
ARE SOCIAL MEDIA AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION HELPING TO DEMOCRATIZE OUR POLITICS

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ABSTRACT

The discoveries of a literature review regarding Social Media and participation are presented in this article. In addition, to better understand the significance and effect of social media on elections, we provide field data from the Dutch elections of 2010 and 2011. When it comes to involving individuals in party politics, there are many obstacles to overcome. Previous attempts to influence public involvement using earlier Internet technologies did not fulfill expectations, according to recent results in the literature. This may change with Social Media, since involvement seems to be the fundamental idea that differentiates the 'old' web from the 'new' Social Media. During the municipal elections in the Netherlands, social media had no major impact on voting behavior. However, during the national elections, candidates who were more active on social media received more votes from most political parties. Finally, we suggest a future research program to investigate how political parties may use social media to innovate and enhance how they interact with members and participants.

KEYWORDS: *Elections, Internet, Participation, Politics, Social Media.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Non-profit organization involvement, for example political party association, has declined in recent years. There are also a number of difficulties in involving individuals in party politics. The development of the Internet, contrary to common belief, did not result in greater levels of public involvement. Furthermore, many political parties are concerned that delegating power and authority to the people would result in them losing control of their message. Citizens' usage of the Internet is growing increasingly social and participatory at the same time. Social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Myspace, Wikipedia, Flickr, and YouTube are now the most popular online activities. According to market researcher Com Score, individuals spend more time on Facebook than on Google as of April 2011. Facebook has about 600 million registered users. The introduction of mobile Internet boosted the usage of social media even further. Political parties, for example, are attempting to stay up with the changing climate. The majority of them are striving to make Social Media work for them. Political parties seem to be just riding the wave of social media without any plan. Organizations often undervalue the utility of social media because they are unfamiliar with it(1).

In the event of Barack Obama's election movement, the reverse was true; it was mostly focused on social media. Obama ran his campaign using fifteen social media platforms in addition to his own website. He saw the value of combining offline efforts with an internet campaign. He established a methodical connection between the internet community and offline operations like fundraising. Obama's use of social media as part of his broader campaign plan was crucial. Another good example was Segolene Royal's election campaign in France in 2007. She was able to connect with a large internet audience. Her internet effort boosted the party's membership from 130,000 to

200,000 participants. 90% of the increment had never previously been an associate of a political party. With instances of large mobilizations like citizen demonstrations in Iran and other Middle East nations, it's fair to say that social media is altering the political game. Though Social Media has the ability to drastically alter people's interactions with society, we must first understand what they mean and how to use them to their full potential(2).

As we shall see in the following section, there is no precise definition of social media. Traditional community institutions are common in political parties. Because they rely on active member involvement, organizations with such structures are likely to gain from social media. As a result, we decided to conduct a thorough literature study. The agenda of this article is to deliver the conclusions of a literature review on Social Media and participation(3). We shall further define Social Media and participation as a consequence of the literature study. We'll also go through some field findings and a study plan. To provide a comprehensive overview of fields, authors, and publications relevant to Social Media and participation, a systematic literature study was performed. We utilized the ISI Web of Science, Scopus, EBSCO INSPEC, and EBSCO Business Source Elite electronic scientific databases. The databases were searched using a variety of keywords. "Social Media" is the first keyword. "Participation" is the second keyword. We also used the words "Social Internet," "Social Web," "Social Network Site(s)," "User Generated Content," "Web 2.0," and "Crowd sourcing" to describe the idea of Social Media. One search term was created throughout the study since several of the articles found included the phrase "e-participation." Participation words like "engagement," "involvement," and "commitment" didn't provide any extra outcomes, therefore they were dropped(4). The next step was to analyze abstracts from the obtained data and pick relevant articles from the search results. Articles addressing user involvement in system design, for example, were eliminated based on a priori criterion. Some topics of interest are researched more often than others. The majority of the publications deal with citizen involvement, particularly in municipal governance. Several research on local electronic involvement have been conducted. Politics and democracy are mentioned in just 12% of all articles. The following conclusions are drawn from an examination of the articles from a political and public engagement standpoint. Previous attempts to use Internet technologies to influence public involvement failed to fulfill expectations.

