Article – Theme section

Personalising climate change on Instagram
Self-presentation, authenticity, and emotion

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Abstract

This article is a comparative study of how three Danish climate celebrities – an activist, an influencer, and a politician – personalise climate change on Instagram. They engage in personal storytelling about the issue in a way that is closely connected to their public presentation of self and their choice of visual genres. The theoretical framework combines theories of social media aesthetics and publics (Serafinelli, 2018; Papacharissi, 2015), self-presentation (Marshall, 2010), authenticity (Enli, 2015a; Marwick, 2015), and emotion in political communication (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019). The method is a qualitative case study comparing the three profiles and their overall curational strategy for addressing climate change through particular visual genres and how their personal storytelling is based on performing authenticity, emotion, and connecting with affective publics. The analysis demonstrates how personalising climate change can be performed as coping with climate anxiety, feel-good sustainable consumption, or enthusiastic promotion of Danish green solutions.

Keywords
Climate change, self-presentation, authenticity, emotion, influencer, activism

Introduction

In the famous documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* (Guggenheim, 2006), former US Vice-President Al Gore broke the mould by making climate change an integral part of a personal and emotional narrative, as well as making the issue part of a global political conversation and winning the Nobel Peace Prize (along with the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)). Today, climate activist Greta Thunberg is the poster girl of climate activism, famous for her emotional "How dare you?" speech and for using social media as a means to present her agenda, intertwined with personal stories of her everyday life (Murphy, 2021).

In current research, there has been a limited focus on how celebrities on Instagram perform the personalised climate change agenda. The work in this area has thus far been concerned with international celebrity advocacy (Abidin et al., 2020), fashion influencers (Jacobson & Harrison, 2021), or climate celebrities in legacy media (Hammond, 2018; Murphy, 2021; Bergmann & Ossewaarde, 2020; de Moor et al., 2020).

In contrast, this study focuses on three Danish climate celebrities – an activist, an influencer, and a politician – all of whom prioritise climate change on their Instagram profile. The analysis compares how they communicate climate change as part of their personal storytelling: How they do so using different visual genres, operating simultaneously with public and public-private presentations of self, embodying and addressing different emotions, performing authenticity, and reaching out to affective publics.

The three public profiles are all well-known in the Danish public sphere and thus qualify as climate celebrities of merit in this national context (Rojek, 2001). Furthermore, their personal life is of interest to legacy media in the case of both the activist and the politician (Turner, 2013), whereas the influencer is an Internet celebrity (Abidin, 2018).

The politician is Dan Jørgensen (@danj.klimaminister), Minister for Climate, Energy and Utilities in the Social Democratic government in Denmark since 2019. He is active on Twitter (Jørgensen, n.d.-b) and Facebook (Jørgensen, n.d.-a) and has 15,000 followers on his Instagram profile (Jørgensen, 2021a). His focus is on presenting the government's climate agenda and political achievements.

The activist is Esther Kjeldahl (@esthermkj), a high-profile youth climate activist, author, and podcast host and co-founder of Den Grønne Studenterbevægelse in 2017 (English translation: the Green Student Movement). She is also on Twitter (Kjeldahl, n.d.). While she has only 2,400 followers on Instagram (Kjeldahl, 2021a), she has often represented the Danish youth movement in legacy media since her appearance in the documentary *70/30* about the 2019 general election (Ambo, 2021).

The influencer is Gittemarie Johansen (@gittemary), a zero-waste influencer and self-proclaimed green activist. In this study, she represents the climate influencer because, in contrast to Kjeldahl, Johansen is an entrepreneur who makes a living through social media, using the attention economy to promote herself and sustainable products (Abidin, 2018, p. 98). In 2019, Johansen was included on sciencereport.dk's list of "the big-

gest Danish sustainable influencers" (Hansen, 2019). She has 68,000 Instagram followers (Johansen, 2021a) and 108,000 subscribers on YouTube (Johansen, n.d.).

By focusing on these three different types of climate celebrities, it becomes possible to show how climate change is communicated as personal storytelling on social media. It is relevant to study the Instagram profile as a media text because the celebrity has greater control of the content compared to legacy media, whether they receive help from staff or not (Marwick, 2015). The Instagram profile, therefore, reflects how they would like to be perceived when promoting the climate change agenda.

The article is divided into four sections. The first presents the theoretical framework by identifying a selection of key visual genres and curational strategies on Instagram, with a focus on how they exemplify a personal perspective (Serafinelli, 2018; Rettberg, 2014; Marwick, 2015). Within celebrity studies concerned with social media, it is relevant to include the performance of self-presentation, because it reveals the shifts between the public and private spheres (Marshall, 2010). The concept of authenticity is also significant, regardless of whether you are an activist, influencer, or politician (Enli, 2015a; Marwick, 2015). The discussion of how authenticity in political communication is often closely connected with emotion on social media, as addressed by Wahl-Jorgensen (2019), is particularly interesting in relation to the personal climate change agenda. Finally, the theoretical framework also takes into account the concept of affective publics (Papacharissi, 2015), because it can reveal the extent to which the climate celebrities, via their posts, wish to engage with the mood of the moment.

