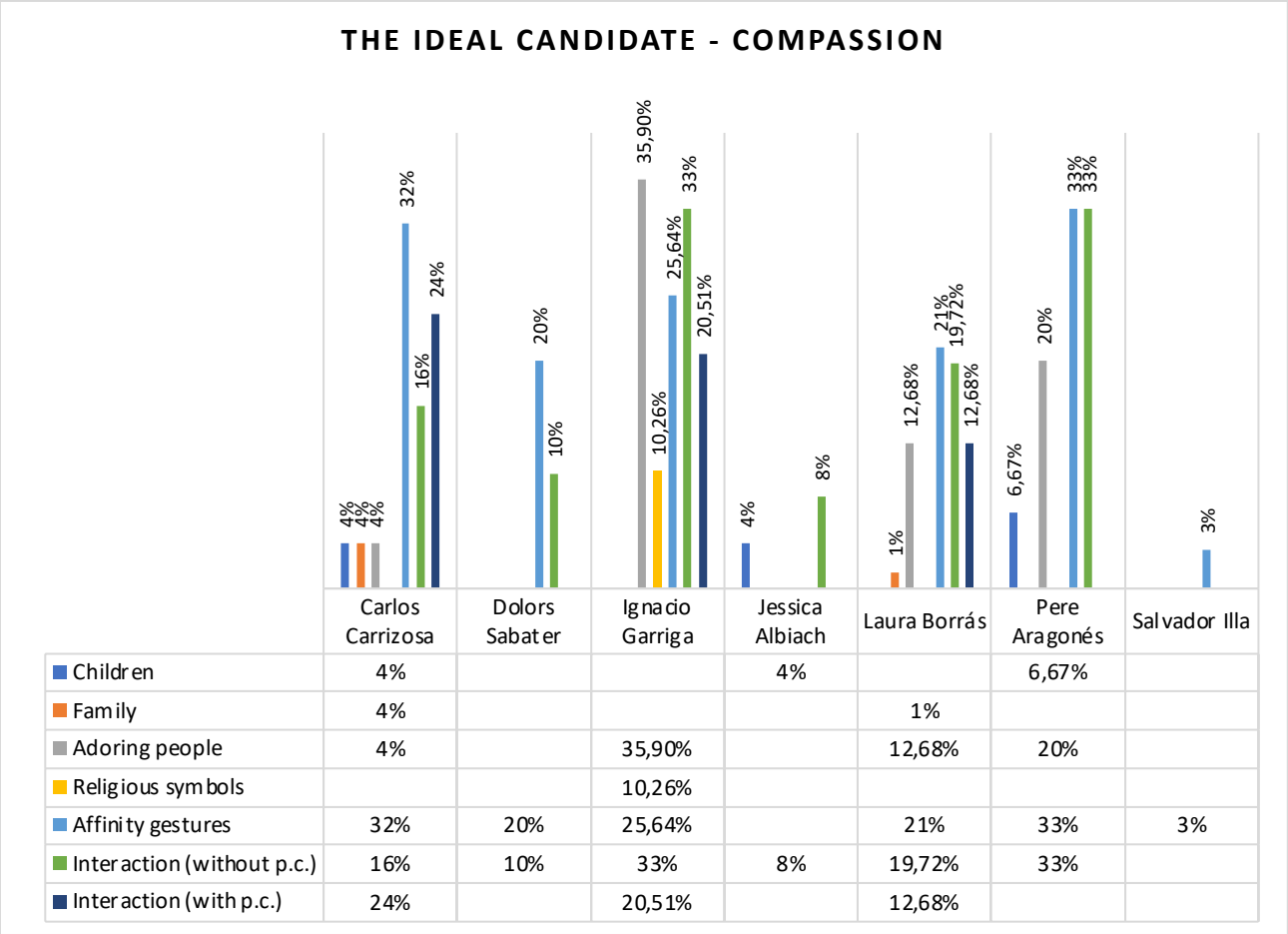
