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Sweet-talkers and Internet trolls

An analysis of six Hungarian female politicians' Facebook comment section

Abstract

Being present on social media platforms has become an advantage for politicians as they aspire to be relatable and likable in the eyes of the voters. Their active participation leads to the odd phenomenon of receiving compliments, while also receiving a large amount of insults in the form of comments. In general, women are the main receivers of online compliments and these compliments mostly focus on appearance (Maíz-Arévalo & García-Gómez 2013). However, in the case of female politicians a compliment on their appearance is not necessarily a propitious speech act and can have an inverse effect, such as destructing cognitive performance in the long run (Kahalon, Shnabel & Becker 2018). The aim of the study is to investigate the Facebook comment section of six Hungarian female politicians from different parties, analyse, and determine the distribution of compliments and insults that they receive. Results show that the number and types of compliments and insults each politician receives can differ, as they are mostly personalized, but identifiable trends were observed. Factors such as the degree of activity, extent of media coverage, position and participation in international politics and party affiliation could play a role in the number of insults a female politician receives online. In total, the examined female politicians received more insults than compliments.

Keywords: compliment, insult, online communication, female politicians

1 Introduction

Recently, there has been a growing interest in the examination of insults and uncivil utterances that high profile Members of Parliament receive in the comment section of their posts on their social media platforms. The murder of Jo Cox in 2016 (member of the Labour Party in Britain) was one of the first cases that sparked concerns and drew attention to the fact that these online insults, when accompanied by gendertrolling, into which death threats can be categorised as well according to Mantilla (2013), can have dreadful real-life consequences. The measures of physical and mental effect of online incivility on female UK politicians have been examined by Collignon, Campbell and Rüdiger (2021) through a survey and the findings suggest that online incivility can affect candidates in an extremely negative way.

One of the consequences of uncivil comments online is that it can lead the receiver, the politician, to step down from his/her position, or even abandon his/her political career altogether. Maisel (2012) made a similar claim that the fear of being the victim of online insults can discourage talented female candidates from taking up political roles. In the past, women were marginalised when it came to being involved in politics and participating in political institutions (Jamieson 1995; Lovenduski 2005) therefore the negative effects of online incivility

do not project a progressive future. It follows from this that the consequence of large-scale online insults and incivility towards politicians is a threat to democracy (Collignon, Campbell & Rüdig 2021; Harmer & Lumsden 2019; Papacharissi 2004). It is fundamental for everyone to have his/her personal safety guaranteed and being a public figure is no exception.

Internet users are of course not all cruel and malicious. On the contrary, compliments (Sodhi, Pant & Mamidi 2021) also appear in the comment section of politicians as well. However, it is important not to forget that insults can be presented in a way that for the superficial reader they might even seem like a compliment at first glance. Furthermore, even if the intention is benevolent, certain types of compliments may promote gender inequality. For example, it had been stated that in certain situations comments on appearance undermine women's achievements (Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn & Twenge 1998).

Being present online is an important extension for a politician's campaign, therefore the issue and the consequences of insulting comments should be tackled and taken seriously. Although multiple research projects had been conducted among UK, USA, Canadian and Australian politicians and the types of online insults they receive, however, to the best of my knowledge, none of the previous studies focused on the Facebook comment section of Hungarian female politicians. Furthermore, most studies examined those comments that undoubtedly belong to the category of insults according to the commonly accepted definitions, while only a few deal with the less obvious examples termed as microaggression by Harmer and Southern (2021). Additionally, compliments are not categorised and analysed together with insults even though certain types can be perceived as hurtful and sexist, which is an existing category among insults.

The aim of the paper is to explore the types of compliments and insults that high profile Hungarian female politicians receive online. Furthermore, it examines who is more likely to be the target of such comments, out of the six female politicians in review, as previous research by Collignon, Campbell and Rüdig (2021) indicates that several factors, such as gender, age, ethnicity, incumbency and party affiliation play a role in determining the amount of insults a politician receives online. Moreover, the aim of the research is to establish the differences between compliments and insults, assess the categories that appear with reference to previous taxonomies and determine their distribution. Overall, the present article's main purpose is to investigate online aggression concerning Hungarian politicians. Hence, two research questions were formulated:

RQ1: Do all examined politicians receive the same number of insults and compliments? (If not, what could be the reason?)

