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The Role of Emerging Social Media Platforms in Politics

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Abstract

The increased use of social media has played a valuable part in the re-vamping of the political landscape, especially over the last decade, where its influence has culminated in the implementation of digital strategy in campaigns and public outreach. There is a substantial amount of research available on the influence of social media upon politics. However, the emergence of new social media platforms continues to be a vibrant area of research, not only in politics but communications and society as a whole. This essay will focus upon the more recent social media platforms in relation to politics and its wider public engagement; how they are used, to what impact on political discourse and the public, and what they represent for the future. Social media provide opportunities for political communication to flourish in ways that differ from traditional political communication modes. However as a platform, it changes and evolves at an extremely rapid pace. This essay provides a landscape of recent research on social media in politics as it stands today, and sets out a cornucopia of original case studies to start to fill a pressing need for more research on the impact of these newer emerging platforms on politics. The applications of social media platforms play a big part in campaigns and political parties however, they are not just tools and how people perceive and interact with them matters. Compact case studies to give an actual insight into how these platforms work and are used will also be assessed, before moving onto a wider consideration of what they represent in terms of campaigns, impacts on wider public engagement, ethics, as well as future projections .

Keywords: *emerging platforms, social media, political communication, public engagement, digital strategy, political discourse, case studies.*

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1. Introduction

There are several reasons behind this research: rapid media evolution, particularly in the social sector; parliamentary cosmetics and the related changing logistic of political competition; enduring need for investigating the relationship between politicians and mediated contents; political behavior analysis in the social space with a focus on the regions being currently governed by opposition parties. Based on the insights provided by Twitter data, these issues are examined on the ground of the largest authorized data set produced so far in a political, exclusively national context. The data set is made up of all the public tweets mentioning a list of candidates, parties, policy hashtags, or more general hashtags in the time-window of the 61 days ahead of the last Italian general election (Battista, 2022).

Social media attract lots of citizen irrespective of their political inclinations: about 30% of them once in 2 months, not only from the young and the old but also everyone in between. Moreover, accidentality of access is a feature: most viewers are more likely to watch a piece of political content only once or twice. On Facebook, once in 2 months 58 out of 100 users watch a political content twice. Nearly 30% of viewers see a tweet about the program they are watching. It follows that underexposed citizens, for instance who seldom read newspapers or watch political programs, are more likely to encounter political contents on social media. On Twitter, 59 political hashtags out of the first 2012 being used, are purposely invented by trend-setter posts with a sufficiently general formulation on an issue. Over half a million users get involved in politically relevant hashtags and over 90,000 of them write at least one post about it. The analysis compares how the exposure to these politically intended contents differs from that intended to normal political words. About 4 million tweets contain accidentally political contents and only 1 out of 7 is intentionally generated (A Ayankoya, 2013). After a first viewing, however, the daily number of people co-watching trend is always larger than that of the intentionals. On the whole, co-watchers are significantly less likely to be intentionals.

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1.2. Case Studies and Examples

Social media platforms have been instrumental in the development and creation of new political experiences. Barack Obama's successful bid for the 2008 US presidency hinged, in part, on his ability to mobilize a massive digital constituency. After the presidential race, his strategy was named "the Facebook effect" by the online technology magazine Shift, which pointed out that "presidential candidates who use online social networks attract more potential voters". The democratic transformation caused by the use of social networks was termed "Last Minit Broadcast Politics" by Mancini and "Starbucks Socialism" by Crick, underlining the capacity of social networks to create new forms of political engagement. This contemporary form of political sharing renders the traditional politics obsolete, bringing rise to more mobilizing and responsive, sentiment-influenced forms of digital conversation.

In this context, the recent effectiveness of social media in the Arab uprisings grew amid hopes for significant changes in Iran and beyond. The Twitter Revolution saw the power of youth as nascent digital activists proposing a vision of democracy that excluded traditional political actors. Twitter transcended mobilization, acting as a hub, where any content, despite its veracity, could spawn a new cycle. Twitter's global reach permitted the republication and reading of information in more user-friendly tools, helping to foster the global public voice of protest (A Ayankoya, 2013). This fueled the number of typewritten searches and eventually the protest's scope, turning traditional media into amplifiers for suggestions. Early expectations of other similar instances began to emerge within Western borders. Theoretically, any oppressed, under-represented, or silenced collective could seize the potential of Facebook and Twitter. Ultimately, the social network traffic was expected to burgeon by 55 percent centred on Iran on June 15, 2009 due to its ultimately failed Green Revolution. In a similar vein, social networks have been credited with facilitating the "Arab spring" processes, due to their capacity to counter the various regime's ability to confiscate imagery. Both Daniel Bell and Nicholas Negroponte, pioneers of the web vision, harboring hope

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for democratic change, have more recently underpined the capacity of social networks to undermine the power of oppressive regimes.

