The concept of an 'anticelebrity': a new type of antihero of the media age and its impact on modern politics

Betto van Waarden

Published online: 14 Sep 2021.

Submit your article to this journal ⬚

Article views: 86

View related articles ⬚

View Crossmark data ⬚

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

The concept of an 'anticelebrity': a new type of antihero of the media age and its impact on modern politics

Betto van Waarden

Unit for Media History, Department of Communication and Media, Lund University, Lund, Sweden

ABSTRACT

Twenty-first-century politics have been defined by celebrity leaders such as Tony Blair, Gerhard Schröder, and Barack Obama. How have 'traditional' politicians like 'Mutti Merkel', who embody the opposite of star status, still managed to compete with these celebrity politicians in an attention economy in which politicians continuously vie for media exposure? Scholarship on concepts such as 'mediatisation', 'personalisation', and 'celebritisation' explains the emergence of charismatic media personalities, but fails to explicate the success of 'conventional' politicians within systems of mediatised politics structured according to a celebrity logic. Based on an analysis of newspapers and both historical and contemporary political actors, this article argues that celebrity politics produced an antithesis, the 'anticelebrity'. This political figure constitutes an 'authentic' alternative to the supposed mediatised 'superficiality' of celebrity politicians, but could not have the same appeal without the latter superficiality to contrast itself with. The text constructs an ideal type of the anticelebrity figure within different political and media systems, distinguishing between 'reactionary anticelebrities' and 'natural anticelebrities'. By focussing on the anticelebrity concept, the article shows the photographic negative of the celebrity politician, which also enables us to see the contours of the notoriously blurred phenomenon of celebrity more distinctly.

The dawn of twenty-first-century politics was marked by celebrity leaders such as the British Prime Minister Tony Blair, German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, and American President Barack Obama. While these figures developed their star status within politics, Obama's successor Donald Trump even used his existing media personality to enter the political stage in the first place, and subsequently performed his presidential politics as show business to dominate the news and maintain popularity. By contrast, Schröder's successor, 'Mutti Merkel', is a figure who embodies the opposite of such celebrity leadership. How did such 'traditional' politicians like Merkel still manage to compete with celebrity politicians in an 'attention economy' (Goldhaber 1997, Franck 2005, Lanham 2006) in which politicians engage in a constant competition for media exposure, and in which media are constitutive of modern politics?

Scholars have shown that the most successful political leaders have not been the 'strong' ones, but those who met the demands of their time (Brown 2014, p. 1–24). For example, in the context of the professionalisation of political parties around 1900 there was a call for managerial leadership, and after the experience with fascism in World War II a demand for less authoritarian leadership (te Velde 2002, Cohen 2013, Föllmer 2014). There has also been a growing expectation for politicians to be media-savvy and portray a personal side of themselves in public, i.e. a 'mediatisation' and 'personalisation' of political leadership (for concrete cases: Langer 2012, Birkner 2016). The popularity of media personalities in politics in turn has led to a 'celebritisation' of politics, in which a politician leverages his or her celebrity for political purposes, or in which a (popular culture) celebrity engages in politics (West and Orman 2003, Street 2004, Celebrity Forum 2011, Wheeler 2013, Marshall 2014 [1997]). Scholars have also begun to historicise this phenomenon, noting for instance the celebrification of prominent political figures such as George Washington, the Count of Mirabeau, and Napoleon Bonaparte (Lilti 2017, pp. 160–216). Historians have stressed in particular how monarchs such as Queen Victoria and Emperor Wilhelm II (Plunkett 2003, Kohlrausch 2005), revolutionaries like Giuseppe Garibaldi (Riall 2008), and colonial heroes such as Henry Morton Stanley and Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza (Berenson 2011, Sèbe 2013) employed their celebrity status for political objectives. Political figures sometimes even attain such a celebrity status in later times, as the recent (sinister) celebrification of Adolf Hitler shows (Williams 2019).

Within this increasingly pervasive culture of 'superficial' celebrity politics, politicians such as the former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd in turn have attempted to appeal to the public by presenting themselves as an 'authentic' and 'average' person (Wilson 2011). To mark this shift, scholars have recently distinguished between 'superstar' celebrity politicians and 'everyday' celebrity politicians (e.g. Boris Johnson). The former focus on broadcast media, a structured marketing technique, and an 'exceptional' performative role, while the latter primarily use post-broadcast media, a supposedly spontaneous communication style, and an 'authentic' performative role (Wood *et al*. 2016). Andrea Schneiker (2019), furthermore, has shown how Donald Trump has characteristics of both the superhero and everyday celebrity politician, but has tried to demonstrate how he is unlike other celebrity politicians by calling him a 'superhero anti-politician celebrity' because he opposes the current political system. Finally, scholars have recently introduced the notion of 'de-celebrification' to show how celebrities can lose their legitimacy and symbolic power (Mortensen and Kristensen 2020). They have applied this idea to entertainment celebrities such as Bill Cosby and Kevin Spacey, but their concept could apply similarly to (former) celebrity politicians. While the above concepts try to capture 'down-to-earth' forms of celebrity, they still remain within the celebrity paradigm and assume that their subject enjoys at least some form of celebrity status (or did so). Conversely, the notion of an anti-politician celebrity constitutes rather an extreme case in signalling a celebrity's contempt for politics. What remains unexplained is how traditional politicians, who work from within the system rather than opposing it and who never attain conventional celebrity themselves, still compete successfully for political office in a mass media environment that is increasingly structured according to a celebrity logic.

This article investigates this contemporary question by considering the historical evolution of celebrity politics. Based on an analysis of a broad range of political actors and newspapers, it argues that celebrity politics produced an antithesis, the 'anticelebrity'. This 'traditional' political figure constitutes an 'authentic' alternative to the supposed mediatised 'superficiality' of celebrity politicians, but could not have the same appeal without the latter superficiality to contrast itself with. The article describes the characteristics of this antonym, and how the concept functions within a political context. By focussing on the anticelebrity concept, it shows the photographic negative of the celebrity politician, which in turn enables us to 'see the contours' of the – notoriously blurred (Driessens 2015) – phenomenon of modern celebrity more distinctly. First, the article reviews newspapers' sporadic use of the term anticelebrity, and then proposes a definition of the phenomenon. The remainder of the text constructs a Weberian ideal type (Weber 1949, p. 93) of this anticelebrity figure in a political setting, noting in particular how an anticelebrity avoids the limelight, displays a certain personality and appearance, is contrasted with contemporaries and predecessors, and functions within different political and media systems. It distinguishes between 'reactionary anticelebrities' and 'natural anticelebrities', and notes that anticelebrity is a mediated construction itself. Rather than offering a conclusive definition, the article introduces the concept based on a temporally and geographically wide range of examples, and provides a point of departure for further research.

Existing usages of the anticelebrity concept

Anticelebrity is not a new term, but has been used in newspapers intermittently. However, the way these newspapers applied it seems to have been rather unconscious and varies significantly. Journalists used the 'anti' prefix to indicate hostility towards celebrities, not caring about celebrities, or uncharacteristic forms of celebrity. They also used it for comparative purposes and to highlight a politician's supposed 'authenticity'. A review of these usages helps to construct an understanding of the meaning and utility of the anticelebrity concept.

The meaning of anticelebrity is shaped by one's understanding of the prefix 'anti'. Four interpretations of this prefix emerge in the press. First, anticelebrity is used to describe an attitude of opposing or disliking celebrities, which can be strong and manifests itself particularly on the internet. The *Village Voice*, an American alternative newsweekly, noted in 2000 how 'anti-celebrity rage sites have proliferated on the web, subjecting icons like Britney Spears and Pokémon to a bewildering array of torture' (Braunstein 2000). The online search engine Yahoo! even had a special Interactive Celebrity Violence Directory. This opposition reappeared in a second interpretation, but in a less hostile version. A 2013 article in *Root* stated that 'the anti-celebrity, like the anti-hero, has none of the qualities that the root noun would suggest'. It continued that the American rapper Kanye West likes to describe himself as 'the anti-celebrity', but rather exemplifies the negative celebrity qualities that he claims to lack (Andrews 2013). Here, the concept thus does not signify a (hostile) opposition to celebrity, but suggests that an anticelebrity constitutes the opposite of a celebrity. Third, 'anti' may indicate a neutral attitude of not caring about celebrity. The *Boston Globe* used the term to indicate a place rather than a person. It called

its base 'the anti-celebrity city; a place where people shrug their shoulders at stardom, sizzle and pop', and included a quote on how it was 'chic to shun celebrity in Boston' (Dezell 1996).