RQ2: What types of compliments and/or insults appear for each politician?

In this paper, previous research that aimed at creating a categorisation of the type of uncivil comments politicians receive will be summarised. Moreover, the literature review will cite the groupings previously created for compliments and the gender division that is present in the variety of insults and compliments politicians receive online. Furthermore, the types and categorisation of insults, compliments and microaggression will be presented in the interest of creating a foundation for the research. Following the literature review, the research methodology is introduced. The methodology section is followed by the discussion of the results and lastly, conclusions are drawn while also possible future directions are determined.

2 The advantages of online presence for politicians

Online presence in the case of politicians requires considerable effort, a team and careful content planning and it is not without its threats and difficulty for the individual who is a real person behind the well constructed online image. Despite the spiritual ordeal a politician needs to face, being present online has many advantages in his/her career that could be seen as compensation. According to Harmer and Southern (2021), being present on social media platforms is crucial for politicians. If politicians decide to stay away from the (online) spotlight they miss an opportunity to be in touch with their followers and potential voters. Users have the right, and as it can be concluded from their activity, the wish to be connected to their elected representative. The use of social media in the case of politicians is “permitting a new arena of grassroots politics” (Axford & Huggins 2001: 90).

Social media assists its users to stay connected and gain information about others. Hellweg (2011) claims that among other social media platforms Facebook is a good tool for politicians to stay connected with those individuals who have already indicated their interest in them by following their profile. In the case of politicians, deeper relationships can be built with potential voters by being present online. Thus, politicians can benefit from the opportunity given by cyberspace, which is “removing the barrier between professional and consumer” (Barlow 2008: 93).

Politicians aspire to be relatable and likable in the eyes of the ordinary user by blending in and adjusting their way of communication to the habitual style of the platform. This leads to the odd phenomenon of politicians receiving compliments, which is a social strategy used for strengthening or initiating connections (Wolfson & Manes 1980), while they also receive insults in the form of uncivil comments.

2.1 The categorisation of uncivil comments received by politicians

The definition of an uncivil comment is often determined by the method of the research, but there are similarities, recurring categories and themes among the studies. For instance, the research conducted by Rheault, Rayment and Musulan (2019) examined and defined comments as uncivil with a filter method. In the gathered data, if a comment contained at least one of 400 keywords then it was marked as uncivil. The keywords belonged to one of six categories: swear word, vulgarity, insult, threat, personal attack on someone's private life or hate speech.

Kenski, Coe and Rains (2017) had a different approach and research method as they asked survey participants to evaluate the level of incivility of statements on a 7-point scale. Nonetheless, there are similarities and overlaps in the way they define incivility. Kenski et al. (2017) distinguish five different types of incivility. The first one is name-calling, where ad hominem attacks belong as well. The second one is vulgarity that includes curse words. It is already visible that they partially diverge from the categorisation of Rheault Rayment and Musulan (2019) since in the case of the previously mentioned research vulgarity and swear words (that can be considered a synonym for curse words) were seen as different types of incivility. In the case of Kenski et al. (2017) further types of incivilities were lying accusation, pejoratives for speech and aspersion. Other scholars have also identified uncivil behavior as an utterance that contains ad hominem attacks, vulgarity, derogatory language, direct insult and name calling (Rossini 2020).

The potential problem with such methods when researching (online) incivility is that comment or statement categorisations are based on the level of words, but fail to examine the

illocutionary act, what the speaker or comment writer intends to say. This is important since many comments are not overt expressions of opinions, but are often double-entendre. This is what Austin's (1975) understanding of Speech Act Theory states. According to Austin, a linguistic expression becomes processable through the interpretation of the rules governing the act of speech. Therefore, the message is not created by the close meaning of the words, but by the intended speech act.