The second section concerns methodology. It describes how the personalising of climate change is analysed as a comparative case study approach informed by the theoretical framework. The analysis looks at the particular curational strategy, the specific visual genres, and which genres are dominant on the respective profiles. The framework includes the concepts of the performance of self-presentation as well as affective publics and uses selected posts as specific examples of how the climate change agenda and the presentation of self are connected with authenticity and emotions.

The third section consists of the analysis of the celebrities' personal Instagram profiles as they relate to climate change: first the activist, then the influencer, and finally the politician. In each case, the analysis looks at selected posts and how their curational strategies correspond to the presentation of self (Marshall, 2010). The selected posts are discussed in relation to authenticity in the way emotions are addressed. The fourth section consists of a brief comparative analysis of the three profiles.

The research questions are as follows: How do climate celebrities like the activist @esthermkj, the influencer @gittemary, and the politician @danj.klimaminister use visual genres on Instagram when addressing climate change as part of their self-presentation, and how do they connect them to an affective public? How is the choice of visual genre for their self-presentation on Instagram an example of a performance of authenticity, and how do they address emotion?

Theory

The analysis of visual performance is central to studies of the personalisation of climate change on Instagram. In their characterisation of "the aesthetics of Instagram", Leaver, Highfield, and Abidin (2020) find that it is important to be familiar with the "Instagram vernacular" in order to perform in a convincing way. "Instagram vernacular" refers to the ability to use the platform's affordances, combined with knowledge of its aesthetic patterns and traditions. Serafinelli, for example, describes the basic, common practice of uploading a photo to Instagram as taking a good-quality picture, which typically requires a certain amount of creativity (Serafinelli, 2018, p. 15). Often, the picture composition involves a particular visual style or an aesthetic pattern that you have established for your profile (Serafinelli, 2018, p. 62).

The way of using images on Instagram is a "shared visual act" (Serafinelli, 2018, p. 20), but also includes multiple visual genres that refer back to well-established photographic and artistic forms (Zappavigna, as cited in Leaver et al., p. 66), e.g., mediated portraits, mediated still lifes, and mediated landscapes, as well as videos.

Portraits are a key genre in personal storytelling via Instagram (Leaver et al., 2020; Serafinelli, 2018). One prominent type of portrait is the "selfie" (Marwick, 2015, p. 139), which captures a specific aesthetic and a particular moment (Rettberg, 2014, p. 11). The selfie has been critiqued for being a narcissistic genre, but it is also a visual ritual and offers a personal perspective (Marwick, 2015, p. 142). For a public personality, posting selfies on Instagram can be seen as indicative of wanting to connect with followers. However, the selfie is less commonly used by influencers, as the seeming simplicity "masks the amount of labour that goes into it" (Leaver et al., 2020, p. 68).

Similarly, Marwick characterises "the always on, mobile nature of Instagram" as something that "lends an air of authenticity and truthfulness that a mere tweet or blog posts may not [possess]" (Marwick, 2015, p. 160). These photos are testaments to where you are and when (Serafinelli, 2018). When you "follow" a celebrity on Instagram, their updates and posts appear in your Instagram feed alongside posts from friends and family (Marwick, 2015). Serafinelli also argues that the Instagram feed for an individual profile can be regarded as a personal photo album and serves as an online expression of identity (Serafinelli, 2018), thereby qualifying as a visual presentation of self, as argued by Marshall (2010, Rettberg (2014), and Marwick (2015). The choice of visual genres, from portraits (including selfies) to still lifes, is a visual way of connecting with followers. This is central when studying how climate change is personalised, because Instagram provides access to the personal photo album that documents actions and a particular visual performance and presentation of self.

Public and private presentations of self

Online presentation of self is always a performance, according to David Marshall (2010), who builds on the seminal theories of Goffman (1959) and especially Meyrowitz's distinction between the middle region and forefront region (1985). Marshall offers a useful distinction for the analysis of photos and self-presentation in specific social media posts (Marshall, 2010, pp. 45-46). To begin with, he argues that social media falls within what he defines as the "presentational media paradigm" – one in which we all have access to social media and the option to present ourselves on it. This is the opposite of the representational media paradigm, where legacy media (Marshall, 2010, pp. 45-46), such as the press, radio, and television, prevails. In the representational paradigm, the content is subject to the gatekeeping and agenda-setting of editors and institutional priorities. Having a profile on social media gives public personalities a certain amount of control over how they present themselves to the public (Marshall, 2010, p. 40).

The performance of "the public presentation of self" on social media, as argued by Marshall, can also include a public situation at work or posting a public photograph from legacy media on your profile, corresponding with Meyrowitz's category of forefront stage presentation (Meyrowitz, 1985). Correspondingly, "the public-private presentation of self" reflects Meyrowitz's concept of the middle region (Meyrowitz, 1985): It is public because it is on social media, but it can nevertheless be a private situation, e.g., at home with friends and family.

However, when analysing a photograph by a public personality, which is posted online as a public presentation of self, we should note that the caption (the adjoining commentary) can make it more private and more personal: Such as when a comment makes fun of the situation or reveals something not seen in the image.

The particular visual genres (Marwick, 2015; Rettberg, 2014; Serafinelli, 2018) are combined with Marshall's notion of the presentational regime. Furthermore, the distinction between public and public-private presentations of self provides a theoretical framework for characterising how climate change is personalised through the choice of posts within particular visual genres. The performance on individual profiles also connects the presentation of self to the issue of whether the performance is authentic and addresses emotion.