Finally, a different neutral interpretation of the 'anti' prefix is that it refers to uncharacteristic forms of celebrity. Such forms can be found across social fields. A Houston chef was called an anticelebrity after receiving an award, but staying down to earth unlike other famous chefs – still working in his kitchen and remaining approachable for people (Baldwin 2017). In sports, the *National Post* described 'the anti-celebrity of the men's tennis elite'. It wrote how 'the perceived wisdom on Nikolay Davydenko has long been that he has all the charm and wit of a Soviet tower block, all the star wattage of an eco-light bulb, and about as much chance of winning a Grand Slam title as one of the former Scotland Yard detectives now working in tennis's anti-corruption yet'. The notion that an anticelebrity has the opposite qualities of a celebrity re-emerged here, when the paper added that 'throughout his career he has been defined by what he is not: dynamic, engaging, asked to sign autographs, or a contender' (Hodgkinson 2010, in the sports context also Reddy 2019). The idea of an uncharacteristic celebrity also applied to 'conventional' celebrities. The *Sunday Times* called the Scottish actress and screen writer Lynn Ferguson an anticelebrity for not behaving like a celebrity, which was particularly striking in the context of Ferguson critically exploring the celebrity theme in what the newspaper dubbed an 'anti-celebrity play' (Braid 2004, see also Richer 2005 on Bruce Springsteen, Spodek 2016 on Prince, Cookney 2016 on Daft Punk).

The newspaper analyses subsequently show how these four forms of anticelebrity manifest themselves. A figure's anticelebrity particularly comes to the fore when he or she is contrasted with someone else. The 2005 *National Post* article entitled 'A New Condominium for a Hotel Heiress (No, not that one – the anti-celebrity one)' termed the Hyatt hotel heiress Liesel Pritzker an anticelebrity in contradistinction to (presumably) the celebrity hotel heiress Paris Hilton (National Post 2005, similarly: Silcoff 2004).

A second way anticelebrity manifests itself is through its alleged authenticity. As Franssen (2019, p. 315) noted in the introduction to a special issue on 'Sincerity and Authenticity in Celebrity Culture' in *Celebrity Studies* in 2019, 'celebrity culture can be understood as an endless quest for the sincere and the authentic'. Within this context of sincerity, claims of anticelebrity are popular. After all, despite the quest for authenticity, celebrity is associated with superficiality, and thus here the concept of the anticelebrity gains relevance. This anticelebrity focus on authenticity can often be observed in what Jo Littler described as the 'age-old narrative' of the 'rage-to-riches tale', which emphasises 'the moment just before becoming famous'. The protagonist must 'show that she can still remember that she started out in the kitchen' and this 'awareness structures her character; it stops her from "getting above herself"' (Littler 2004, pp. 120, 125–26). The authenticity appeal occurs in diverse settings, as illustrated by an article in *Computer Arts*, which described how the magazine *Accent* was 'an anti-Vogue, anti-celebrity love letter to "Authenticity"' (Wynne 2018). The anticelebrity concept here also enables a distinction among celebrities, with some being uncharacteristic and thus 'anti' celebrities. It was this image that the media projected onto Birhan Woldu, the well-known former famine child from Ethiopia, within the context of celebrity humanitarianism defined by celebrities such as Bob Geldof and Madonna (Tester 2010, p. 59).

Yet how do anticelebrities maintain their authenticity image? Newspapers argue that they do so by avoiding attention (e.g. Hanson and Achara 2015). A notable example is Stephen Feinberg, the founder and chief of the buyout firm Cerberus Capital Management, which made headlines in the US in 2007, when it purchased the automobile company Chrysler from its German parent company, thereby making Chrysler American again. Despite heading such a large firm that now owned a famous American car maker, Feinberg attempted to maintain a low public profile of himself and the firm, as he had done for the previous 15 years. *Fortune* thus contrasted this anticelebrity with 'such private equity czars as KKR's Henry Kravis or Blackstone's Steve Schwarzman' (Benner *et al*. 2007, see also Allen 2016). Even people generally considered celebrities such as Jodie Foster and Domhnall Gleeson, who played Bill Weasley in the final Harry Potter films, were still termed anticelebrities because they kept their lives private (Amil 2016, Spencer 2020). By this standard of shunning publicity, perhaps the greatest anticelebrities are those whose identity has remained unknown. Examples are Bitcoin's mysterious founder Satoshi Nakamoto, as well as artists and novelists such as Banksy, Sia, and Thomas Pynchon (Cappello 2014, Humayun and Belk *et al*. 2018). By 2010, the *Times* noted a veritable 'rise of the anti-celebrity', as people were saturated with celebrity culture and celebrities sought privacy rather than maximum publicity (Rumbelow 2010).

However, *USA Today* warned that avoidance of publicity can result in hostile media. According to the newspaper's definition, an anticelebrity is a celebrity who does not act like one and dismisses the media, which angers journalists who then vilify him or her. It provided the example of baseball player Barry Bonds, who excelled at his sport but turned journalists into enemies. Consequently, when asked about the best moments in baseball, fans voted for the actions of players who were athletically inferior to the anticelebrity Bonds, but who interacted positively with the media (Saltzman 2003).

In sum, newspapers – and some scholarly works – have applied the term 'anticelebrity' intermittently in varying contexts. They employed the prefix of 'anti' to signal both animosity and indifference towards celebrities, as well as uncharacteristic manifestations of celebrity. This anticelebrity is generally used to construct a contrast with celebrities and celebrity culture, and is arguably achieved through a display of 'authenticity' and an avoidance of publicity. However, as some publications already note, the anticelebrity is ultimately also a role that is being played (Hampson 2002, Travers 2014). It even constitutes a paradox in that 'to be an anti-celebrity actually is to be a kind of celebrity' (Tester 2010, p. 39). This review of existing usages of the term anticelebrity provides the foundation for defining this concept and its ideal type as found in politics.

The impact of a new type of antihero on politics

To start using anticelebrity in a more analytical manner than in the mentioned newspapers to help explain contemporary politics, we need a clearer definition of this concept. The most precise description here is that it constitutes the antonym of 'celebrity' and thus anticelebrities embody, as several press articles have already hinted at, the opposite qualities of those exhibited by celebrities. A useful comparison is the older notion of an antihero, who is 'the central character in a play, book, or film who does not have

traditionally heroic qualities, such as courage, and is admired instead for what society generally considers to be a weakness of their character' (Cambridge Dictionary). Thus, we must first establish a definition of celebrity.

P. David Marshall in his influential *Celebrity and Power* defined generally that mass media enable celebrities 'to move on the public stage while the rest of us watch' (Marshall 2014 [1997], p. xlvii), and C. Wright Mills already specified in his 1956 classic *The Power Elite* that political celebrities 'are celebrated because they are displayed as celebrities' (Mills 1993 [1956], p. 74, a notion that famously recurred in similar guise in Boorstin 1961, p. 57). Darrell West and John Orman subsequently divided the celebrity politician into five types, of which the most relevant here is the 'political newsworthy', who derives his or her legitimacy from the field of politics rather than the field of celebrity and who – aided by advisers – excels at public relations (West and Orman 2003, pp. 1–16). Conversely, an anticelebrity is then a person who is not celebrated, and is rather known (and often admired) for lacking charisma, mediageneity, and (allegedly) media savviness. However, as we start zooming in on this political field for the rest of the article, it should be stressed that the anticelebrity differs from the mentioned 'everyday' celebrity politicians, who 'have cultivated a popular persona through appearing "human" to the public' (Wood *et al.* 2016, p. 585). A political anticelebrity can still have the persona of an elevated statesman or -woman, but simply without corresponding to expectations of celebrity behaviour. The next paragraphs show the characteristics of the anticelebrity within this particular field of politics.