Harmer and Southern (2021) took more of a Speech Act Theory-governed perspective when categorising online insults. They based their main idea upon the previously defined category of direct insult, and created their own version, which they termed as overt online abuse. The main feature of overt online abuse is that it openly intends to offend the recipient. Beside overt online abuse, the expression of microaggression emerged as well. Microaggression was defined by Harmer and Southern as an utterance that is “not overtly abusive but nevertheless undermines the recipient” (2021: 260). During their analysis alongside these two main categories, they have identified more profound and indirect examples of online incivility. The notion of everyday sexism- and othering was created. It contained comments referring to the gender of the politician, stereotyping and highlighting physical appearance. The other example of a more subtle type of incivility is dismissing discrimination and victim blaming which includes uncivil remarks toward someone who speaks up about discrimination targeted toward him/her. Lastly, the category of claiming reverse discrimination was created.

It is important to note that several different ways of categorisations emerged and an extensive review on the literature of incivility had been produced, “identifying civil and uncivil political discourse is not impossible, even though we probably will never achieve complete consensus about precisely where to draw the line” (Massaro & Stryker 2012: 440). The present study will draw on a combination of insights from different categorizations of scholars of the research area in the analysis of the data that will be explained in the methodology section.

2.2 The categorisation of compliments

As previously mentioned, politicians do not only receive uncivil comments online, but also a variety of compliments. When focusing on compliments as speech acts, the principles of pragmatics cannot be overlooked. According to Searle (1976) speech acts are the universal operators. Furthermore, Searle suggests that compliments can be viewed as an expressive speech act where according to the speaker's intentions a limited set of reactions arise as possibilities for the receiver. Reactions can be grouped into three main categories with further subcategories: acceptance, disagreement / rejection and diversion. Other scholars who dealt with compliments as speech acts are Wolfson and Manes (1980). They view compliments as a social strategy used by communicating parties for initiating or maintaining relationships. It contains the opinion and impression of one party, which has a positive effect on the other party. Not long after, Holmes (1986) defined the phenomenon of compliments as a speech act that has the explicit or implicit intention of the speaker to acknowledge the quality or property of another person. In addition, Holmes believes that the purpose of compliment is to increase, or strengthen solidarity between the two parties. Wolfson (1983) returned to his earlier thoughts a few years later and expanded them with the idea that compliments are “social lubricants” that enable us to connect and maintain relationships. Wolfson and Manes (1980) and Holmes (1988) thus agree that the exchange of compliments between individuals assures one party of the other's recognition, with the overt or covert intent to guide their relationship in a favorable direction.

This comprehensive definition of complimenting is also used in most subsequent research (Indah & Rifana 2017; Maíz-Arévalo & García-Gómez 2013).

Several studies by Wolfson (1981, 1983 and 1989) and Holmes (1986, 1988 and 2013), which took examples from different areas of life, found that the subject of a compliment can be divided into four major groups: appearance, ability / personality, property and performance. Although compliments require a certain degree of familiarity, a well-established good relationship to make a comment on someone's appearance, ability, achievements, or even property, it nevertheless happens among strangers as well. Wolfson and Manes (1980) also considered the linguistic realization of compliments, focusing on American English. Their finding suggests that the most common structures are the ones that contain a noun phrase accompanied by an adjective. In case of adjectives the most frequent are *nice*, *good*, *pretty*, *great* and *beautiful*.

2.3 The gender division in compliments and insults

Women are the main receivers of online compliments, and these compliments mostly focus on appearance (Maíz-Arévalo & García-Gómez 2013). However, in their case a compliment on their appearance is not necessarily an appreciated speech act and can have an inverse effect by leading to the objectification of female politicians. As believed by Kahalon, Shnabel and Becker (2018), compliments on appearance can create sexist environments. Although compliments on appearance can lead to short-term exhilaration, it can also damage cognitive performance in the long run (Kahalon, Shnabel & Becker 2018). It is also important to highlight that while women receive most compliments on their appearance, men are usually complimented for their competence (Parisi & Wogan 2006). Moreover, there are instances where insults are produced in a camouflaged way, but when it is examined through a pragmatic lens, the intentions of the interlocutor may be revealed.