Authenticity and emotion

The concept of authenticity arises when assessing if someone is genuine or truthful, but in the context of social media, it is generally understood as an important part of a successful performance (Enli, 2015a, 2015b; Marshall, 2010; Marwick, 2013). When studying the performance of personalising climate change on Instagram, authenticity is key to understanding how it works. Gunn Enli explores what she calls "the paradox of mediated authenticity", because "although we base nearly all our knowledge about the world and the society in which we live on mediated representations, we remain well aware that the

media is constructed, manipulated, and even faked" (Enli, 2015a, p. 1). She distinguishes between different types of authenticity, including symbolic authenticity, spontaneity, and imperfection, and asserts that this distinction is central. Symbolic authenticity "builds an image of the politician as willing and able to adapt to contemporary culture's emphasis on networked communication, sharing, and participation" (Enli, 2015b, p. 125).

Spontaneity is perceived as authentic because it means that the politician appears "less cynical and dishonest than if they were scripted all the time" (Enli, 2015b, p. 127). Imperfection is interpreted as authentic because it signals an apparent willingness to show that the politician is capable of making mistakes – they are ordinary and only human (Enli, 2015b, p. 132).

For influencers on social media, Marwick argues, there is an agreement that authenticity is highly valued as "the moral imperative to be 'true to oneself'" (Marwick, 2013, p. 2). Marwick concludes that even promoting commercial products in order to make a living as an influencer need not detract from authenticity, as long as your self-expression is truthful (Marwick, 2013, p. 4).

In their study of influencers, Maares et al. (2021) align with Enli and her constructivist notion and conclude that authenticity "is relational depending on an evaluation of expectations being met or disappointed" (Maares et al., 2021, p. 22). However, taking that into account, in this context, the focus is on analysing how authenticity is performed: from establishing symbolic authority by having an account on social media in the first place, to being spontaneous or imperfect (Enli, 2015b), but also by being true to oneself (Marwick, 2013). Social media is always a performance, but different means are used to present authenticity – one of which is the combination of personal storytelling and emotion.

In her study of emotion, media, and politics, Karin Wahl-Jorgensen argues that authenticity is often closely connected to emotion in personalised storytelling. She builds on the notion of "the affective turn", as argued by Ahmed (2004) and others, and recognises that emotion and rationality are not mutually exclusive (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019, p. 173). On social media, such as Instagram, we "must pay attention to how emotions are not merely performed and constructed through the discourses of groups or individuals, but also shaped by the technological architectures and affordances" (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019, p. 174). Studying individual climate celebrities' personal profiles on Instagram provides insight into how they perform emotion (as individuals) but also reveals how they operate within the framework of Instagram's particular affordances. As Enli suggests, there is a symbolic authority associated with simply being on social media in the first place (Enli, 2015b). Even if the individuals concerned have staff managing their accounts (for example, if they are professional politicians), their performance still reflects on them and can impact public perception. While emotion is not at odds with rationality, in the context of personal storytelling, it also has the effect of establishing the politician as ordinary (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019, p. 70) and also, by extension, authentic.

Another kind of emotional engagement with politics takes place via "affective publics". In a network society, social media platforms play a central role in setting the political agenda (Castells, 2009, p. 301). The study of a political agenda, such as the personalising of climate change, must also take into account an "affective public" because it can potentially mobilise a certain kind of sentiment online (Papacharissi, 2015). Instagram posts can use hashtags to connect with potential publics. Hashtags facilitate engagement or participation, argues Papacharissi. Building on Raymond William's notion of "a structure of feeling", she describes how the tone or mood of the moment helps "publics collaboratively reimagine a shared future" (Papacharissi, 2015, p. 321). An example of an individual combining her personal activism with an affective public is Greta Thunberg and her consistent use of, e.g., #Fridaysforfuture and #Climatestrike in the captions on her Instagram posts.

In her original analysis, Papacharissi argues that affective publics can be influential in more ways than one. They are "mediated feelings of connectedness" on social media and have symbolic impact by "presenting the underrepresented viewpoints" (Papacharissi, 2015, pp. 308, 317-318). When the focus is on how celebrities personalise climate change, it makes sense to include how they, in specific posts, use hashtags to potentially connect with affective publics. As Abidin et al. also suggest, celebrity environmental activists often use these public-identifying hashtags to voice critique of a specific corporation, e.g., #AskChevron, or as a way of organising or promoting events (Abidin et al., 2020, p. 391). Emotion can take the form of individual expression on a personal profile, through visual genres and captions performing political communication (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019), or it can involve reaching out to be part of the mood of the moment by using hashtags to connect with an affective public (Papacharissi, 2015).

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach that compares three case studies of personalising climate change on Instagram, informed by a presentation of the theoretical framework. The three Danish climate celebrities' Instagram profiles were selected because they represent different agendas: an up-and-coming youth activist (@esthermkj), a sustainability influencer (@gittemary), and a climate politician (@danj.klimaminister).