The first characteristic is that, similar to the anticelebrity in the entertainment industry, the political anticelebrity avoids the limelight. Many political figures do not even need such avoidance, as the limelight is naturally absent – the spotlights can only be on a few key individuals and thus others automatically remain in the shadows. The *Daily Beast* noted in 2013 that Ashton Carter; then, undersecretary for defence in the US, was an anticelebrity because he was powerful but little known. The connection between an antihero and anticelebrity comes to the fore in the publication praising this little-known political figure as a 'superhero' for promising to take a twenty-percent pay cut if civil servants would be obliged to do so – the cut would not apply to him as he was a presidential appointee – and suggesting that other political appointees like the senators questioning him make the same commitment (Cottle 2013).

Other anticelebrities avoided publicity more actively. George Washington, the revolutionary and first American president, already did so in the late eighteenth century. In both the US and Europe, Washington quickly became well known and there was a demand for private stories about him in accordance with the latest style of biographies being consumed by the public. However, Washington guarded his private life and what he revealed did not match the new demand for insights into public figures' private thoughts and character. He sought the role of an aloof statesman rather than a contemporary celebrity (Lilti 2017, pp. 160–216). A modern example of such publicity avoidance is the German Chancellor Angela Merkel. In fact, according to Schomburg et al., her key asset is her inconspicuousness and ability to remain out of the media focus ('agenda-cutting'). Merkel's subtle and quiet press policy subsequently results in her barely being criticised in the media, in contrast to other high-profile political figures (Schomburg *et al.* 2016, pp. 286, 294).

However, such attempts at media avoidance do not always succeed. In 2006, the *Hill Times* classified Prime Minister Stephen Harper of Canada as an anticelebrity because he disliked the national media, but noted nevertheless that 'the anti-celebrity Prime Minister is the talk of the town, the belle of the ball, the top banana'. That said, he did generally manage to avoid 'negative media coverage' like Merkel (Hill Times 2006). Conversely, some political figures do seek publicity but remain (largely) ignored by the media. This situation led the *Washington Post* to describe US presidential candidate Bernie Sanders as 'the Capitol's Surging Anti-Celebrity' in 2015. Despite the large crowds turning up to see Sanders on his campaign trail, the media in Washington continued to pay little attention to him. Asked for comment, the Virginia Senator Joe Manchin III told the newspaper that 'Bernie's Bernie' and that 'if he had star power, he wouldn't be Bernie' (quoted in Demirjian and Snell 2015). Manchin here captured the essence of being an anticelebrity: that his or her character inherently does not seem to fit with a position in the media spotlights.

This character of the anticelebrity displays several common elements. While the media present celebrities as 'great' and 'interesting' figures, anticelebrity politicians appear rather mediocre and uninteresting at first sight. Washington again constitutes a notable historical example, as despite his heroic role in the American Revolution he was actually not particularly smart nor a great strategist (Lilti 2017, pp. 160–216). Such a 'simplistic character' was even more pronounced in the persona of Paul Kruger a century later. Kruger served as president of the South African Republic from 1883 to 1900, and his Republic constituted the antithesis to 'modernity'. He had the image of a simplistic, devout, and poorly clad but manly man, who served at the head of a 'backward' Boer republic that was surrounded by 'modern civilising' colonial powers. The 'colonial imagination' in European metropoles presumably had little room for such an anachronism. However, Kruger was well known internationally. Continental European papers, many of whose readers felt a bond of *stamverwantschap* (kinship) with the Boers, heralded him as David standing up against the Goliath of the British Empire. Yet besides the high politics, they surprisingly often commented on his simplistic personality and hardy features. He was personally celebrated without meeting the new celebrity criteria, and even became an anticelebrity martyr for Boer nationalism during his eventual exile in Europe (Fisher 1974, Meintjes 1974, Zietsman 2006).

Merkel again comprises an illustrative modern example of a politician with an anticelebrity character. During her rise to power, she was commonly referred to as a 'grey mouse', as she neglected the show that usually contributed to a politician's image building, and already early on her supposed sincerity impressed journalists. Even today, she still projects a type of girlishness to achieve foreign policy objectives. This image partly results from her simple and modest rhetoric and dress. Merkel still has the hand movements of a natural scientist addressing manageable chunks of problems rather than grand gestures – a reminder of her career before becoming well known as Littler would argue – and characteristically keeps her hands in the shape of a diamond. It took Merkel time to acknowledge the importance of appearance in mediated politics, but overall there have been few politicians who have changed their public image as often as she has (Schomburg *et al*. 2016, pp. 275, 276, 280, 291, quote on p. 279).

The essence of a definition of anticelebrity is thus that it is the antonym of celebrity, and that an anticelebrity is popular for having the opposite qualities of a celebrity. In politics, the anticelebrity is marked as a figure who lacks political charisma and

mediageneity. Such an anticelebrity politician avoids the limelight and displays a simple or modest character and appearance. Yet how do such traits become known and accentuated in the media, if the essence of this figure is that he or she does not behave like an attention-seeking celebrity?

The anticelebrity politician as defined by celebrity contemporaries and predecessors

As the 'anti' prefix already indicates, the anticelebrity is defined by what he or she is not. In other words, the identity of an anticelebrity politician depends in large part on having a celebrity counterpart with whom he or she is contrasted – explicitly or implicitly. Such counterparts can be both contemporaries and predecessors. This logic means that the history of anticelebrity parallels that of celebrity. The phenomenon of anticelebrity flourished particularly in a context in which the public was inundated with celebrity culture. Its appeal was reinforced by public saturation with the supposedly superficial politics of celebrity figures.

The most clearly defined political anticelebrities have been those who had an immediate celebrity counterpart, as the media and consequently the public could observe both simultaneously side by side. Such 'pairs' of contrasted politicians became particularly visible with the 'industrialisation' of celebrity culture in the late nineteenth century, when an emerging mass press brought the stories and images of political figures to a broad audience for the first time (van Krieken 2012, pp. 1–14). A notable example of this early period was Benjamin Disraeli, who served as Conservative British prime minister in 1868 and between 1874 and 1880. While Disraeli was a skilled politician, it was the manner in which the emerging mass press constantly contrasted him with his nemesis, the Liberal Statesman William Gladstone, that paved the way for his prominence in politics. Gladstone, a great rhetorician whose many speeches were amplified in British and international newspapers, was an early celebrity politician, and Disraeli was the anticelebrity who offered the public a traditional alternative to Gladstone's new celebrity politics (Foot 1968, Wickham 1998, Meisel 2001).

By the end of the nineteenth century, Kruger's popularity resulted from a similar opposition. His mentioned 'simple' character and appearance were particularly appealing as they contrasted with the media savviness and show that accompanied the international political figures with whom he interacted. The British Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain, Cape Colony Prime Minister and mining magnate Cecil Rhodes, and German Emperor Wilhelm II, who all involved themselves in South African politics, featured as modern political 'stars' in the international media (van Waarden 2019). This context of rapid modernisation and a new style of media politics enabled Kruger to play the role of the authentic anticelebrity politician of the good old times.

The opposition reappeared in structurally new guises in changing media landscapes in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The Vietnamese President Hồ Chí Minh's apparent simplistic lifestyle made him into an international anticelebrity as contrasted with the media glitz of notably US President John Kennedy. However, the persona of the anticelebrity did not always emerge in response to celebrity politicians; sometimes it was the other way around. Dutch politics of the twentieth century had been known for their 'dullness' and apparent lack of media show compared to the politics of other countries.

Only once a celebrity politician emerged on the political scene in the form of the populist Pim Fortuyn in the early 2000s, did existing politicians such as the Labour leader Ad Melkert suddenly appear as anticelebrities. Across the Channel, the new 'British Kennedy' Labour leader Harold Wilson, who was the country's first politician to not only adapt to television but to create a television image, pushed the incumbent Tory Prime Minister Alec Douglas-Home to consciously accentuate his aristocratic anticelebrity persona in the lead up to the 1964 election (Robinson 2013, pp. 179–187).