When it comes to online incivility, based on several studies, women are the main receivers of insults (Collignon, Campbell & Rüdig 2021; Harmer & Southern 2021; Rheault, Rayment & Musulan 2019). In a study, conducted by Hunt, Evershed, and Liu (2016), Hillary Clinton received twice as many tweets that had insulting content, compared to Bernie Sanders, her opponent in the 2016 democratic primaries. Due to this phenomenon the expression “gendertrolling” was created by Wagner (2020), which reflects on the differences between the insults targeted at female and male politicians. Due to gendertrolling, many women feel discouraged from engaging in politics. The female politicians that are active in the political environment are twice more likely to be concerned about harassment that can be explained by the significantly higher number of incivilities that reach them daily through social media, also termed as cybersexism (Wagner 2020). Krook and Restrepo (2016) also reflect on this occurrence and insist that online incivility toward female politicians can be viewed as a form of gender role enforcement.

3 Research Method

This study examines 1073 comments received by six female politicians belonging to different Hungarian political parties. Important criteria for chosen politicians were that they must have a larger following, which in this case meant more than 40 000 followers and to be active on their Facebook page, for which the specified amount was to post at least 3 times a week.

Manual content analysis has been applied to determine quantitative patterns of insults and compliments. After the general classification a qualitative analysis followed to define specific insult and compliment categories. To ensure the accuracy of the coding a second coder, a lay speaker of Hungarian, participated. The second coder was made familiar with the coding book and the criteria system for insults and compliments. Out of the 205 comments, 17 appeared questionable when categorizing, therefore the involvement of the second coder was essential in these cases. In the case of the remaining 188 comments in the corpus, 47 (a quarter of the remaining amount) were randomly selected for the second coder. Here the inter-rater reliability was 89%.

3.1 Politicians who make up the sample

In order to interpret the content of the examined comments and understand the obtained results a brief introduction of the six politicians who make up the sample of the research is essential. However, there are instances that prove that knowing the basics about a politician's background is not always sufficient, since comments often reflect on current major, or sometimes minor events that were picked up and shaped by the media. Nevertheless, the paper only aims to give an objective introduction.

Klára Dobrev is the Vice-President of the European Parliament and she was also the candidate for Prime Minister in the Hungarian opposition pre-elections in 2021 nominated by the Democratic Coalition.

Anna Donáth is a Member of the European Parliament. In the 2018 elections she was the candidate of the Momentum Movement in the 3rd district of Budapest and also the Vice-president of the party up until 2021.

Dóra Dúró was formerly a spokesperson and subsequently deputy leader of the Better Hungary Movement (*Jobbik*). From July 2018 she holds the position of Vice-President of the Our Country Movement (*Mi Hazánk*).

Ágnes Kunhalmi was a Member of the Parliament from 2014 while also being the chairwoman of the Hungarian Socialist Party until 2018. She was elected to the co-chair position in the party in 2020.

Bernadett Szél was initially in the co-chair position in Politics Can Be Different (*LMP*). In the 2018 parliamentary elections, she was the party's prime ministerial candidate. Since October of 2018 she has been an independent representative.

Judit Varga from May 2018 became the Prime Minister's Office State Secretary for EU Relations. In 2019 she was nominated as the Minister of Justice in Hungary, a position she holds to date.

3.2 Data Collection

From each of the chosen politicians, three different posts had been examined. The conditions for the posts were to have an active comment section, furthermore, to be posted longer than one week time compared to the date of the data collection and examination. An important discovery was that most of the posts revolve around the same three concepts: personal content; current happenings in the Hungarian political sphere and posts connected to the social responsibilities that the given politician feels strongly about. Although all three types of content can possibly shape the politician's perception in the eyes of the voters, they might receive different types of

comment and contrasting amounts of insults and compliments. Therefore, when selecting the analysed posts a criterion was to include one post for every above mentioned category from all the politicians analysed in the research. This is how the final 18 analysed posts were determined.

