



## Analysis of The Influence of Communication and Promotion in Digital Social Media on Citizens' Participation in The Election

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### Abstract

This research aims to provide conclusive results regarding interaction and discussion, use, and exploitation of social media in the context of general elections in the digital public space. This research involves analyzing all messages published by presidential candidates via social media during the general election campaign. Every day during the campaign, a presidential candidate published a tweet, thereby collecting data. The research results revealed that the general public's ability to participate in substantive political conversations related to the presidential election remains incomplete. The achievement of equality among participants in digital public spaces remains incomplete. Candidates focus more on their political messages and interactions with the media and their own political platforms rather than interacting equally with other users. The role of participants in digital public spaces is very relevant. Although the Internet provides a wealth of information, users tend to be disseminators rather than conducting in-depth analysis. This can hinder the formation of independent opinions and meaningful participation in political discussions. In this context, commercialization and excessive information on the internet can be detrimental to the process of creating a healthy public space. However, in reality, the internet has not been able to effectively overcome complex political challenges. In this context, it is important to develop a more critical understanding of the role of the internet in shaping the digital public sphere. This requires awareness of the challenges and complexities involved, as well as efforts to promote more active and educated participation in the digital public sphere.

**Keywords:** Digital, Presidential Election, In-Depth Analysis, Social Media.

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### 1. Introduction

An analysis of presidential elections from a digital perspective is attractive, especially in the context of interactions between candidates and voters in the online environment. In this context, the concepts of public space and digital space are very relevant. First, the community can openly discuss political and social issues in public space. In the digital era, the public sphere has expanded to social media and other online platforms, where interactions between candidates and voters often occur [1]. Through this platform, candidates can interact directly with voters, convey campaign messages, and receive real-time feedback. Second, the concept of digital space is also essential because it provides a framework for understanding how interactions in political contexts occur online. The digital space includes not only social media but also websites, discussion forums, and other platforms where political and campaign information is disseminated. By understanding these concepts, analyzing presidential elections from a digital perspective can help identify patterns of interaction between candidates and voters, as well as understand how political dynamics are changing in the digital era. This analysis can also provide insight into how the use of technology and social media influences democratic processes and political participation [2].

Understanding public space is very important in the contemporary social and political context. Public spaces are places where individuals can gather, talk, and exchange ideas without fear of external pressure or intervention. It reflects values such as openness, free speech, fairness, equality, and transparency. In the context of presidential elections and digital media, an understanding of the public sphere helps us understand how interactions between candidates and voters can influence public opinion and the political process [3]. The digital public sphere offers a platform that enables broader participation in the political process but also raises new challenges, such as the spread of inaccurate or manipulative information. With a good understanding of the public sphere, we can better understand the role of digital media in shaping public opinion as well as the importance of collective political action in defending democratic values and human freedom. Thus, an understanding of the public sphere provides a strong foundation for analyzing political dynamics in contemporary society [4].

Public space, in the historical context of society, is often described as a place where discussion and judgment are guided, encouraging participation through the formulation of opinions based on reasoned arguments. However, even though it refers to the inclusion of all citizens in the public sphere, in reality, there are restrictions regarding the entry and participation of certain social groups within these strata [5]. At that time, participation in the public sphere required large amounts of capital, both in the form of support and nobility. This often leads to the exclusion of the majority group, preventing them from understanding or contributing to the discussed arguments. However, as time goes by and a democratic system forms, the concept of inclusion in the public sphere becomes more critical. Thus, the idea of us in society began to gain momentum, along with greater inclusion in the public sphere. It represents a shift towards a more inclusive and democratic public sphere where diverse voices and perspectives can be heard and considered [6].

Public space today has undergone a significant transformation. The presence of more active written and electronic media, such as the internet and social media, has changed the way we participate in the public sphere and voice opinions. Mass media, especially television, has become the dominant medium that influences public opinion and the public sphere as a whole. With its audiovisual format and the language used on screens, television has the power to shape viewers' views and opinions. Political parties and other organizations often use this to influence the decisions of their voters [7].

Furthermore, the internet and social media have created a digital public space that allows the public to participate more fully in political and social discussions. However, there are also new challenges emerging, such as the problem of spreading fake news and limiting access to information, which can affect the overall quality of the public sphere. In this context, political propaganda and advertising become more complex and require a more careful approach to analyzing their influence on the public sphere and people's political participation. Understanding the dynamics of public space in the digital era is becoming increasingly important in the current political and social context [8].

With the emergence of the internet, there was a revolution in the media space that provided new opportunities for citizen participation. The Internet enables broader expression and expands the symbolic power that citizens have. In contrast to conventional media, the internet offers central possibilities for the articulation, communication, and participation of citizens. The web has become an active part of the tangible and digital public sphere, with its evolving technologies, convergence, and ease of use incomparable to traditional mass media. The differences between conventional media and the internet are becoming increasingly clear [9]. It is absolutely impossible for there to be democracy in conventional media. Television, radio, and the press are essentially authoritarian media. This statement becomes more weighty when looking at the basic differences between conventional media and the internet. With the internet, every individual has the potential to become a content creator and participate in public dialogue. This opens the door to a wider plurality of voices and perspectives in the digital public sphere. However, it is important to remember that although the internet offers great democratization potential, there are also challenges, such as the spread of fake news and the use of the internet for political propaganda purposes. Therefore, there needs to be an adequate framework for managing digital public spaces so that they remain diverse, inclusive, and democratic [10].