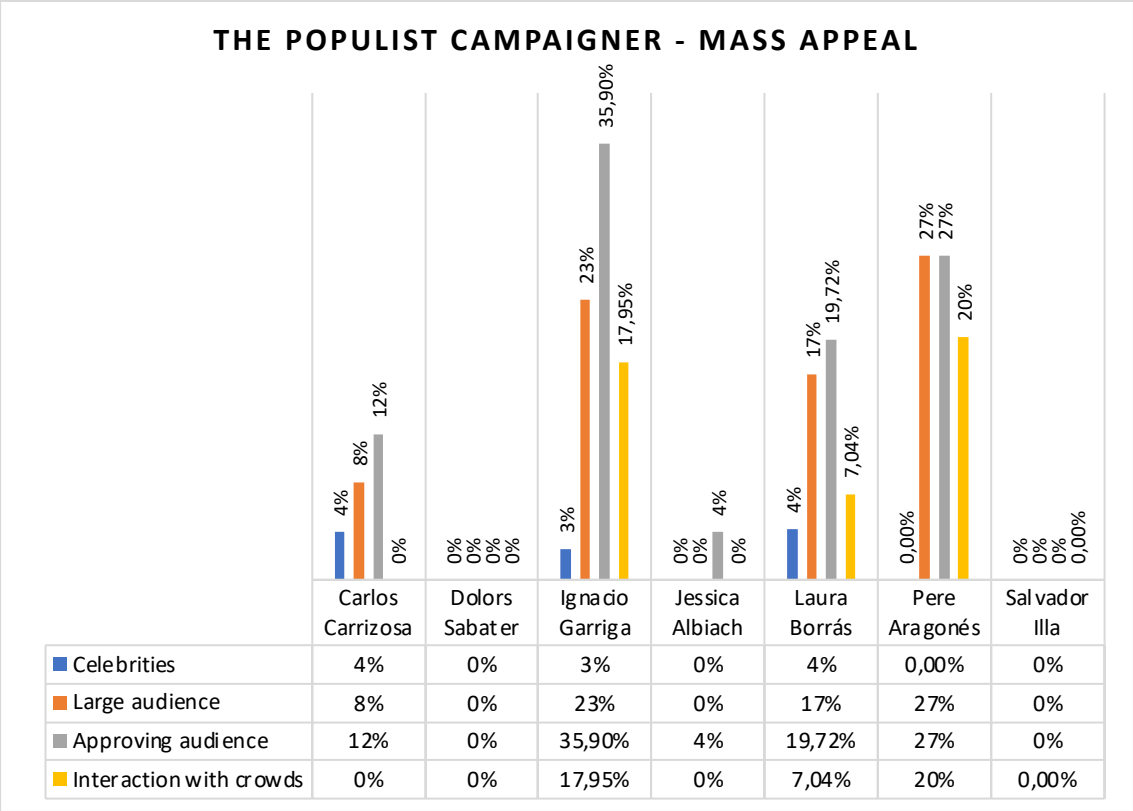