A more recent example of such a *deliberate* creation of a contrast with a contemporary politician was the 2008 US presidential campaign of John McCain. McCain's team realised that he could either opt for projecting a traditional story of how he was a maverick and a prisoner of war who became an experienced senator, or attack Obama because all the news focussed on Obama anyway. The team opted for the latter and thus the McCain story became that Obama was a superficial celebrity like Britney Spears or Paris Hilton, but that McCain was an experienced politician who could lead the country. The McCain team thus attacked the celebrity hype around Obama and contrasted it with McCain (Scherer 2008). It thereby demonstrated a dual meaning of 'anticelebrity': a politician who opposed celebrity culture in politics, and who himself boasted the opposite qualities of a supposedly superficial celebrity. Ironically, in this effort to appear as a serious politician who fought for the man in the street, McCain related to 'Joe the plumber' in an important speech, thereby making Joe Wurzelbacher into an international celebrity and causing the latter to accuse him later of 'really screwing my life up' (quoted in Rumbelow 2010). This episode shows how, even when contrasted with as hyped a celebrity as Obama, it was not easy for a political opponent to maintain an anticelebrity role effectively and avoid any celebrity media attention for himself and those around him.

A second way anticelebrities have been defined is in contrast to their celebrity predecessors. Clement Attlee, British prime minister from 1945 to 1951 and subsequently leader of the Opposition, gained a reputation as a rather bland and unmediagenic figure, which largely resulted from the media's constant comparison of him with him predecessor, the war hero and international media icon Winston Churchill. 'The indifference shown by this low-key, laid-back antithesis of the modern politician was due in part to his awareness that "I have none of the qualities which create publicity"', noted the BBC's Political Editor Nick Robinson about Attlee (Robinson 2013, p. 137). Similarly, the 'serious aura' that surrounded the American President Lyndon Johnson and (initially) French President François Hollande, and that particularly in the case of the latter played an important role in his popularity, was a consequence of the celebrity frenzy engulfing their respective predecessors John Kennedy and Nicolas Sarkozy. However, it was not always possible to distinguish oneself from predecessors: John Kennedy Jr., the son of the former president, 'cast himself, as one friend put it, as "the anti-celebrity," which was of course impossible for someone whose fame preceded his 1960 entrance into the world' (Kurtz 1999).

The anticelebrity reputation that resulted from the comparison with a celebrity predecessor could be positive or negative. In Merkel's case, it turned out to be positive. Her predecessor Chancellor Gerhard Schröder defined a new generation of celebrity politicians, always performing charismatically in the ever-expanding mass media environment of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. 'To be in power in Germany, you need *Bild, Bild am Sonntag* and television', thus the Social Democratic leader (quoted in

Economist 2005, p. 51). Yet Schröder played his media personality role too strongly and attempted to dominate the press, in contrast to which Merkel's apparent simplicity and modesty, as well as her lack of impulsiveness and emotion, gained her widespread approval. Particularly Schröder's macho behaviour during the post-election television debate in 2005, during which he refused to concede victory to Merkel, created a newfound sympathy for her from journalists and the public and enforced her new role as an anticelebrity. Consequently, Gerd Langguth even argues that Merkel should 'be thankful to Schröder' (quoted in Schomburg *et al*. 2016, p. 288).

Conversely, the comparison with a predecessor could hurt a politician. Already in the early days of celebrity politics around the turn of the twentieth century, the US President William Howard Taft avoided the new mass press, but after Presidents William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt had popularised a new type of 'media presidency', this avoidance only damaged Taft rather than making him popular as an anticelebrity (Ponder 1999, pp. 49–75). More recently, the efforts of British Prime Ministers 'John "I am what I am" Major and "Not flash, just Gordon" Brown', the respective successors of Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair, to deliberately present themselves as anticelebrities also turned out negative (Robinson 2013, p. 187). Like Schröder in Germany, Blair set a new standard for mediatised celebrity politics in Britain. Blair, aided by his 'spin doctor' Alastair Campbell and openly boasting of his media savviness, was exceptionally good at showing his private side and appealing to the emotions of the public, and incorporating these characteristics into his general political presentation (Langer 2012, pp. 112–138). Brown attempted to contrast himself with Blair, who had also played into changing gender norms by adopting the role of the modern father in the media, by taking on a more traditional father role and presenting himself as the authentic alternative to the celebrity Blair (Smith 2008). However, in Brown's case, this attempt to offer substance rather than show did not work in the new environment of mediatised politics as shaped by his predecessor, and when he still tried late in his campaign to show more emotion it was perceived as inauthentic (Chin 2010). Thus, being unmediagenic does not automatically make a politician a successful anticelebrity.

In sum, the anticelebrity politician is defined in contrast to its opposite, which comes to the fore most vividly when the politician is compared with mediagenic political contemporaries or predecessors. Popular anticelebrities, ranging through time from figures like Kruger to their modern counterparts like Merkel, all faced an 'other'. Political history shows numerous pairs of politicians in which one implicitly played the role of the celebrity and the other its anticelebrity nemesis.

Popularity of anticelebrities dependent on place and time

Related to the use of an 'other' to distinguish oneself from, the (role of an) anticelebrity emerges, and flourishes or perishes, within particular contexts. In a society apathetic to 'boring' politics, a celebrity politician may attract renewed interest in politics among the public, whereas in a media society saturated with celebrity entertainment, this public might rather long for a 'serious' anticelebrity leader. This section provides a preliminary theoretical reflection on how both political and media systems affect the receptiveness to

an anticelebrity, and how this receptiveness changes over time. Like the ideal types of these systems it builds on, this analysis oversimplifies differences for conceptual clarity, which subsequent empirical work must nuance.

An overarching distinction is that between what may be termed a 'reactionary anticelebrity' and a 'natural anticelebrity'. The *reactionary* anticelebrity occurs in 'progressive' media-political systems designed to abolish class distinctions and radically democratise politics, which produced more popular and celebrity politics and its reactionary anticelebrity backlash (notably the US but also France). In such systems, the prominence of celebrity politics has a double effect. On the one side, it means that to be a successful politician, one needs to act as a celebrity. On the other side, an overabundance of celebrity culture simultaneously produces a stronger counter movement, and consequent demand for anticelebrity figures. Conversely, the *natural* anticelebrity is found in 'traditional' systems in which politics has remained more shielded from the people's will and popular excitements such as celebrity culture, which has allowed politicians who embody the opposite qualities of celebrity to thrive – even without the politician needing a concrete 'other' to distinguish him- or herself from. Wim Kok, prime minister of the Netherlands between 1994 and 2002, was an anticelebrity politician because his shyness and modesty made him popular in the sober and 'inherently anticelebrity' Dutch political culture (Editorial 2018). His popularity was no explicit reaction to any celebrity politics. In the former systems, the 'anti'-prefix thus carries the antagonistic meaning, while in the latter systems it carries the meaning of 'being the opposite' of celebrity.

Generally, the systems that create reactionary anticelebrities are presidential, whereas natural anticelebrities flourish in parliamentary systems. In the American presidential system, President Joseph Biden constitutes an anticelebrity 'reaction' against the unprecedented celebrity style (even for an American president) of his predecessor Donald Trump, who during the 2020 election unsuccessfully attempted to use Biden's long and conventional career as a Washington insider to dismiss him as 'Sleepy Joe' (Pindell 2020). While the mentioned 'reaction' of the election of the anticelebrity Hollande to Sarkozy's celebrity politics was similar, Emmanuel Macron's subsequent election based on the rapid creation of celebrity momentum – even bypassing the traditional party system – reaffirms how quickly the pendulum can swing back from anticelebrity to celebrity in a presidential system.