The data were chosen using an information-oriented selection of three so-called extreme (or atypical) cases of visual media content (Yin, 2009). The posts were harvested from the individual profiles on Instagram within a six-month period: 1 May–30 November 2021. The number of uploaded posts varies: @esthermkj published 46 posts in this period, @gittemary 156, and @danj.klimaminister 122. The focus is on regular posts, whereas stories (brief photo/video montages) and reels (longer videos) are not included. Since the focus is on the climate celebrities' visual presentation, user comments are not included either.

The analysis of each of the three profiles and their personalisation of climate change follows the same structure. Each begins with a brief analysis of the curational strategy, based on the choice of visual content, divided into seven visual genres in order to characterise their visual self-presentation and, where relevant, how they engage with affective publics (Papacharissi, 2015) in the caption. According to Marwick (2013), Rettberg (2014), and Serafinelli (2018), the typical genres on Instagram include the division of the posts into portraits, selfies, group photos, still lifes, landscapes, videos, and posts that do not fit any of these genres, which are described as "other". This presents a useful overview of how the self-presentation is divided up between the seven different types of images. The posts are ranked from the most used genre to the least used and converted into percentages. For @esthermkj, videos account for 28 pct. of her posts, group photos and portraits are both at 23 pct., selfies are 16 pct., and the rest, including "other", account for 10 pct. There are no posts in the categories landscape or still life. On @gittemary's profile, 69 pct. of her posts are still lifes, 23 pct. are portraits, 16 pct. are videos, and the rest consist of group photos and landscapes (2 pct. each), and selfies and "other" (1 pct. each). On @danj.klimaminister, 60 pct. of the climate minister's posts are group portraits, 15 pct. are portraits, selfies and "other" account for 8 pct. each, videos are 7 pct., still lifes are 4 pct., and there are zero landscapes. The analysis focuses on the kind of images (and texts in the captions) that are characteristic of the profile and the performance of self-presentation (Marshall, 2010), how the personal storytelling specifically includes a performance of authenticity and emotion (Enli, 2015a, 2015b; Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019), and how the climate change agenda is expressed in specific media texts as part of personal storytelling on Instagram. Thirdly, a brief comparison of the three profiles makes explicit the respective ways in which they personalise climate change by using self-presentation in visual content on Instagram, and their performance of authenticity and emotion, as well as the extent to which they connect with affective publics.

The activist: Climate anxiety, mental health, and humour

The research into celebrity activists on Instagram has so far primarily focused on global figures such as Leonardo DiCaprio and Greta Thunberg (Robeers & Van Den Bulck, 2021; Murphy, 2021). DiCaprio is an actor with more than 52 million followers on Instagram, yet his profile is dominated by posts from climate organisations and institutions providing information about climate change. Very few posts on his profile are public-private presentations of self. At the other end of the spectrum is Greta Thunberg, whose fame is not based on a successful Hollywood career. Instead, she made her breakthrough with her *Skolestrejk for klimatet* initiative and via social media, using her presentation of self as a young activist. Where DiCaprio is associated with celebrity advocacy, Greta Thunberg is famous for being part of the youth movement Fridays for Future (DiCaprio, 2021; Thunberg, 2021).

Studying how celebrities engage with activism, Chouliaraki argues that they run the risk of inviting more distanced engagement (Chouliaraki, 2013, p. 175). Followers can "subscribe to their arguments and support their work, simply by buying the book, watching the film, or reading the article" (Brockington, 2013, p. 124). Goodman and Littler support this viewpoint, saying that "with its individualised mode of power, its concentration of wealth, its implication in systemic profit-making, celebrity might be the exact opposite of what biodiversity and the environmental crisis needs: participation, co-operation, regulation against exploitation and systemic political change" (Goodman & Littler, 2013, p. 269). This is a valid point if we are primarily talking about Hollywood film stars such as Leonardo DiCaprio (e.g., Robeers & Van Den Bulck, 2021), who is a spokesperson for the UN, but full-time climate activists invite a different kind of engagement – partly because their main focus is to address systemic political change, and because they seem to perform the importance of participation, as documented on their social media profile.

The focus of this analysis is on the profile of the Danish climate activist Esther Kjeldahl (@esthermkj). She made her breakthrough in 2021 as part of the documentary *70/30* (Ambo, 2021), which depicted the youth movement and the politicians behind the scenes during the 2019 general election. Like Thunberg, Kjeldahl is a full-time activist but also has an MSc from the London School of Economics (Gerstenberg, 2021). On Instagram, Kjeldahl presents herself as a philosopher, author, and podcast host and is co-founder of Den grønne studenterbevægelse (Kjeldahl, 2021a).

The visual genres that she selects for her presentation of self on Instagram are dominated by photos, portraits, and videos of herself, group photos with other activists and celebrities, and selfies. She is usually informally dressed in everyday clothes but likes to dress up, adopting a more formal look at public events. She also has the highest number of selfies compared to the other Danish climate celebrities. Her selfies invite followers into her public-private presentation of self by emphasising imperfection and the ordinary. The group portraits usually show her participating in activist actions as part of *Den grønne Studenterbevægelse*, but also with other celebrities from the Danish cultural and political public spheres, such as critic Carsten Jensen and author Madame Nielsen. Similarly, the videos include clips from legacy media, such as the news programme *Deadline* (DR) and the morning TV show *Godmorgen Danmark* (TV2).