Image 12. The ideal candidate - Compassion. Source: own elaboration

According to the data, the 'compassion' subcategory of the ideal candidate was not predominant when constructing visual frames on the Instagram profiles analysed here (Image 12). There were hardly any posts in which 'children' (only one in the case of Carrizosa, Albiach and Aragonés), 'family' (also one in the case of Carrizosa and Borràs) or 'religious symbols' (only in 10% of Garriga's posts) appeared. The variable 'adoring people' was observed in the posts of four candidates (Carrizosa, Garriga, Borràs and Aragonés), with Garriga (35,9%) outstanding.

Other expressions included in this subcategory were employed by all or most of the candidates in their self-representation, albeit also with insignificant frequencies. All the candidates resorted to 'affinity gestures', observed in between 20% and 33% of their posts (except for Illa, in 3,33%). 'Citizen interaction without physical contact' was observed in the posts of all the candidates except Illa, albeit in only between 16 and 33,33% of them. 'Citizen interaction with physical contact' was only observed in the case with Carrizosa (24%), Garriga (20,51%) and Borràs (12,68%).



	Carlos Carrizosa	Dolors Sabater	Ignacio Garriga	Jessica Albiach	Laura Borrás	Pere Aragonés	Salvador Illa
Celebrities	4%	0%	3%	0%	4%	0,00%	0%
Large audience	8%	0%	23%	0%	17%	27%	0%
Approving audience	12%	0%	35,90%	4%	19,72%	27%	0%
Interaction with crowds	0%	0%	17,95%	0%	7,04%	20%	0,00%

Image 13. The populist campaigner – Mass appeal. Source: own elaboration

The study shows that the candidates analysed here did not construct the visual frame of the populist campaigner. The visual expressions of the 'mass appeal' subcategory were hardly observed in the posts analysed (Image 13). Indeed, Sabater and Illa did not employ any of the visual expressions of this profile (along with Albiach, only 4% of her posts). 'Celebrities' appear in only one post in the case of Carrizosa, Garriga and Borràs; 'large audience' ranges from 8% (Carrizosa) to 26,67% (Aragonés); 'approving audience' appears from 4% in the case of Albiach to 35,9% in that of Garriga; and 'interaction with crowds' is only observed in 7,04%, 17,95% and 20% of the posts of Borràs, Garriga and Aragonés, respectively.

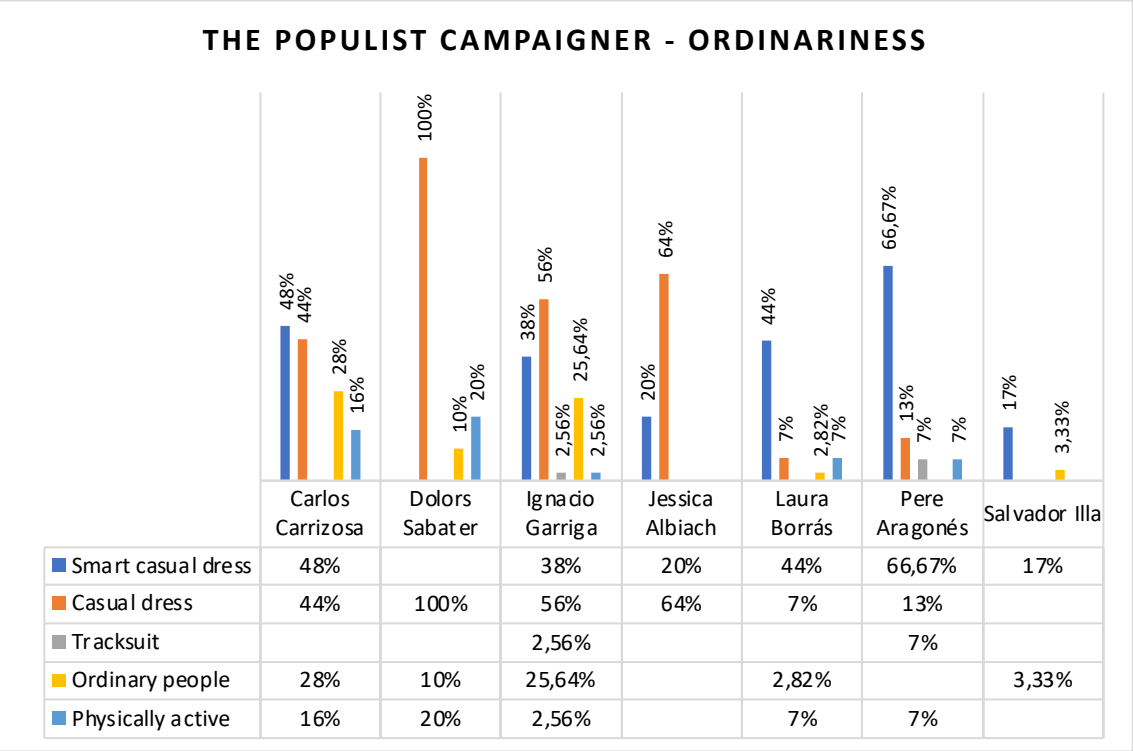


Image 14. The populist campaigner – Ordinariness. Source: own elaboration

In the 'ordinariness' subcategory (Image 14), however, some visual expressions were indeed observed. For example, all the candidates, except for Sabater, appeared in 'smart casual dress' (corresponding to the 'rolled sleeves' subcategory in Table 1): from Albiach (20%) to Aragonés (66,67%), with the rest doing so in between 30% and 50% of them (Image 15). In the case of 'casual dress', the results are the opposite: Illa did not appear casually dressed in any of his posts; Sabater did so in all of her posts; Carrizosa (44%), Garriga (56,41%) and Albiach (64%) managed to strike a balance; while it was Aragonés (13,33%) and Borràs (7%) who appeared less in casual clothing. All of the candidates except Albiach and Aragonés did appear with ordinary folk in their posts, although in less than 30% of the cases. Nor did the visual expressions of 'tracksuit' (one post in the case of Garriga and Aragonés) or 'physically active' (from Sabater in 20% of her posts to Garriga in 2,56%; neither of these two visual expressions were observed in the posts of Albiach or Illa) predominate in the posts analysed.