1.3. Impact on Political Campaigns

As technology continues to grow and evolve at a rapid pace, emerging social media platforms have molded the traditional campaign strategies of the past. As a politician, the ability to post on these platforms provides an unfathomable reach for their message. This creates a revolution in how campaigns are ran, because it eliminates the often maligned media and allows for direct candidate voter interaction (Davis, 2017). Many have thus far leveraged the perceived advantages the medium has provided, and online campaigning use is here to stay. The first reason, and maybe most enticing, for social media campaigning lies within its cost-effectiveness. Both new and old politicians alike have lauded praise at these platforms for their ability to reach a vast number of constituents steadily at a low to no cost. Social media may not be able to reach the senior citizen who prefers to retreat back to their home landline, but it certainly has the ability to insight change upon the cellphone constantly attached to the hip of all voters ages 18-29. Whether Twitter is your preferred form of communication or Facebook, both are steadfast in their updating of one's daily life in 140 characters. Social media campaigning has paved the way for candidates to keep followers updated instantaneously on the events and whereabouts. In the race for interaction, social media has allowed for news and posts to be created continuously. However, in the race to post and remain in the online conversation, sometimes candidates are raring to go before all the facts can be accounted for, which leads to misleading and misinformation. Because of this, candidates often have to use all the tools within online platforms to quickly respond and manage online narratives. Each of these goals is hard to accomplish as activists and fake news posts are constant in the online world, and as such, maintaining online appearances can be challenging. In regards to these issues, an analysis is done upon various campaigns to find what methods have been coined effective. (Fahey, 2022)

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1.4. Regulation and Ethics

An increase in the adoption and use of social media in politics offers another avenue for expression, and a way to reach different types of audiences that might not be caught by more traditional advertising methods. The new, smaller, and more specialized platforms that have entered into the ring in the past years disagree profoundly on the well-established platforms from a variety of perspectives. As new media forms, they do not directly challenge the regulatory framework, in place for traditional media, permitting political actors to surpass conventional threshold and monopoly regulations. Emerging platforms epitomize privacy and data rights, eventually threatening the habitat of data-dependent business models of well-established platforms. Despite the configuration of powerful data protection policies, there are no effective means of enforcement available to emerging platforms. Struggles over the control and commercial exploitation of user information have become central to the annual development of social media, and further intensified in the wake of particular corporate scandal (Bayer, 2019). Additionally, incumbent platforms gain multiple and extensive policy benefits, including the capacity to contractually connect user generated content and interfaces in the context of the apparent competition policy. Succeeding platforms are safer from the comprehensive approach of EU regulations than are the larger platform enterprises to be connected. However, the Scamsung case suggests that social media activities may be scrutinized as anticompetitive when directed to faking a political environment. This pertains to the duties of the government, competition policy enforcers, and ultimately, public discourse watchdog organizations. Campaigns seeking to affect democratic public life through social media demand there be several levels of political, legal, and economic accountability for the discourse conducted online, and off. An accountable framework for social media built is suggested, which effectively confronts several forms of social media behaviour entangled in producing or facilitating political debate. A comparative study of political engagement in Hungary, Italy, and the U.K., conducted in 2018, resulted in the following

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recommendations for nation states regarding their approach toward social media in politics. (Rojon & Rijken, 2021)

1.5. Future Trends and Implications

Whether the benefits and drawbacks of social media use in political campaigns depend on the geographic size of the contested area is investigated. A structural topic model of television and Twitter data is used. The implications for democratic practice are considered. With the development and popularization of the Internet and mobile technologies, social media has become deeply integrated into everyday life. In less than a decade, social media has transformed from an underlying information distribution service to one of the main modes of communication among its users. Geographically removed from traditional media, it provides lightning-fast updates (Battista, 2022) and transcends geographical and social structures. Social media has also profoundly changed the ways in which information is produced, disseminated, and consumed in political contexts. Alongside the traditional media that is consummately experienced, social media has unique capabilities – it is an indistinct mix of personal sources and general news of all sizes. Furthermore, since its inception, social media has established contact with the public, confirming that people are no longer passive recipients of information.

Candidates utilize social media extensively in campaigns to cultivate, engage, and mobilize their audience, testify organized work, and fundraise. These platforms enhance the validity of witnessing political trust. With the advent of social media, the landscape of political engagement and organization has radically evolved. This instantaneity has demonstrated the noble power of social media as a tool to empower grassroots movements and to bring voices that are typically marginalized to the center of civic discussion (Jain, 2019). Sign of social media characteristics has been examined extensively in the communication literature. ExecutionContext analysis distinctively focuses on how the use of specific social media platforms is connected with certain campaigns. On striking that essentially all studies to date are framed in the context of advanced democracies.

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Conflict of Interest

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Data Availability

No new clinical, experimental, or patient-level datasets were generated or analysed during this study. All information discussed in the review was obtained from the published literature and publicly available sources cited in the manuscript. Additional information relating to the review may be obtained from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Informed Consent

Not applicable. No patients or other human participants were recruited, and no identifiable personal or clinical information was collected or analysed for this review.

Use of Generative AI

The authors declare that no generative artificial intelligence tools were used to conduct the literature review, generate the scholarly content, interpret the evidence, or formulate the conclusions presented in this article. The discussion of generative AI, artificial intelligence, and machine-learning technologies in the manuscript relates solely to their applications in healthcare resource optimization and does not constitute their use in preparing the article.

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