Previous Social Media technologies, for example online discussion mediums, chat, and online polls, have had limited effectiveness. The problem of defining and quantifying e-participation is addressed by a number of writers(5). There are no less than 13 alternative participation ladders accessible from the literature review, and there is no agreement on which one is best. The participation ladders, in general, specify a specific level of user involvement, ranging from informing to empowering. It is problematic to assess and compare e-involvement due to the different methods related to defining and determining participation in present literature(6). In the following section, we'll utilize Macintosh's well-known participation ladder. Macintosh's approach, in our view, is the best appropriate for defining Social Media involvement levels. With the evolving Internet environment, there are more possibilities for people to be involved and empowered in campaigns and government activities. This so-called crowd sourcing is a significant issue that necessitates a new view on people. It is essential to shift from being a content consumer to becoming a content creator. In the majority of instances, this transition is tough. It necessitates a greater level of community trust. And it turns out that nearly all of the contributions are made by a small number of people. Super contributors, as they're known(7). As a consequence, instead of an equal representation of people, a new political 'web' elite may emerge. The notion of the digital divide is another important subject that has been mentioned in the literature. Political involvement on the internet is not evenly distributed. Some individuals are more interested than others.

According to different writers, political activists on the internet are well-educated men with a high income and, in some cases, a high age. However, the younger they are, the more they engage and

publish. People who are politically interested online are often the same as those who are politically interested outside. Second, in addition to political and citizen involvement, research on societal usage and social behavior are accessible. Findings in the latter, for example, support the notion that using social media improves social capital, which is linked to political involvement. Because the area of participation research is considerably wider than citizen involvement, additional study on political parties, their members, and elections should be conducted(8). We can define Social Media and participation based on the findings of the literature study. Has social media benefited the ordinary person more than most contemporary governments in this pandemic? Yes. In a manner that many leaders of state have failed to accomplish, it linked broken healthcare, breaking news, generous volunteers, and sad loved ones via a digital thread. But we need these media for a more essential reason: to magnify the week's cries for help and to restrain the powerful hubris. Does this sound like a head of state seeking peace or a tyrant risen from a democracy publicly threatening to kill anyone who do not agree with him, regardless of which side of the political spectrum you are on? Because when you seize full control of the media and demand that they follow your own rules, you openly enable propaganda to take priority over news. Which political party in the world would say, "Oh yeah, sorry, we went too far with that post; please remove it or label it as manipulated media so that the layman doesn't get it wrong?" For the time being, these media companies will undoubtedly be simply another government tool to protect the chair, the people(9). For the millionth time, government is not synonymous with country, regardless of where you are from.

A country is a kaleidoscope of centuries of parties, cultures, art, architecture, ideals, and aspirations. Each government that comes and goes is a drop in the endless ocean of our heritage - they're both essential, but mixing them up confuses the transitory clothing we wear with the eternal spirit within. "Big demonstration in DC on January 6th," Donald Trump tweeted. Was he the President of the United States or was he the United States? Thousands of rioters smashed the Capitol complex on January 6th, was he the President of the United States or was he the United States? Was Twitter correct in removing his post and suspending his account, or do you think he would have accepted responsibility for the situation himself? This is exactly why we will always need some media that the government does not control, since otherwise, under the guise of "undermining the nation's sovereignty," they will continue to destroy the truth, which nearly always affects those in power the most. Russia claims full deletion rights of any post it considers unsuitable to include child pornography, drug addiction information, or calls for children to commit suicide, yet slows down and punishes them repeatedly for not taking down protest requests. Many developing nations use the same Trojan horse of "it's for the protection of our people," when what they really want is for the wolf prints on snow to vanish from the sheep's minds. Apart from Nigeria, Turkey, Iran, Egypt, Turkmenistan, Uganda, and North Korea have already banned Twitter, either temporarily or permanently, and the rest of the world, particularly those aspiring to become superpowers, must pick their values appropriately. As their stocks plummeted, China banned the term "stock market" from all domestic social media in March. China banned all "candle and cake" emoji from Weibo last week to suppress discussions about the Tiananmen Square tragedy. Yes, any government (authoritarian or democratic) will have that degree of control if they demand a mandatory veto over what is acceptable and what is not on social media.