Image 15. Laura Borràs' post. Source: Instagram @laura_borras_castanyer

Following OS3 and OS4, this study has focused on identifying the types of "visual frames" employed by the seven candidates analysed. Our research identified that the self-representation strategies adopted by the candidates were more aimed at constructing the ideal candidate (OS3: To analyse to what extent Catalan leaders use the ideal candidate as a visual frame on Instagram, according to the theory proposed by Grabe and Bucy, 2009). Connecting the results with Goffman's (1956) theory, our research concluded that the majority of them showed themselves in a professional light. Specifically, the 'statesmanship' subcategory was outstanding, being three visual expressions most clearly predominant, i.e., 'political elite', 'campaign paraphernalia' and 'patriotic symbols'. The fact of identifying the "ideal candidate" as the predominating frame coincides with the results of the study performed by Steffan (2020) on the "visual frames" developed by candidates in different Western countries, and also with the Uluçay and Melek's study (2021) about Istanbul elections. Hence, H2 (The political candidates present themselves on Instagram mostly following the visual frame of the ideal candidate, instead of the populist campaigner) can also be confirmed.

Although the "ideal candidate" was predominant, some of the visual expressions of this profile were not clearly identified, as the data show. For that reason, we should rather speak of a tendency towards the "ideal candidate" frame on the Instagram profiles of the Catalan candidates studied here. We did not observe all of the visual expressions corresponding to the subcategories of each character or visual frame (neither "the ideal candidate" nor "the populist campaigner"). For example, 'progress symbols' or 'political confetti' (which are visual manifestations of the 'statesmanship' subcategory) are hardly observed in the posts analysed. Similarly, the 'compassion' subcategory was not used

so much to construct the image of the "ideal candidate", with some exceptions like 'adoring people', 'affinity gestures' or 'interaction' as visual manifestations observed in the posts of Carrizosa, Garriga or Borràs. Nevertheless, as well as Uluçay and Melek's study (2021) states, some visual expressions corresponding to "the populist campaigner" are observed and predominant in several occasions, such as some like 'approving audience', for 'mass appeal' subcategory; or the ones corresponding to the 'ordinariness' subcategory, which are observed in the posts of all the candidates (except Illa) in a great number of their Instagram posts, mostly through clothing. That is the reason why we identified that the visual frame of the "populist campaigner" is not clearly constructed (OS4: To analyse to what extent Catalan leaders use the populist campaigner as a visual frame on Instagram, according to the theory proposed by Grabe and Bucy, 2009).

Finally, and following OS5 (To determine whether or not the predominant visual frame employed by each candidate corresponds to a specific ideology), it has been concluded that no candidate is clearly positioned in only one visual frame according to their Instagram feed, so it couldn't be affirmed that a certain visual frame is attached to a certain ideology. However, there are some common lines between candidates when picturing themselves. Garriga (Vox) and Aragonés (ERC) are the candidates more closed to the "populist campaigner" frame, both showing high levels of mass appeal on Instagram (mostly through approving audience and large audience). But their ideology is quite the opposite. Also, it has been noticed that it is not the ideology but the newness of the party which could be related to the use of a certain visual frame (cf. Selva-Ruiz and Caro-Castaño, 2017; Verón Lassa and Pallarés Navarro, 2017), since the candidates who use more compassion elements to picture themselves as the ideal candidate are Carrizosa (Ciudadanos), Garriga (Vox) and Boràs (ECP).