By contrast, within a parliamentary system, the continued prominence of political parties (for now) enables anticelebrities to climb the political ranks internally and be propelled into high-elected offices while remaining relatively shielded from the celebrity logic of mass media. However, these 'apparatchiks of the celebrity politics age' sometimes still fail once exposed to the glare of the national media spotlights. Both British Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn and German Christian Democratic leader Annegret Kramp–Karrenbauer were elected within their parties, but subsequently did not deliver politically. Armin Laschet succeeded Kramp-Karrenbauer, but it remains to be seen if this short-built anticelebrity favoured by the party elite over the taller and more mediagenic Markus Söder will perform better in the German elections. Despite their differences from presidential systems, there is also an increasing focus on the party leader – especially during elections – in parliamentary systems. Conversely, party logics can aid politicians in presidential systems as well. Both in the 2008 and 2016 US elections, the Democratic Party establishment supported the anticelebrity party loyalist Hillary Clinton over, respectively,

Obama and Sanders, though in both cases it relented to the celebrity logic in the end: in 2008 it switched to Obama once his celebrity appeal had helped him to obtain the majority of party delegates, and eight years later it stood by Clinton as she obtained more popular support than the even more characteristically anticelebrity Sanders.

Another characteristic of political systems that can affect anticelebrity is federalism. Peter van Aelst et al. found that personalisation of politics occurs more frequently in centralised systems like the UK and France than in federal systems such as Belgium and Switzerland (van Aelst *et al.* 2016, p. 128). Personalisation does not equal celebritisation, but facilitates it. Consequently, centralised states may produce more celebrity politicians, and in response more reactionary anticelebrities. The splintering of both power and media attention in federalism then provides fertile ground for natural anticelebrities to emerge quietly at local, regional, and national levels.

Finally, in presidential systems, media attention for political parties is replaced to a greater degree by attention for the bureaucracy (Albuquerque 2012). 'Grey bureaucrats', the archetypal anticelebrities, thus have an opportunity to become well known here. The reduced media attention for parties in presidential systems may also open the door for anticelebrities in other branches of the political system. While monetary policy and celebrity culture seem inherently at odds, the media eventually labelled former US Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan a 'rock star' (Aversa 2005, Evans-Pritchard 2007). The field of law is arguably even more removed from celebrity and judges by virtue of their role act 'neutrally' and uncharismatically, but also here the American Supreme Court Judge Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Brazilian Federal Judge and Minister of Justice and Public Security Sergio Moro became antiheroes in celebrity politics. In times of crisis, such bureaucratic anticelebrity appears in parliamentary systems as well. Following periods of popular governance, the anticelebrity economic technocrats Mario Monti and 'Super Mario' Mario Draghi both served as Italian prime ministers to deal with the country's immediate crises. During the Covid-19 pandemic, virologists internationally adopted a similar anticelebrity political role, with the down-to-earth Swedish State Epidemiologist Anders Tegnell even gaining an international anticelebrity standing due to his controversial policies.

The role of an anticelebrity can also function well in a supranational political system. The politics of the European Union are marked by widely diverging interests between member states, and the fear of national leaders that a too dominant EU will worsen Euroscepticism and populism in their home countries. In this context, the member states voted for who Lieve Gies termed the 'damp rag' Herman van Rompuy, then prime minister of Belgium, rather than for the 'traffic stopper' Tony Blair. Those in favour of Blair argued that he had the celebrity currency that would enable him to gain the attention needed for the EU to enlarge its role on the world stage. However, national leaders did not want to be overshadowed by Blair's international celebrity, and finally voted for the backstage compromise-seeking Van Rompuy whom the (particularly British) media complained was dull and unknown (Gies 2011). Thus, the anticelebrity politician fits the needs of an international arena of egos and conflicting interests better than the celebrity politician.

A political actor can gain a role as an anticelebrity not just because he or she stands outside the bounds of celebrity politics within the political system, but because he or she functions outside of the institutional political system altogether. The terrorist Osama bin Laden, who projected an image of himself as a traditional Muslim leader, adopted such

a role by attacking the conventional international political and economic order through alternative means – violence and terror (Newswire 2007). Precisely the terrorist's position as a political outsider is what makes him or her an anticelebrity.

As celebrity and its antonym are mediated phenomena, it is finally political systems' interaction with different media systems that shapes anticelebrity politics. Despite criticisms, the most accepted theoretical framework on media systems remains that of Hallin and Mancini (2004, 2012a, 2012b), which others have partly validated, and modified (Brüggemann *et al*. 2014). However, rather than their Liberal, Democratic Corporatist, and Polarised Pluralist *models*, it is the application of their four *dimensions* along which to compare systems that is most useful here. First, the media market: hypothetically the high-circulation 'inclusive' press of Northern Europe (particularly Scandinavia) constitutes a 'large stage' fit for celebrity politicians and reactionary anticelebrities, while the low-circulation 'exclusive' press of Southern Europe and Brazil that is focused on an elite political audience suits partycratic and technocratic natural anticelebrities. However, the low media readership in the latter is compensated by large broadcasting markets, which rather facilitate (reactionary anti-)celebrity politics. Besides audience size, the market is defined by private versus public production. Personalisation thrives in competitive (North Atlantic) media environments (van Aelst *et al*. 2016, p. 129), and thus so does celebrity and reactionary anticelebrity. By contrast, Northern and Central European public broadcasting offers a 'protected' platform for natural anticelebrities who would struggle to rise to recognition in systems defined by commercial logics.

Second, political parallelism, or the degree to which media align with socio-political ideologies and parties: in traditionally consociational countries like Belgium and the Netherlands, parties' 'own' media also provide natural anticelebrities with an environment shielded from celebrity logics. Reactionary celebrity may be more common in places with little parallelism such as the Nordic states. However, political parallelism presumably does not play a dominant role in this discussion, as the point of celebrity – and its reactionary antonym – is that its media logic supersedes the political logics of individual media outlets.

Third, journalistic professionalism: comparatively independent journalism such as in Scandinavia includes more investigative journalism, which leads to the uncovering of political scandals – particularly of celebrity politicians whose lives are heavily scrutinised by media. Scandals, in turn, reinforce an investigative culture and a spiral of scandal revelations (Thompson 2000, pp. 110–116, 254–257). Such a culture of scandal may pave the way for anticelebrities, who as 'straight-edged puritans' offer an antidote to moral transgressions of celebrity culture in politics. Despite Vice President Al Gore's attempts during his 2000 US election campaign to distance himself from the celebrity President Bill Clinton following the hyped Lewinsky scandal, the election was won by George W. Bush, who despite his well-known family name emanated 'traditional Christian and family values' rather than media glitz. In contrast to the external pluralism of political parallelism, a high level of journalistic professionalism translates into internal pluralism within media content, with each newspaper or broadcaster showing different political perspectives. This internal pluralism may lead to a juxtaposition of celebrity politicians with their anticelebrity rivals, including in American-style horse race reporting reinforced by the popularity of polling.

Finally, the role of the state: intervention in the commercial media market hypothetically equates intervention in the making of celebrity and its reactionary counterpart, and thus favours natural anticelebrity. This reasoning applies to state broadcasting – including the provision of free broadcasting time to every political party at elections as in all Democratic Corporatist countries – state subsidies, and state regulations (see Hallin and Mancini 2004, p. 163, Brüggemann *et al*. 2014). In contrast to the US, numerous countries in Southern, Central, and Northern Europe also have right-of-reply laws for the press – as do all European Union member states for broadcasting – which allow persons criticised in the media to respond (Hallin and Mancini 2004, pp. 43, 122, 163, 229). Such laws indirectly prevent celebrity politicians from monopolising media attention and protect a platform for both reactionary and natural anticelebrities.