Platforms of liberty are the only way for digital democracy to progress. For the first time in history, we have a tool that can challenge apparently indestructible administrations, hold them responsible, and deliver long-term change led by people rather than a single vote every few years. This isn't a love letter to social media; I've spent over a decade running million-dollar branded ads on them and have seen firsthand how their thousands of filters can persuade the most adamant — in fact, a significant number of modern governments would not have come to power if these

platforms hadn't given them unfettered access to their own citizens and mobilized them. According to the Google Transparency Report, political parties have spent approximately \$800 million on election advertisements in the past two years. In the past two years, Facebook India alone has aired political advertisements worth Rs 107 crore. The sad irony is that political parties rely on social media much more than the other way around to remain viable(10).

2. DISCUSSION ON ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES

Consider the hypothetical case of an Indian state establishing a Nigeria-style special force that may search and arrest people without a warrant or notice — let's say they beat up a 23-year-old college student named Rizwan, who wasn't even in the country at the time of the alleged crime. Due to a lack of proof, he is released after 45 days in custody, and his furious family and friends launch a digital protest to demand justice for the young academician. Overnight, the government orders all social media corporations to ban all content related to Rizwan or face a fine of 1 crore, as stated in the new IT guidelines created to protect the country's sovereignty. Take a deep breath and consider whose sovereignty is being preserved here, since without a medium that allows us to maintain some appearance of unity throughout authoritarian measures, we will all become Rizwan sooner or later. The elephant in the room: “If these multibillion-dollar behemoths are not maintained under government supervision, they will grow too powerful.” That's ridiculous, since businesses have affected almost every contemporary government in the past five decades, either directly or indirectly. “Social Media is a collection of Internet-based applications that build on the conceptual and technical underpinnings of Web 2.0, and that enable the production and sharing of User Generated Content,” according to one of earliest meanings of Social Media available in scholarly literature. This explanation establishes that Social Media is not a brand-new generation of online technologies. The idea of Web 2.0 is widely used in social media. “Web 2.0 is a term coined in 2004 to define a new way for software creators and end-users to use the internet; that is, as a platform where content and applications are no longer created and published by individuals, but are instead continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative manner. As a result, it is possible to claim that the phrase “Social Media” is just a new name for existing technology. The World Wide Web's creator, Tim Berners-Lee, predicted this social usage of the Internet from the start: “The Web is more of a social invention than a technological one.” It was created to have a societal impact by assisting individuals in working together.” Web technology allows consumers to engage more actively in organizational operations. Although elementary facilities for communication such as conversation and forum were accessible in the early days of the internet, participation appears to be the fundamental idea that explains alteration between ‘former’ web and ‘newer’ Social Media. As Boyd and Ellison point out, the issue with this concept is that it ignores the significance of underlying social networks with personal profiles. The media's fascination with the phrase Web 2.0 is waning. The downward trend is continuing. People nowadays are discussing social media.