Kjeldahl directly addresses her background and her motivation for engaging in climate activism in a clip from *Godmorgen Danmark* (Kjeldahl, 2021c), in which she is asked about her climate anxiety. She argues that being part of *Den grønne studenterbevægelse* alleviates this anxiety because she feels that she is doing something together with other people who share her concerns. She stresses how her emotions are pivotal in motivating her to do something about climate change – not only for the benefit of the planet but also for her own well-being.

It might be expected that, as a young activist, @esthermkj has mastered the Instagram vernacular to reach out to an affective public (like Greta Thunberg) and systematically

uses hashtags that tap into the mood of the moment. However, this is generally not the case, with the exception of a campaign post promoting a march, in the caption to which Kjeldahl not only tags @dengroennestudenterbevaegelse, but also several other climate organisations and invites followers to engage with the idiosyncratic hashtags #KlimakrisenErIkkeGlemt #EndnuEtTabtÅr and #HvorErMette (English translations: #Climatecrisisisnotforgotten, #Anotherlostyear, #WhereisMette). The latter is a reference to the Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and her government's lack of climate-friendly initiatives, according to @esthermkj. The brief campaign video shows Kjeldahl "acting" the part of a naïve citizen (Kjeldahl, 2021d) who says that they are doing something for the climate because they are eating plant-based food, cycling to work, and drinking oat milk. The naïve citizen is then invited to "do more" by participating in a big climate march. The argument is clear – lifestyle changes are not enough. This is a call to action. This imperfect, low-budget video appears authentic, with intentionally bad acting and a sense of irony, and ends with information about the climate march, stressing the importance of physical participation. The fact that Kjeldahl herself participates in her "homemade" campaign indicates a sense of self-deprecating humour (Kjeldahl, 2021d). She uses Instagram to perform her activism and to show how she is part of the political public sphere (through campaigns, morning shows, and debate programmes) when climate change is on the agenda.

Emotion is also key, both as part of her personal emotional journey from climate anxiety to activist (Kjeldahl, 2021c), but also in terms of how life as an activist can be depressing and stressful. In a post from her holiday, she reveals that she needs a summer break to take care of her mental health because the slow pace of the political establishment is taxing (Kjeldahl, 2021b). Her presentation of self combines the private and the public-private and addresses emotion, e.g., in the mental health post (portrait) and the *Godmorgen Danmark* interview (video).

Her performance and presentation of self come across as authentic because she is being true to herself, because she is imperfect when admitting her vulnerability, and in her aesthetic choices in the campaign videos. However, as a climate celebrity, she fuses the public and the private presentation of self because she counters her climate anxiety with constructive action but also presents herself as a role model for young people when voicing her impatience with the current government.

The influencer: Feel-good sustainability and recycled fashion statements

The influencer is a particular kind of Internet climate celebrity. Their fame is based on their use of social media to brand themselves and promote products as an integral part of their self-presentation (Abidin, 2018; Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2016). Gittemarie Johansen uses her Instagram profile @gittemary to promote a zero-waste lifestyle and sustainable products (Johansen, 2021a).

The most common type of post on her Instagram is the still life (Johansen, 2021c). The example analysed here is a carousel post (several photographs/videoclips in one post) consisting of two still-life shots and two brief videos (no sound), showing close-up shots of vegetables being hand-picked from stalls at the market. The still-life photo shows vegetables such as carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, garlic, and leeks, all looking clean, presented as a tableau on the kitchen table. They are presented in an appealing way, resembling a feature in a high-end women's magazine. Johansen documents both her vegan diet and her aestheticisation of everyday life (Serafinelli, 2018). We learn in the caption that she has been shopping at the local farmers' market. Her comment adds information and frames the post as a regular Saturday ritual. The caption says (with two green emojis – green leaves and a green turtle): "Saturdays are for farmers' markets."

#zerowaste #zerowastefood #zerowastelife #lesswaste #plasticfree #noplastic #eco #gogreen #vegan #veganfood #lowimpactmovement #lowimpact #gogreen #govegan #sustainability #sustainablefood #saturday #farmersmarket" (Johansen, 2021c).

The hashtags address a wide range of potentially affective publics within the realm of climate change on Instagram, including sustainability, vegan food, and zero-waste. The hashtags also include everyday hashtags like the rather neutral #saturday, thus combining the everyday with the agenda of sustainable living issues, e.g., #zerowastefood. As an influencer, Johansen addresses an international audience (in English) while also making a point about living in Aalborg. In this way, she reaches out to an affective public, which gives her authenticity when she connects sustainability with an international climate-change agenda.

The two other main visual genres are portraits and videos. Less used genres include selfies, group photos, and landscapes. The portraits focus on sustainable fashion and show her in model-like poses, but she is always smiling and looking directly into the camera (Johansen, 2021a). The style of fashion is more of a personal statement rather than following the trends of the industry. Many of the videos are from her YouTube channel and often present information (e.g., about zero waste) or express concern about consumption (e.g., a critique of IKEA's lack of sustainability).