Since the analysis was done manually it was unequivocal that it would not be possible to analyse every comment under each post since there were instances where posts contained more than a thousand comments. Therefore, the comments were collected with the online program called *exportcomments.com* that randomly selected up to 100 comments from every analysed Facebook post. 1073 comments were accessed through the process, but not all of them contained the targeted units of analysis. After the pre-screening, 867 comments were excluded as they were not in line with the purpose of the study, they did not contain insults or compliments.

3.3 Coding and Analysis

Before the actual coding started it was important to get familiar with the collected data. For this reason, multiple re-readings of the comments were necessary to get a general idea about their content and to make a well-established definition of the categories.

The coding happened based on previously determined definitions and categories by scholars of the research area (Harmer & Southern 2021; Kenski, Coe & Rains 2017; Harmer & Southern 2021; Wolfson & Manes 1980) whose categorisations have been generally accepted and used for similar research. The first step was to decide whether a comment contains an insult or a compliment. Only those were analysed that were aimed at the politician in question and not the whole party to which she belonged. Once these comments were determined, the major categories of compliments or insults were applied.

Compliments and insults were based on different criteria and had different categories. In the case of compliments three types emerged: performance, personality and appearance adapted from the categorisation system of Wolfson and Manes (1980) with the exception of property as it was not relevant in the present sample.

In the second round, the compliments were analysed to see whether they contained sexism and othering based on the definitions of Harmer and Southern (2021). An example of such a case from the sample is *You're sexy, that's why you won!* 😊 (original: *Szexi vagy, azért nyertél!* 😊). In the case of insults there were three main categories as well: microaggression, overt online abuse and sexism and othering. Microaggression was defined as a comment that is abusive but not overtly (Harmer & Southern, 2021). According to scholars, comments that contain derogatory language, vulgarity, name calling, aspersions, and lying accusations can be seen as overt online abuse (Kenski, Coe & Rains 2020; Rossini 2020). Lastly, the definition applied for sexism- and othering is that those comments belong to this category where the content refers to the gender of the politician in an undermining, stereotyping way and often refers to appearance (Harmer & Southern 2021). The aim of the analysis was to get a deeper understanding of the insults Hungarian female politicians receive and to make a more grounded distinction among the types that appeared.

This process resulted in 205 comments containing compliments and insults which were analysed qualitatively.

4 Results

In total, when the results from the comments of the analysed female politicians were gathered, 169 examples of insulting comments appeared (15.7% of the whole corpus) out of the 205 that either contained incivility or a compliment. The most common type was overt online abuse with a total of 82 instances, followed by microaggression with 67 appearances and lastly sexism appeared 20 times. In the corpus only 40 compliments appeared, where the most common was performance (15), followed by appearance (13) and lastly compliments regarding the politician's personality (12).

The first research question investigates whether the six female politicians in review receive approximately the same number of insults and compliments and, if that is not the case, it aims to examine the reasons for this outcome. The second research question focuses on the different types of compliments and insults that may appear.

When analysing the compliments, the results were the following: in the case of Klára Dobrev 6.7%; Ágnes Kunhalmi 6.6%; Dóra Dúró 4.4%; Judit Varga 2%; Bernadett Szél 1.2% and lastly in the case of Anna Donáth 0.4% of the comments contained compliments out of all the comments received individually. While the most common type of compliment when analysing the comments of Klára Dobrev referred to her performance, Ágnes Kunhalmi in most cases received appearance compliments. In the case of Dóra Dúró the amount of personality and appearance compliments were equal. The remaining 3 politicians each received only one compliment. Thus, this is not a decisive number in stating the type of compliment one receives the most in the form of Facebook comments.