We performed multiple empirical research studies during the period of 2010 and 2011 Dutch general election to better comprehend meaning and effect of social media platform on political elections. To begin, we wanted to see whether there was any scientific evidence that politicians' use of social media influences voting behavior. We can determine whether there exists a relation between political candidate social media activity and individual votes by comparing the two. We chose to create our own assessment methodology for Dutch elections, the “Social Media Indicator,” since a recognized framework for evaluating Social Media involvement is missing, and the Macintosh participation ladder is too vague to measure (SMI). This outline consists of a uniform method of assessing politicians' use of social media and their interaction with the public. This Social Media Indicator is a useful tool for determining a politician's level of social media engagement and the extent to which they connect with their following on various platforms. We did not attempt to include all social media in our research due to the huge number of various social

media. We felt it was more essential to cover the most popular social media platforms in the Netherlands. As a result, we added Hyves, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube on our list. Hyves remains the most popular social networking site in the Netherlands. In addition, the Social Media Indicator now includes personal blogs. Politicians' personal blogs are often used to interact with people and have a big audience. We incorporate all degrees of involvement e-enabling, e-engaging, and e-empowerment by concentrating on the politician's contribution levels and quantifying contact with others. Currently, the measuring method does not distinguish between these various degrees of involvement. We can compute a total SMI score for any politician in the Netherlands by looking at a set of preset standardized indicators. This score is based on the number of personal votes this politician received during the election. We can observe whether the use of social media makes a difference inside the party with this comparison. The party candidates who use social media platform for getting get more votes than those who don't? In terms of statistics, we compare two variables: a candidate's SMI score and the votes the candidate got. To identify dependencies, we utilize scatterplot diagrams in combination of Spearman's rank relational coefficient.

The following are the outcomes of applying the aforementioned technique to three separate elections in the Netherlands. In the Netherlands, social media has yet to play a significant influence in the local state and municipality elections. Politicians' levels of involvement were very lower. Since of the limited contribution, calculating correlations was very challenging. When just two or three members of a group are active on social media, comparing them to a much bigger group of inactive users is pointless. We saw obvious results during the national elections for the House of Representatives, since social media engagement was considerably greater. The SMI was computed for each candidate ($n = 676$) and compared to the votes. Because we believed that politicians with high list positions had easy access to mass media such as television, radio, and print media, we removed the top five candidates from each candidate list. It's impossible to separate the impact of social media from that of other, more conventional media in such situations. Differences in target audiences, content strategy, and other variables may explain the disparities between the parties, although these issues have yet to be fully investigated. Furthermore, higher ratings for certain candidates may reflect the fact that a party candidate already has a big social network in the actual world. Nonetheless, Social Media seems to have a significant impact in reaching and influencing voters.

3. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

We performed a few qualitative, open head-on interviews with political party associates and board associates to enhance the value of our results. We were able to enhance our knowledge of the connection between social media engagement and votes thanks to interviews with the parties. Other impact variables may explain measuring points that were outliers. And it seems that whether politicians utilize Social Media strategically or not makes a difference. Using social media to promote a political campaign may not necessarily result in a more successful campaign. It is very dependent on how it is used, emphasizing the need for further study. Social media may help political parties and other non-profit organizations better communicate with their members and volunteers. The different uses of Social Media and their impact on member involvement, on the other hand, are not well known. As a result, two study topics for future research have been developed. We want to perform several longitudinal case studies to address these issues. "Longitudinal studies may provide insights into how businesses alter their social networking tactics over time," according to, and "case studies could be undertaken to assist offer ideas for other organizations based on both successful and unsuccessful efforts." We will investigate the shifting dynamics of a major Dutch municipality's city council as a result of participatory usage of social media in the near future. We'll conduct a longitudinal research in which we'll compare two components: social media contribution and offline public participation. Evaluation of both offline

and online involvement is a new and developing field that requires further investigation. The next step is to create a framework for evaluating social media and community engagement. In addition to assessing actual involvement, it is critical to include social elements of community engagement, such as beliefs, attitudes, and a feeling of belonging. Our overarching aim is to determine to what degree Social Media can be utilized to build communities in non-profit entity with community assemblies such as churches, labor association as well as political parties.

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