There is an inherent contradiction between being a climate influencer and promoting products. In their recent study of sustainable fashion influencers, Jacobson and Harrison (2021) argue that this can be a problem. The point is that influencers have to balance their authenticity and their passion for sustainability while also "making the entrepreneurial endeavour make sense" (Jacobson & Harrison, 2021). In the case of @gittemary, she overcomes this contradiction because she is a combination of a thrifting fashion influencer (sustainable fashion) as well as a vegan, zero-waste influencer (sustainable everyday living). In other words, she is not only dependent on sustainable fashion but also promotes a range of sustainable products.

The curational strategy of her profile is focused on an aesthetic comparable to that of a magazine, as seen in her still lifes particularly. In her well-produced video posts, she talks

about issues such as greenwashing, the environmental impact of carefully mowed lawns, and sustainable fashion. Her authenticity is closely connected to "being herself" and being imperfect, and her emotional focus is one of feel-good optimism (expressed in both visual genres and captions). Her personal narrative is connected to climate change – it is a story about changing both her lifestyle and her focus as an influencer (Johansen, 2021b). In the post "From hyper-consumer to zero-waster", she writes about her shift "from fashion week to farmers' market". The image is a mirrored double portrait of herself (Johansen, 2021b). The photo seems to imply that you can have good taste in fashion while being a thrifting influencer. Her authenticity is thus closely connected to her personal narrative about being her true self, how she has changed to a vegan lifestyle and stopped buying new clothes (Enli, 2015b; Marwick, 2015). She is not perfect either, and her presentation of self focuses on her smiling and having fun. In terms of emotion, @gittemary focuses on the feel-good factor when she addresses climate change.

Her performance focuses on her public-private presentation of self, because both the vegan still lifes and the portraits are shot in her apartment: This means that followers will know her kitchen intimately, as well as her living room, bedroom, and book collection. As a type, she could be characterised as belonging to "the beautiful people" within a creative industry (Marwick, 2015), and she frequently shows off her many tattoos, but combines this with an approachable, "ordinary" look. She also expresses a sense of irony when she poses in her latest "pre-loved" vintage fashion (Johansen, 2021b, 2021d). Concerning climate change, there are no invitations to political marches or hashtags relating to current events. Rather, her focus is on consumption and sustainability while also maintaining her authenticity.

The notion of consumption is therefore turned on its head because her focus is on sustainability, which distinguishes her from traditional lifestyle and fashion influencers. Her profile does not present an expensive lifestyle (Marwick, 2015), but precisely the opposite.

The politician: Enthusiasm, a gloomy IPCC report, and spontaneity

As the Danish Minister for Climate and Energy, Dan Jørgensen is the most high-profile politician concerned with climate change. Corner (2003), Street (2003), and van Zoonen (2005) have all argued that politicians operate within celebrity culture. Jørgensen's Instagram account @danj.klimaminister (Jørgensen, 2021a) has more than 14,000 followers, and he is also present on Facebook (Jørgensen, n.d.-a) and Twitter (Jørgensen, n.d.-b). His political profile focuses on environmental issues, and the focus of @danj.klimaminister is on maintaining his brand through a curational strategy primarily involving public presentation of self, with a few exceptions of selfies and portraits, e.g., from his summer cottage (Jørgensen, 2021e). Most of his posts are group photos, followed by portraits and selfies. The group photos are all official photos (taken by a professional or by staff) and show

him "working for climate change" and having discussions with political colleagues, climate business representatives, ordinary citizens, and students/potential voters. Jørgensen usually dresses in classic political uniform (a suit), with a modern slim fit, thereby signalling that he is both dynamic and has a sense of style. He usually looks happy or focused, and the captions have a light and optimistic tone.

One exception is his video presenting the IPCC report (Jørgensen, 2021b), in which he adopts an emotional and more serious tone. He addresses the camera directly: "The alarm bells have been ringing for many years now, but now they are louder than ever before". This marks a shift in his general performance of emotion. However, at the end of the video, Jørgensen insists that we (Denmark, as a nation) have something to offer to the urgent global climate problems. In this way, the emotion of gloom and potential despair is ameliorated within the span of the short video on the current climate change situation, and the video ends on an optimistic note. Jørgensen concludes that, despite the bleak data, Denmark is part of the solution.

This focus on the international role of Denmark in relation to climate change is also evident in the "the Yale visit" post, where we see him working "for the climate" in an international context. This is a public presentation of self in which he is seen in the company of elite climate personalities. The Yale post consists of several photographs, along with screenshots from a report claiming that Denmark is number one (Jørgensen, 2021c). The caption reads: "danj.klimaminister It was a pleasure to visit @yale .[*sic*] A big thank you to students and faculty for the very interesting conversations on @cop26uk, US climate policies and Denmarks [*sic*] green transformation (is [*sic*] proud to rank #1 on the Environmental Performance Index made by Yale and Columbia universities)" (Jørgensen, 2021c).

The captions for images depicting visits abroad are usually written in English in order to address a more international audience and include paying respects to the government or organisations involved by tagging them. However, it is typical of the profile in general that the affective public is not addressed, because the only tags used are those thanking the individuals involved or depicted in the photographs. This particular "carousel post" includes five images – three with Jørgensen in his regular blue suit, smiling and engaged in conversation with (or giving a talk to) an audience of students (Jørgensen, 2021c). The last two look more like "slideshow screenshots" of the aforementioned report, the *Environmental Performance Index*, published by Yale and Columbia Universities. They include an image of a sunset framing a group of industrial buildings – a visual example of stereotypical industrial, fossil-fuel pollution imagery – and factual information, in the form of the report's ranking of countries' participation in the green solution, with Denmark at number one. Still, the Yale post is typical of the profile's overall curational strategy, with a focus on official professional photos of an enthusiastic climate minister and information regarding climate change data and reports.