Hallin and Mancini concluded their analysis with the homogenisation thesis that different media systems are converging towards the Liberal or North Atlantic Model – found in its purest form in the US – while acknowledging the limits and nuances of this homogenisation (Hallin and Mancini 2004, pp. 198–250, 2012a, pp. 215–216, 2012c, pp. 284–287). The same applies to mediated politics: European politicians have increasingly promoted themselves as American-style celebrity politicians (Wheeler 2013). Blair and Campbell admired Clinton's effective political communication, orchestrated by the latter's advisor James Carville (Robinson 2013, pp. 323, 329, see also Campbell 2007). Yet already since Wilson and his advisors copied Kennedy's media tactics, 'campaign strategists, speechwriters and ad men have pored over the commercials, the speeches, and the photo opportunities of US elections in enormous detail in the hope of smuggling whatever they can into their own plans without anyone accusing them of plagiarism' (Robinson 2013, p. 184). Even Jesse Klaver, the leader of the relatively small progressive party *Groenlinks* (Green Left) in the Netherlands, heralds himself as the 'Jessias' ('Jessiah'), reminiscent of the messianic imagery surrounding Obama. Consequently, the reactionary backlash against celebrity may fit within a more general tradition of anti-Americanism. Media initially contrasted Merkel's East German sobriety with West Germany's decadence – and thus only indirectly with the American culture that had defined post-war West Germany – but once Trump became the American president they presented her directly as an anticelebrity antidote to American celebrity culture and its perils.

In addition to the political and media system of a place, temporality affects how receptive people are to an anticelebrity politician. Fatigue with celebrity politics benefits anticelebrities. This idea manifested itself in 2005, when the organisation Citizens United contended that a backlash against celebrity culture in general had helped re-elect Bush. On three billboards viewable from the red carpet at the Oscar night, it communicated the message that the endorsement of Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry by Hollywood celebrities such as Michael Moore, Barbra Streisand, Ben Affleck, and Whoopi Goldberg had only backfired on Kerry and his celebrity supporters. One billboard showed Bush juxtaposed with the faces of celebrities, saying '4 more years. Thank you Hollywood!'. 'It's a not-so-gentle reminder to them that the American people don't take them seriously when it comes to issues of war and peace', argued Citizens United executive director David Bossie (quoted in McNary 2005).

Besides how conducive a cultural context becomes for anticelebrities, the 'degree of anticelebrity' of figures evolves over time. Similar to Max Weber's point that charisma is a quality that leaders have only temporarily and that relies on a favourable context and

reception (Weber 1968, pp. 244, 246), the extent to which a politician is perceived as a celebrity or anticelebrity changes. An example is the Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. A former unschooled metalworker and union leader, 'Lula' lost the 1989 presidential race, the first democratic elections since 1960, as well as the subsequent two elections. Lula was a short and stocky figure, who was known for his prominent beard and Che Guevara t-shirts. This informal appearance combined with his working-class background gave him a quintessential anticelebrity image, which was reinforced particularly during his first presidential race when he was contrasted with the young, tall, and handsome candidate of the Brazilian elite, Fernando Collor de Mello (Robb 2005). However, Lula professionalised his dress and finally won the 2002 and 2006 elections, and by 2010 his popular (particularly social) policies gained him the highest approval ratings of any national leader worldwide, hovering around 80%, which was especially notable for such a long-sitting leader. President Obama, known as a celebrity politician himself, even commented that Lula was 'the most popular politician on earth' (quoted in Miranda 2009). A similar change occurred with the German politician Martin Schulz. During his two terms as president of the European Parliament from 2012 to 2017, Schulz was ridiculed for being unknown to the public and embodying the dullness of European politics. Yet when he ran as the Social Democratic candidate for the German chancellorship in 2017, the media heralded him as a new charismatic leader and even ascribed a special 'Schulz effect' to him – though his party eventually suffered a historical loss. Thus, both Lula and Schulz show how a political figure could change from being a quintessential anticelebrity to being a celebrity, partly due to a changing context and partly due to changes in how the figure presented himself.

In all, context plays a defining role in the demand for, and framing of, anticelebrities. Differences in context produce two distinct types of anticelebrities. First, the 'reactionary anticelebrity' constitutes a direct response to celebrity politics, and occurs in progressive media-political systems in which such celebrity politics flourish and produce intermittent public fatigue with celebrity culture. Second, the 'natural anticelebrity' inherently possesses qualities that make him or her the opposite of a celebrity politician. This type is found in traditional media-political systems in which politicians have remained more protected from a mass media celebrity logic. A public's receptivity to an anticelebrity politician changes over time, as does the degree to which a figure is perceived as such. The image of anticelebrity is transient, and anticelebrities eventually often become celebrity politicians.

Conclusion

A survey of press articles has shown that celebrity culture depends on an implicit contrast with its negation, a lack of celebrity characteristics in certain public figures. Newspapers term such figures 'anticelebrities', a concept that can be developed academically and applied to politics to better understand how politics functions in an age of mass media. This article has set forth an ideal type of such an anticelebrity politician. Important characteristics of this politician are that he or she carefully dosages exposure to media, and manifests a 'modest' personality and appearance. These characteristics especially come to the fore when contrasted with those of celebrity contemporaries and predecessors, and in specific political and media systems over time. In progressive media-political

systems, 'reactionary anticelebrities' constitute direct backlashes against celebrity politics, while in traditional media-political systems, 'natural anticelebrities' inherently embody the opposite characteristics of celebrity politicians. The importance of contexts also explains why (especially reactionary) anticelebrities flourished in particular periods. The emergence of the first mass media around 1900 – the mass press – fostered a quantitative and consequent qualitative change in celebrity culture, which in turn led to a strengthened demand for 'authentic' anticelebrity politicians. By the turn of the millennium, the advent of the internet and digital culture, combined with the rise of non-ideological politics that facilitated spin-doctoring, reinforced the role of celebrity in politics, which in turn led to another backlash against celebrity politics. Both the late nineteenth and late twentieth centuries thus constituted accelerations in the development of celebrity politics and their antithesis – though there were similar moments of acceleration in between.

However, the anticelebrity persona is generally a mediated construction itself. In fact, projecting the image of anticelebrity is a clever strategy for politicians to compete with charismatic celebrity politicians over the attention of the media and thus public. This image is often based on a rags-to-riches narrative focussed on the character and role they (supposedly) had before becoming known. The degree to which politicians portrayed themselves as an anticelebrity consciously, rather than being assigned this label by the media, is difficult to determine. Presumably sometimes such an initial media portrayal also led a politician to start reinforcing this image intentionally. Many of the aforementioned anticelebrities, often aided by advisors, managed, and cultivated the image of being the antithesis to superficial celebrity politics. Washington was extremely conscious of his image, and his correspondence shows how he weighed every decision in terms of its impact on his reputation (Lilti 2017, pp. 160–216). A century later, Kruger's anticelebrity image was enforced in newspapers across Europe by Willem Leyds, minister plenipotentiary of the South African Republic, notably with the support of his press agent Edgar Roëls and a press office in Dordrecht (Kröll 1973, pp. 176–177, Kuitenbrouwer 2012, pp. 49, 60). Another century later, Merkel's inconspicuousness has been carefully orchestrated in consultation with a team of loyal and professional media advisors. While Merkel's media staging is made to look as if it is not staged, it has actually made her the most media-savvy chancellor in post-war Germany (Schomburg *et al*. 2016).

The anticelebrity politician thus constitutes the antithesis to the celebrity politician, and the characteristics of each are accentuated through their interactions. The anticelebrity is defined by the celebrity and vice versa. Celebrity and anticelebrity politicians therefore depend on each other: the celebrity politician offers the public an interesting form of politics that contrasts with dull and unmediagenic politics, while the anticelebrity politician in turn offers a down-to-earth form of politics that is approachable for the public. Thus, politics in the media age is not only a struggle over the attention of this public, but also a struggle over defining the type of politician that one is: 'modern and mediagenic', or its supposedly 'authentic alternative'. Moreover, anticelebrity is an indicator for broader societal change: a heightened demand for an anticelebrity politician generally signifies an expansion of the media landscape and subsequent saturation with the increased media visibility of celebrity politicians. This article has provided a first analysis of the role of anticelebrity in enabling political success, and has nuanced celebrity scholarship by showing that celebrity politics cannot be understood without also

grasping the celebrity politician's antithesis. Further research is now necessary to comprehend this phenomenon in more detail – and how it can sharpen our understanding of the important impact of celebrity on modern politics.