Examples of each category from the sample are the following: the first is a performance compliment. *Come on, Ági! You're the best at representing the 18th district!* (original: *Hajrá, Ági! Te képviseled a legjobban a 18. kerületet!*). The commenter refers to the politician's ability to represent the district while using the adjective *good* in the superlative form. An example for a personality compliment is the following: *The pepper is small, but strong!!!* (original: *Kicsi a bors, de erős!!!*). This compliment is based on a Hungarian proverb referring to a person being small in size, but unexpectedly strong physically. However, in this case, it most probably indicates sturdiness. A typical example of a compliment on appearance is *You are beautiful* (original: *Gyönyörű vagy*) received by Ágnes Kunhalmi. In the examples presented the most frequent adjectives, established by Wolfson and Manes (1980), appear.

Based on the analysis the following pattern was observable: in the case of Judit Varga 44%; Ágnes Kunhalmi 20.3%; Anna Donáth 16.1%; Klára Dobrev 8.2%; Bernadett Szél 6.1% and lastly in the case of Dóra Dúró 2.5% of the comments contained insults out of all the comments received individually. It can generally be stated that most insulting comments appeared under those posts where the content was strongly political. This could be a potential explanation for those who received the least amount of insults: Bernadett Szél being independent and Dóra Dúró being the Vice-President of a smaller, less influential party in Hungarian politics, while also being less active at the time of the data collection. Another finding is that out of the remaining four politicians who received a higher amount of insults, three of them partake in political roles not just nationally, but also internationally. Furthermore, it was interesting to identify personalised insults in the case of most politicians. There was a politician, Anna Donáth, in whose case name calling that belongs to overt online abuse was outstanding. An example of name calling is: *Viktor Orbán is so intelligent that he won't be willing to have a discussion with such reprobate, raff nobodies* (original: *Orbán Viktor van annyira intelligens hogy ilyen senkiházi söpredékkal mihasznákkal nem áll szóba mint te*). In this example three

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instances of name-calling appear in the form of pejorative expressions. Another form of name-calling in her case was when they called her *Donald Duck* (*Donát Kacska – Donáth Anna*) using the similar sounding of her name and the Hungarian translation of the cartoon character's name. Furthermore, Anna Donáth mostly received insults that she is a *disappointment* and a *traitor*, often referring to her position in the European Parliament. For another politician, Ágnes Kunhalmi, sexism and othering appeared the most along with uncivil mockery based on a previous incident she had with a glass door. An example of sexism and othering was *This "woman" will not change either. She will be uglier at most!* (original: *Ez a "nő" sem fog változni. Legfeljebb csúnyább lesz!*). As previously presented, in the case of the category of sexism and othering, the definition of Harmer and Southern (2021) was adopted where an utterance belongs to this category if it negatively discriminates against someone based on his/her gender in an undermining way, often referring to one's appearance. In the example, the word "woman" is in quotation marks, questioning the politicians' femininity. While it also refers to her appearance in a more subtle way, it still expresses the idea that she will only get uglier, which is a very open criticism of one's appearance.

When focusing on the main categories the most common type was microaggression in the case of Klára Dobrev, Ágnes Kunhalmi and Bernadett Szél. An example of microaggression was *Exceptionally, the Minister is doing something meaningful* (original: *Kivételesen valami értelmes dolgot csinál a miniszter asszony*). In the case of Anna Donáth, Dóra Dúró and Judit Varga, overt insults were the most frequent. An example of overt online abuse was *What about casino money?? With hundreds of millions? Liar hypocrite* (original: *Kaszinós pénzekkel mi van?? A több százmillióddal? Hazug képmutató*). Overt online abuse, as explained, among many, contains the elements of lying accusation and name calling that appear in the comment in the form of openly calling the politician a liar and a hypocrite. Although everyday sexism and othering did appear, it was never the most significant in number when the examples belonging to the main categories were estimated.

Overall, the answer to the first research question is that female politicians do not receive the same number of compliments and insults. Online insults are more common, but altogether there are large differences when it comes to measuring and comparing the established amount. The graph below titled *Proportional distribution of compliments and insults* shows the division between the politicians when their results are projected per hundred and they are marked by their monograms.