The other post in which emotion is expressed visually as well as in the caption is "the Mentor post" (Jørgensen, 2021d). This shows an old photo of a very young Jørgensen in

conversation with his now-deceased mentor in climate politics, Svend Auken. In the caption, Jørgensen pays tribute to his mentor, who was a key figure within the Social Democratic Party and in climate politics. The post celebrates Auken's birthday with anecdotes from his career and describes how Jørgensen's work today still benefits from his mentor's influence and impact on international politics. Jørgensen also acknowledges his own feelings of loss, describing Auken as "a fantastic, caring and inspiring friend. I miss him a lot!" (Jørgensen, 2021d).

Even when the focus is on documenting a politician travelling around the country (and abroad), the captions usually stress the climate change perspective by mentioning buzzwords like "green transition" or sustainability. In many ways, Jørgensen's Instagram profile is an example of the classic broadcast communication. Its most frequent type of post is the group portrait as a public presentation of self. The focus of @danj.klimaminister is on maintaining Jørgensen's status as Minister for Climate and Energy, in particular by showing him with international political celebrities, e.g., US Special Climate Envoy John Kerry (Jørgensen, 2021a). The performance of authenticity is evident in the few public-private presentations of self. Apart from the mentor post, there is a photo from his summer cottage, where we see Jørgensen in casual clothing, in the long grass, a book in his hand. In the caption, he writes that biodiversity is the mantra for his garden – an added bonus of which is that he no longer has to mow the lawn (Jørgensen, 2021e). This post is an example of calibrated amateurism (Abidin, 2017, p. 1). It does not look like a press photo, and Jørgensen comes across as authentic because, like a selfie, the performance connects the imperfect with the ordinary. Not only is he the climate minister, engaged in communicating the latest political initiatives and reports from the UN, but in his public-private presentation of self, he also reveals his personal investment with his former mentor and performs his enjoyment of a climate-friendly lifestyle, even while on holiday.

Three ways of personalising climate change on Instagram

The three Danish climate celebrities use visual communication and self-presentation on Instagram for very different purposes and use very different visual genres to do so. They all agree that climate change is an urgent situation and that action must be taken. All three communicate this on their individual profiles, and as such embody what Enli calls "symbolic authenticity". This means that as a climate celebrity, no matter if you are a politician or an activist, you must be present on social media (Enli, 2015b). The influencer, however, has established her symbolic authenticity on Instagram to begin with and has solidified her status in the attention economy via her large number of followers (Marwick, 2015).

All three are engaged in cross-media contexts, because they are active on several social media platforms and legacy media (e.g., publications in the case of @gittemary; and television, magazines and podcasts for @esthermkj and @danj.klimaminister). This cross-media presence strengthens their visibility and status as climate celebrities and enables

them to address emotions specifically connected to the climate change issue as a form of political communication.

Their performances on Instagram focus on the intermingling of public and public-private presentations of self and come across as being "true to oneself" when addressing emotions. @esthermkj addresses climate anxiety as a mental health issue directly connected to politicians' lack of climate action. @gittemary implicitly addresses climate shame by insisting on having fun with sustainable living, zero-waste fashion, and a vegan diet while being stylishly dressed.

For the politician, @danj.klimaminister, emotion and authenticity are connected only in a few posts, such as the commemoration of the birthday of a lost (climate change) mentor and political icon in the Social Democratic Party, or in an atypically gloomy address when discussing the latest IPCC report.

The three also diverge from each other in terms of the visual genres of their posts. The politician uses mainly professional photos, such as group photos and portraits. He includes some examples of "calibrated amateurism" in the form of a few selfies and holiday photos to give the profile a sense of authentic spontaneity and to insist that his engagement in climate change is an integral part of his public-private presentation of self.

The influencer, @gittemary, also adopts a very professional aesthetic in her photos – her still lifes in particular look like they belong in a lifestyle magazine. This indicates a coherent and professional stylistic pattern in her profile. However, her honesty (regarding her own lifestyle change) and feel-good humour establish her performance as authentic because she is being imperfect and "true to herself".

The activist, @esthermkj, establishes her authenticity through being true to herself by using many different visual styles, not really establishing any kind of pattern, and thereby conveying an ordinariness that contrasts with @gittemary and @danj.klimaminister. Kjeldahl includes excerpts from legacy media to document her other media activities. She uses her public-private presentation of self on holiday with a friend to address the cost of being an activist (in terms of mental health) and performs authenticity as imperfection in her humorous and intentionally amateurish campaign videos.

While @gittemary is well-established and is the most successful of the three in terms of followers, @esthermkj is an up-and-coming climate celebrity and documents her impact in terms of appearances in the political public sphere. @danj.klimaminister posts media appearances, such as the Yale post and an interview on CNN, as a way of demonstrating both his international recognition and Denmark's success as a trailblazer in climate politics and green solutions.