Acknowledgments

Disclosure statement

Notes on contributor

Betto van Waarden holds a Marie Curie Individual Fellowship at Lund University, and is conducting research for his new project 'Presenting Parliament: Parliamentarians' visions of the communication and role of parliament within the mediated democracies of Britain, Belgium and the Netherlands, 1844-1995'. Previously, he received postdoctoral fellowships from the KU Leuven and the Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History, where he explored new digital methods for analysing large corpora of press and parliamentary data. Van Waarden obtained his PhD also at the KU Leuven, after successfully defending his dissertation on 'Public Politics: The coming of age of the media politician in a transnational communicative space, 1880s-1910s'. He holds an MPhil in political thought and intellectual history from the University of Cambridge, and a BA in liberal arts and sciences from Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon, USA. Van Waarden has a background in politics and media himself, having worked for the European Commission in Brussels, the World Affairs Council, the United Nations Information Center, and Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, and the news magazine *De Groene Amsterdammer* in Amsterdam. Based on his scholarship and experiences, he has written on media and politics in numerous academic journals, as well as in *Le Monde Diplomatique, De Volkskrant, Het Financieele Dagblad,* and *De Morgen*.

References

Albuquerque, A.D., 2012. On models and margins: comparative media models viewed from a Brazilian perspective. *In*: D. Hallin and P. Mancini, eds. *Comparing media systems beyond the western world*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 72–95.

Allen, J., Jr., 2016. Francis calls on America's ultimate Catholic anti-celebrity. *Crux*, 25 Jan. Available from: https://cruxnow.com/church/2016/01/pope-francis-comes-calling-on-americas-ultimate-catholic-anti-celebrity/ [Accessed 23 May 2020].

Amil, G., 2016. Una 'anticelebrity' llamada Jodie Foster. *Diario de Sevilla*, 6 May. Available from: https://www.diariodesevilla.es/gente/anticelebrity-llamada-Jodie-Foster [Accessed 23 May 2020].

Andrews, H., 2013. Kanye is the opposite of 'anti-celebrity'. *Root*, 6 Dec.Available from: https://www.theroot.com/kanye-is-the-opposite-of-anti-celebrity-1790896864 [Accessed 23 May 2020].

Aversa, J., 2005. Alan Greenspan enjoys rock star renown. *Houston Chronicle*, 5 Mar. Available from: https://www.chron.com/business/article/Alan-Greenspan-enjoys-rock-star-renown-1914177.php [Accessed 30 Jun 2021].

Baldwin, C., 2017. Houston's anti-celebrity chef: Hugo Ortega is happy to stay in the kitchen. *PaperCity Magazine*, 7 Jul.

Benner, K., Colvin, G., and Burke, D., 2007. Cerberus: inside the Wall Street powerhouse. *Fortune*, 20 Aug, 156 (4), 37–42.

Berenson, E., 2011. *Heroes of empire: five charismatic men and the conquest of Africa*. Berkeley: California UP.

Birkner, T., ed., 2016. *Medienkanzler: politische Kommunikation in der Kanzlerdemokratie*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.

Boorstin, D., 1961. *The image: a guide to pseudo-events in America*. New York: Vintage Books.

Braid, M., 2004. Anti-celebrity play seeks star. *Sunday Times*, 13 Jun.

Braunstein, P., 2000. Star crossed. *Village voice*, 18 Jan, 45 (2), 32.

Brown, A., 2014. *The myth of the strong leader: political leadership in the modern age*. London: Vintage Books.

Brüggemann, M., *et al*. 2014. Hallin and Mancini revisited: four empirical types of Western media systems. *Journal of Communication*, 64 (6), 1037–1065. doi:10.1111/jcom.12127

Cambridge Dictionary. *antihero*. Available from: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/antihero [Accessed 8 Sep 2020].

Campbell, A., 2007. *The Blair years: extracts from the Alastair Campbell diaries*. New York: A. Knopf.

Cappello, N., 2014. Sia, and our obsession with the anti-celebrity. *HuffPost*, 5 Jul. Available from: https://www.huffpost.com [Accessed 23 May 2020].

Celebrity Forum, 2011. Celebrity studies, 2 (1), 86–99. doi:10.1080/19392397.2011.544167

Chin, Y.-L., 2010. Gordon Brown and the work of emotion: a response to Nunn and Biressi. *Celebrity Studies*, 1 (3), 369–371. doi:10.1080/19392397.2010.511144

Cohen, Y., 2013. *Le siècle des chefs: une histoire transnationale du commandement et de l'autorité (1890-1940)*. Paris: Éditions Amsterdam.

Cookney, D.J., 2016. *Daft Punk as anti-celebrity celebrity*. Celebrity Studies Journal Conference, University of Amsterdam, 28-30 Jun.

Cottle, M., 2013. Ashton Carter: superhero of the sequester. *Daily Beast*, 28 Feb.

Demirjian, K. and Snell, K., 2015. Bernie Sanders, the capitol's surging anti-celebrity. *Washington Post*, 10 Aug.

Dezell, M., 1996. Boston's celeb complex: many stars, little glitter. *The Boston Globe*, 29 Nov, C2.

Driessens, O., 2015. On the epistemology and operationalisation of celebrity. *Celebrity Studies*, 6 (3), 370–373. doi:10.1080/19392397.2015.1062651

Economist, 2005. Profits and politics. *Economist,*13 Aug, 51–52.

Editorial, 2018. Wim Kok herdacht als zowel 'architect als aannemer' van het poldermodel. *Volkskrant*, 20 Oct. Available from: https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/wim-kok-herdacht-als-zowel-architect-als-aannemer-van-het-poldermodel~b1d0baca/ [Accessed 11 Aug 2020].

Evans-Pritchard, A., 2007. Greenspan was more a rock star than a feared fed sage. *Daily Telegraph*, 17 Sep. Available from: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/comment/ambroseevans_pritchard/2815893/Greenspan-was-more-a-rock-star-than-a-feared-Fed-sage.html [Accessed 30 Jun 2021].

Fisher, J., 1974. *Paul Kruger: his life and times*. London: Secker and Warburg.

Föllmer, M., 2014. Leadership in modern times: reflections on Yves Cohen's *Le siècle des chefs*. *International Journal for History, Culture and Modernity*, 2 (1), 65–81. doi:10.18352/hcm.463

Foot, M., ed., 1968. *The Gladstone diaries*. Oxford: Oxford UP.

Franck, G., 2005. *Mentaler Kapitalismus: eine politische Ökonomie des Geistes*. München: Carl Hanser.

Franssen, G., 2019. Sincerity and authenticity in celebrity culture: introduction. *Celebrity Studies*, 10 (3), 315–319. doi:10.1080/19392397.2019.1630117

Gies, L., 2011. The damp rag and the traffic stopper: the fame factor in appointing the first EU president. *Celebrity Studies*, 2 (1), 88–90. doi:10.1080/19392397.2011.544168

Goldhaber, M., 1997. Attention shoppers! *Wired*, 12 Jan. Available from: https://www.wired.com/1997/12/es-attention/ [Accessed 12 May 2017].

Hallin, D. and Mancini, P., 2012a. Comparing media systems: a response to critics. *In*: F. Esser and T. Hanitzsch, eds. *Handbook of comparative communication research*. New York: Routledge, 207–220.

Hallin, D. and Mancini, P., 2012c. Conclusion. *In*: D. Hallin and P. Mancini, eds. *Comparing media systems beyond the Western World*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 278–304.

Hallin, D. and Mancini, P., 2004. *Comparing media systems: three models of media and politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

Hallin, D. and Mancini, P., eds., 2012b. *Comparing media systems beyond the Western World*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

Hampson, S., 2002. I'm noirish and I'm cold. *Globe and Mail*, 24 Aug, R3.

Hanson, P. and Achara, E., 2015. Fashion in the family: acting up. *Teen Vogue*, May.

Hill Times, 2006. Prime Minister Harper's in Charge. *Hill Times*, 6 Mar, 4.

Hodgkinson, M., 2010. Spotlight shines on anti-celebrity: Russia's Davydenko turning heads at the Australian open. *National Post*, 22 Jan, B12.