Regarding the activity on Instagram, the newness of the party also seems to be connected to a greater number of posts in the case of the 2021 Catalan regional elections. New parties posted an average of 40 photos on Instagram, in opposition to the 14 photos of average posted by traditional parties. In relation to the ideology and the activity on Instagram, despite not being a factor as relevant as the newness, it is worth mentioning that pro-independence parties posted an average of 32 photos, a number which is slightly superior to the rest (24 of average). In this sense, our study is in line with Cartes Barroso's (2018).

5. CONCLUSIONS

This paper is in line with recent studies about election campaigns on Instagram that point out a growing importance of the figure of the political candidate. However, candidates are still using this social network to broadcast their campaign activities mostly ___as Manan *et al*.'s study states (2020)___, instead of using it in a more personal and interactive way. It has been confirmed that Catalan political leaders presented themselves in a more professional than personal way on Instagram during 2021 regional elections, linked to the visual frame of the ideal candidate, and it has been also established that the ideology is not clearly attached to a certain self or visual frame on this social media site. Hence, this study concludes that candidates prefer to use Instagram to perform intentional "representation" (Feher, 2021), that is, actions and staging to build a certain image corresponding to a specific frame ___in this case, a professional profile which is the ideal candidate.

Focused on the study of political communication and politainment in the case of the 2021 Catalan regional elections, our paper contributes to existing literature as follows. First, by updating Goffman's (1956) theory and bringing it to contemporary research through its application to social networks (thus developing previous research by Gordillo-Rodriguez & Bellido-Pérez, 2021; Bellido-Pérez & Gordillo-Rodriguez, 2022). Goffman's theory is combined with Grabe and Bucy's (2009) visual framing theory to study the type of character represented by candidates, through the visual elements used to construct their photo settings in the specific case of Instagram. Second, this paper identifies the strategies used by Catalan candidates to construct their identities online during the election campaign. This is in line with Rettberg's (2018) and Feher's (2021) ideas of "representation" as "construction" and "intentional", respectively. For the Catalan candidates, our study identified the concrete aspects that were selected to share on Instagram, thus making clear their intention of constructing a certain identity, generally, as an "ideal candidate", attempting to portray a positive image of themselves (Steffan, 2020) before citizens, given that the way of performing is a critical component of the identity of any public figure (Marshall, 2010). Third, when studying the relevance of the candidate's image on Instagram, our study is located in the recent academic research line of personalization and spectacularization of politics on social media (Poulakidakos and Giannouli, 2019; Metz, Kruikemeier and Lecheler, 2020; López-Rabadán and Doménech-Fabregat, 2021). As a final contribution, our research contributes to develop and update the line of research on social media grounded in Goffman's theory of online self-presentation and the management of impressions online.

However, this paper has some limitations. An important limitation of this study is connected to the period analysed: January-February 2021, when Spain was under some restrictions that affected public and social life, as a consequence of the recent third wave of COVID-19 in the country. Thus, the observed data might have been influenced by this context in which the elections were held, as some of the variables of our study were related to public events and interaction of the candidate with citizens. Owing to the health measures in force, neither crowds nor mass rallies were permitted; at any rate, people were expected to continue with physical distancing. This observation also applies to the results obtained from the visual expressions of the 'mass appeal' and 'ordinariness' subcategories of the 'populist campaigner', owing to the fact that they are variables also linked to the physical contact between candidates and their audiences. Another limitation is related to the sample: using a relatively small sample complicates the generalization of the results, so future research lines need to enlarge the sample taking into account, maybe, a pre-electoral period.

In line with limitations stated above, it would be interesting to compare our results with other election processes held in other countries in a close temporal frame, in order to investigate the effect of COVID-19 restrictions in the configuration of the political communication strategies for the election campaign. Also, a future line of research could replicate the study in further election processes in Catalonia, held in a non-pandemic context, and compare the results related to candidate-mass interaction. A final future research line can be focusing the analysis in other social media site. Recent studies (see e.g. Cervi and Marín-Lladó, 2021) point out that newer social networks like TikTok are used by political parties in a more interactive way, which opens a new line of research in the contemporary context of political communication. The fact of combining Goffman's theory (face-to-face interaction) with Grabe and Bucy's analysis (TV image of the candidate) makes it possible to expand this study to newer social networks like TikTok, focused more on the video aspect and opening the question to the manipulation of the moving image through different effects like fake dubbing, giving rise to fake news or viral contents as key determinants of current online political communication.

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