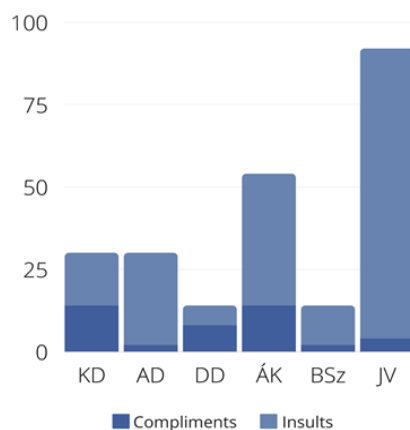


Image 1: Proportional distribution of compliments and insults.

In sum, 15.7% of the comments were categorised as an uncivil comment, which is a higher percentage compared to a similar study conducted by Harmer and Southern (2021) where the results showed 9.8% of the tweets to be uncivil. The authors concluded that although incivility targeted towards female politicians is not extremely widespread, it is not insignificant either, therefore it is worth investigating.

Moreover, based on the results, the question remains: what could be the reason behind the uneven division of compliments and insults? Collignon, Campbell and Rüdrig (2021) believe that the competitiveness of the campaign, the extent of the online presence, and the visibility of the candidate are influencing factors in the number of comments, especially uncivil ones. Furthermore, leading candidates, mainly if they are younger female individuals, are more likely to be targets of uncivil comments. In the case of the present study, the politician who received the greatest number of uncivil comments, Judit Varga, is one of the most active, media-capable ministers of the government and a well-known politician on the international stage as well. Another politician, who received a bigger number of insults, Anna Donáth, is also present in politics internationally, and the argument of being a young female politician as a motivating factor for uncivil comments (Collignon, Campbell & Rüdrig 2021) also applies to her. On the other hand, Dóra Dúró who is also a young politician received the least number of uncivil comments. Another argument of Collignon, Campbell and Rüdrig (2021) could explain this; at the moment she is not a parliamentary politician, thus, less attention is directed towards her. Due to this, her opponents and their supporters do not target her either.

As the results previously presented show, the second research question was proven. Specific types of compliments and insults appeared in the case of each politician. No compliment or insult category emerged as the most common in the case of all the politicians in review.

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the comment section of six high profile Hungarian female politicians was investigated in order to discover the type of compliments and insults they receive. The research method included manual content analysis. The compliments were categorised into three major categories (performance, personality and appearance), while uncivil comments were grouped to three major categories as well (microaggression, overt online abuse and sexism and othering) but had extended, more specific subcategories.

The overall number of insults was higher than the number of compliments in the examined sample. The proportional distribution of compliments and insults was different in the case of the six politicians. When analysing the types of compliments together out of the three major categories, none emerged as more determinative or common as the amounts were near-equal. Compliments, same as insults, were more specific and customised in the case of all six politicians. In some cases, accomplishment compliments were prominent, while in the case of another politician, appearance compliments were the most common. To summarise, not just the amount of compliments and insults each politician received was different, but also the types that they needed to face were diverse. Several factors could play a role in the number of compliments or uncivil comments a politician receives: the degree of political activity, the number of supporters and opponents. The extent of media coverage, role in international politics, and age and political party affiliation are also important units.

A limitation of the present research could be that posts were examined for one month only (September 2021). Moreover, working with a larger sample could further specify and support

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the obtained results. Lastly, the research did not deal with the fact that the social media accounts of politicians could be monitored by either social media teams or software, or Facebook algorithm itself which could result in comments being deleted, trolls, or any other commenters' profiles getting blocked. Due to the potential monitoring, the number, types and distribution among politicians of insults could be a fragment of the actual number that appears.

Based on the established research and the obtained results, as a future direction the comparison of male and female politicians could be proposed. It would be interesting to examine which gender is more likely to be subject to online insults. Furthermore, the results of the present research could be compared with female politicians of another country to explore possible cultural differences in online incivility. Additionally, the short- and long-term effects of online uncivil comments among female politicians could be further investigated.

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