Humayun, M., and Belk, R., 2018. 'Satoshi is dead. Long live satoshi': the curious case of Bitcoin's creator. *In*: S.N.N. Cross, *et al.*, eds. *Consumer culture theory*. Bingley: Emerald Publishing, 19–36.

Kohlrausch, M., 2005. *Der Monarch im Skandal: die Logik der Massenmedien und die Transformation der wilhelminischen Monarchie*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.

Kröll, U., 1973. *Die internationale Buren-Agitation 1899-1902: Haltung der Öffentlichkeit und Agitation zugunsten der Buren in Deutschland, Frankreich und den Niederlanden während des Burenkrieges*. Münster: Regensberg.

Kuitenbrouwer, V., 2012. *War of words: Dutch pro-Boer propaganda and the South African War (1899-1902)*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam UP.

Kurtz, H., 1999. A smaller Camelot: at George, thoughts of John. *Washington Post*, 19 Jul, C01.

Langer, A.I., 2012. *The personalisation of politics in the UK: mediated leadership from Attlee to Cameron*. Manchester: Manchester UP.

Lanham, R., 2006. *The economics of attention: style and substance in the age of information*. Chicago: Chicago UP.

Lilti, A., 2017. *The invention of celebrity: 1750-1850*. Cambridge: Polity.

Littler, J., 2004. Celebrity and 'meritocracy'. *Soundings: A Journal of Politics*, 26, 118–130. doi:10.3898/136266204820467391

Marshall, P.D., 2014 [1997] . Celebrity and power: fame in contemporary culture. Minneapolis: Minnesota UP

McNary, D., 2005. Banner day for bushies. *Variety*, 7 Feb, 397 (12), 6.

Meintjes, J., 1974. *President Paul Kruger: a biography*. London: Cassell.

Meisel, J., 2001. *Public speech and the culture of public life in the age of Gladstone*. New York: Columbia UP.

Mills, C.W., 1993 [1956]. *The power elite*. London: Oxford UP.

Miranda, J., 2009. Brazil's Lula called planet's most popular politician by Obama. *Brazzil*, 2 Apr. Available from: https://www.brazzil.com/10645-brazils-lula-called-planets-most-popular-politician-by-obama/ [Accessed 14 Sep 2020].

Mortensen, M. and Kristensen, N.N., 2020. De-celebrification: beyond the scandalous. *Celebrity Studies*, 11 (1), 89–100. doi:10.1080/19392397.2020.1704385

National Post, 2005. *A new condominium for a hotel heiress: (no, not that one - the anti-celebrity one)*. *National Post*, 26 May, PH4.

Newswire, P.R., 2007. Osama's recruiting video surfaces on the internet at Hollywoodbythenumbers. net. *PR Newswire*, 24 Jan.

Pindell, J., 2020. Trump's 'sleepy Joe' nickname for Biden isn't working: even Trump knows it. *Boston Globe*, 2 Feb. Available from: https://www.bostonglobe.com/2020/07/02/metro/trumps-sleepy-joe-nickname-biden-isnt-working-even-trump-knows-it/ [Accessed 29 Jun 2021].

Plunkett, J., 2003. *Queen Victoria: first media monarch*. Oxford: Oxford UP.

Ponder, S., 1999. *Managing the press: origins of the media presidency 1897-1933*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Reddy, S., 2019. 'The anticelebrity': revisiting Andrew Luck's legendary career. *Stanford Daily*, 20 Nov.

Riall, L., 2008. *Garibaldi: invention of a hero*. New Haven: Yale UP.

Richer, S., 2005. Bruce Springsteen: anti-celebrity. *Globe and Mail*, 16 Jul.Available from: https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/bruce-springsteen-anti-celebrity/article18241289/ [Accessed 23 May 2020].

Robb, P., 2005. *A death in Brazil: a book of omissions*. New York: Picador.

Robinson, N., 2013. *Live from Downing Street: the inside story of politics, power and the media*. London: Bantam Press.

Rumbelow, H., 2010. The rise of the anti-celebrity. *Times*, 5 Aug, 45.

Saltzman, J., 2003. The anticelebrity, the media, and the public. *USA Today*, Jan, 131 (2692), 35.

Scherer, M., 2008. McCain's anti-celebrity story line. *Time*, 31 Jul.Available from: http://content.time.com/time/politics/article/0,8599,1828111,00.html [Accessed 23 May 2020].

Schneiker, A., 2019. Telling the story of the superhero and the anti-politician as president: Donald Trump's branding on Twitter. *Political Studies Review*, 17 (3), 210–223. doi:10.1177/1478929918807712

Schomburg, A., Mykhalchyshyn, Z., and Herber, V., 2016. Angela Merkel. *In*: T. Birkner, ed. *Medienkanzler: politische Kommunikation in der Kanzlerdemokratie*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 263–302.

Sèbe, B., 2013. *Heroic imperialists in Africa: the promotion of British and French colonial heroes, 1870–1939*. Manchester: Manchester UP.

Silcoff, M., 2004. Models are back in Vogue: actresses as cover girls passe. *National Post*, 4 Sep, RB1 front.

Smith, A., 2008. 'New man' or 'son of the manse'?: Gordon Brown as a reluctant celebrity father. *British Politics*, 3 (4), 556–575. doi:10.1057/bp.2008.23

Spencer, A., 2020. Anticelebrity: actor doesn't fit the mould. *Edmonton Journal*, 20 Apr.Available from: https://www.pressreader.com/canada/edmonton-journal/20200420/281487868488171 [Accessed 23 May 2020].

Spodek, J., 2016. We can all learn from prince's class, grace, and anti-celebrity habit. *Inc.*, 22 Apr.

Street, J., 2004. Celebrity politicians: popular culture and political representation. *British Journal of Politics & International Relations*, 6 (4), 435–452. doi:10.1111/j.1467-856X.2004.00149.x

te Velde, H., 2002. *Stijlen van leiderschap: persoon en politiek van Thorbecke tot Den Uyl*. Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek.

Tester, K., 2010. *Humanitarianism and modern culture*. University Park: Pennsylvania State UP.

Thompson, J., 2000. *Political scandal: power and visibility in the media age*. Cambridge: Polity.

Travers, P., 2014. Rock's masked phantom. *Rolling Stone*, 28 Aug, 64–65.

van Aelst, P., *et al.* 2016. Personalization. *In*: C.D. Vreese, F. Esser, and D.N. Hopmann, eds. *Comparing political journalism*. Abingdon: Routledge, 112–130.

van Krieken, R., 2012. *Celebrity society*. London: Routledge.

van Waarden, B., 2019. *Public politics: the coming of age of the media politician in a transnational communicative space, 1880s-1910s*. PhD Dissertation. KU Leuven.

Weber, M., 1949. *The methodology of the social sciences*. Glencoe: Free Press.

Weber, M., 1968. *Economy and society: an outline of interpretive sociology*. Berkeley: California UP.

West, D. and Orman, J., 2003. *Celebrity politics*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

Wheeler, M., 2013. *Celebrity politics: image and identity in contemporary political communications*. Cambridge: Polity.

Wickham, G., 1998. Gladstone, oratory and the theatre. *In*: P.J. Jagger, ed. *Gladstone*. London: Hambledon, 1–32.

Williams, S., 2019. The celebrification of Adolf Hitler. *Celebrity Studies*, 10 (2), 300–304. doi:10.1080/19392397.2017.1390948

Wilson, J., 2011. Sunrise to sunset: Kevin Rudd as celebrity in Australia's post-broadcast democracy. *Celebrity Studies*, 2 (1), 97–99. doi:10.1080/19392397.2011.544172

Wood, M., Corbett, J., and Flinders, M., 2016. Just like us: everyday celebrity politicians and the pursuit of popularity in an age of anti-politics. *British Journal of Politics & International Relations*, 18 (3), 581–598. doi:10.1177/1369148116632182

Wynne, M., 2018. Long live print. *Computer Arts*, Jan, 274, 16–17.

Zietsman, P., 2006. *Paul Kruger se laaste jare, 1899-1904*. Pretoria: Bienedell.