Whereas all three connect the authentic with the emotional in their posts addressing climate change, only @gittemary is systematic in the inclusion in her captions of hashtags intended to address an affective public and encourage them to reach out and engage with #vegan, #zerowaste, or #sustainablefashion. Jørgensen and Kjeldahl do not use

hashtags at all as a way of connecting with followers, seeming to prefer to tag the people who appear in their photos.

To sum up, the analysis answers the research questions by showing that the three climate celebrities use visual genres in three very different ways. When performing a presentation of self, they use different types of authenticity markers, such as symbolic authenticity, spontaneity, imperfection, and being true to oneself. They all address emotions in image, caption, or video and include reveals of the public-private presentation of self. Kjeldahl mentions climate anxiety and takes care of her mental health by going on holiday or by being part of the climate movement community. In contrast, Johansen feels good and has fun with sustainability in both food and fashion, and Jørgensen is primarily enthusiastic in his posts but also delivers the bad news from the IPCC report and recalls a personal and political loss.

Personalising climate change on Instagram is part of the presentational regime (Marshall, 2010), in which Instagram constitutes a platform for individual perspectives on the issue. However, only @gittemary uses the affective public as a systematic strategy, as social media is her primary platform. In contrast, the politician and the activist seem focused on retaining their symbolic authenticity by being available on Instagram, tagging individuals, and otherwise preferring only to engage in parasocial interaction (Horton & Wohl, 1997).

Concluding remarks

Personalising climate change on social media, as mentioned above, is still one of the lesser researched parts of the environmental communication tradition (e.g., Abidin et al., 2020; Murphy, 2021). However, this theoretical framework can be used to conduct further studies of the impact individual profiles have when they address climate change on visual social media. Personal storytelling is important in contemporary digital culture (Highfield, 2016), and all three of the climate celebrity profiles studied make the personal political because they address climate change as a fully integrated part of their self-presentation on social media. In addition, these climate celebrity profiles transcend communication genres and social spheres – between civic society (the activist), government (the politician), and the market (the influencer). The lack of systemic criticism by climate celebrities, in general, has been addressed by Brockington (2013), Goodman and Littler (2013), and Chouliaraki (2013). Nevertheless, when the focus is on Danish (national) climate celebrities, they all contribute with potential options, e.g., activism as a way to cope with the emotions of climate anxiety, as a source of inspiration for switching to a sustainable lifestyle in an upbeat manner, or to keep tabs on national climate change politics and initiatives (or lack thereof, depending on your point of view).

More broadly, the personalising of climate change on Instagram can be discussed productively using the three steps of communicating traditional environmental information, as introduced in *Environment, Media and Communication* (Hansen, 2010, pp. 39-40).

The first part of the communication process consists of addressing how environmental communication makes claims and gets the attention of the media. Public personalities on Instagram, in the form of climate celebrities, can help to highlight the climate change agenda within the attention economy (Marwick, 2015). They also have a different kind of appeal in terms of authenticity and emotional address on the subject of climate change. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the influencer is the one who systematically connects with an affective public and has the most followers by far, whereas the activist and the politician address smaller audiences, primarily within a national context. In contrast to traditional celebrity advocates, all three have climate change as their main professional engagement, associating them more with Thunberg, Gore, and climate change journalist Naomi Klein rather than Leonardo DiCaprio.

The second dimension mentioned by Hansen (2010, pp. 39-40) is the framing of climate change as the key challenge for modern societies on a global level, as well as a personal (moral) issue. When framing climate change, the activist, @esthermkj, is the most adamant in voicing impatience with the political establishment and calling for systemic change. She takes on the "epideictic role" to remind her followers that this is a matter of urgency (Murphy, 2021 p. 200).

The influencer, @gittemary, is more implicit when taking a moral stand. She is reaching out to an affective public and is concerned with presenting options, as well as informing her followers. The performance of the politician, @danj.klimaminister, focuses on how to present Denmark as a frontrunner taking on a moral (and global) responsibility. Further studies of the role of climate celebrities on Instagram can perhaps reveal, as this analysis suggests, that a potential paradigm shift is underway concerning the climate change crisis and personalised political communication on social media.

The third dimension in the environmental communication model is outside the scope of this study, because it concerns the effect on the audience (Hansen, 2010, pp. 39-40). Future studies concerned with the impact of personalising climate change by politicians, influencers, and activists could include studies of how or if audiences change consumption patterns or find solace in the climate youth movement rather than succumbing to climate anxiety (Thompson, 2021, p. 605). However, it is also relevant to recognise the affective publics as a force to be reckoned with, particularly in relation to political events (Papacharissi, 2015). It could be relevant to analyse affective publics in relation to environmental political events, such as using #COP26 in 2021 to voice criticism and circulate satirical memes on social media aimed at the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow.

Personalising climate change on social media has become mainstream in the realm of popular political culture. Climate celebrities are one significant factor in this shift, and affective publics are another. Both tap into the mood of the moment and negotiate cli-

mate change issues from different perspectives. However, the study of the specific social media texts continues to be important and could also include memes and TikTok videos that represent different kinds of visual political communication aimed at connecting with participatory culture or, on an individual basis, with different types of climate celebrities. Hopefully, this proposed theoretical framework shows how personalised climate change can work and be a productive starting point for future studies of personalising climate change as a form of self-presentation on social media.

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