Today's society utilizes the symbiotic relationship between tangible and digital public spaces for various purposes, which include spreading a variety of topics, building identity, expressing feelings and emotions, expressing frustration, and demonstrating their demands. The interaction between these two spaces provides a vitality that renews these spaces and also generates solidarity among the citizen users [11]. The intertwining of urban space and the internet plays an essential role in building collective identity and disseminating identity issues. These interactions form an identity that manifests both online and in street demonstrations. These interactions not only increase solidarity between users and citizens but also provide vitality to the messages. Similar things that are circulating and are in process also expand the public sphere by bringing up various issues that may not appear directly in the traditional public sphere. The existence of a democratic system does not guarantee that the actual public space will automatically achieve the desired level of citizen political participation [12].

There are various factors, such as differences of opinion, lack of motivation, corruption, and decline in a society's political system and culture, that can hinder active participation in the public sphere. Nonetheless, citizens frequently use alternative media options, such as the internet, to exchange messages and arguments, and this can be a way for them to engage in the political process [13]. However, it is important to remain alert to the potential for manipulation or dissemination of incorrect information in the digital public space. The emergence of new technology does not necessarily mean that individuals will automatically engage with and use the technology for collective purposes. As a result, careful reflection on the possibilities and limitations of the digital public sphere is needed to understand the extent to which this technology can provide benefits or limitations to democracy [14]. In this context, the internet can be considered a suitable medium for describing public space in a broader sense, where citizens can participate in deliberation and discussion forums. However, we must also acknowledge

that the internet may not always offer an optimal setting for discussion, necessitating ongoing efforts to sustain digital public spaces as hubs for the constructive exchange of ideas and the advancement of democracy.

## **2. Research Methods**

The study of digital media and its tools is a huge field of research that provides opportunities to study this context from a theoretical and analytical perspective. This study aims to provide conclusive results regarding interaction and discussion, use, and exploitation in the context of elections in the digital public space, as well as the possibility of forming a digital public space. In political communication theory, consideration of feedback from politicians, the media, and audiences in the public sphere is very important for the benefit of society. Even though digital media has limitations in its capabilities, it can help fulfill this function as an integral part of the public space. Therefore, to confirm or reject these assumptions, quantitative methodology will be helpful. This research involves analyzing all messages published by presidential candidates via social media during the general election campaign. Every day during the campaign, presidential candidates collect data by collecting every tweet they publish. Once the collection process is complete, we classify the messages into predetermined categories based on the project's needs.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

Technology's influence has modified coexisting public spaces, presenting an exciting picture of their evolution from the past to the present. Initially, fountains and public squares served as hubs for diverse activities like commerce and politics, fostering connections among individuals. Places such as cafes, salons, and parliaments served as spaces for debate and the pursuit of agreement. The role of mass media on coexisting sites shows how mass media has become an active part of the public space. Then, how has digital media, such as the internet, expanded public space as a place for discussion, dissemination, and interaction between users and citizens? This has changed the way humans coexist and express themselves, especially in a socio-digital network environment. On the internet, a person can interact with others and influence many people at once, depending on their number of followers. The same action in a physical public space, such as a cafe or public square, may not have the same impact. The Internet has become a place of constant interaction, allowing messages and information to be replicated by other users, expanding its scope and potential to motivate reflection. This reveals the most optimistic group's overestimation of the benefits and technological capabilities that the Internet and digital networks offer users to approach politics. These benefits include the ability to establish and maintain almost automatic contacts with politicians and institutions, while also adhering to the ideals of citizenship namely information, exercise, and participation.

A comparison of the candidates' tweets reveals their reliance on social media to disseminate ideas, proposals, invitations, and other elements necessary for maintaining an active presence on the network. From an optimistic point of view, those who think that those who tweet the most are the ones who use the media the most. However, it is essential to remember that the best use or most significant number of tweets in the digital public sphere does not always reflect or mean rational deliberation and exchange of ideas with other users or candidates, which is the essence of the formation of the digital public sphere. If it outperformed other candidates in the number of tweets issued during the election, it also performed better in the interaction category. However, to achieve a digital public space that is following the expected concept, it is essential to remember that digital public space must be based on the commitment of all actors to achieve a consolidated model of interaction or deliberation that allows the improvement of various areas and orientations of society, always within the framework of rationality and respect. Unfortunately, candidates did not consistently generate respectful and tolerant interactions or deliberations throughout the campaign. In his interactions with users, he often gives short responses and sometimes shows annoyance towards specific comments from users who question him. Although his responses do not always reflect deep thoughts regarding election issues, they are more focused on musical tastes, aspects of life, opinions, and his frustration with the situation in society.

Social media use can be identified more as an ordinary user spouting phrases from his or her daily activities than as a candidate actively interacting with his or her voters to discuss relevant political issues. While there were some interactions leading to questions about his campaign proposals, the responses were sometimes less than convincing or simply sent links with information on his campaign page without providing sufficient explanation or meaningful dialogue. While this research does not aim to theoretically analyze the follower phenomenon, it's crucial to understand that the recurring need in politics to represent the movement of identified sympathizers or potential voters explains the practice of digital carry. It is important to note that all candidates, without exception, have fake followers whose number is increasing every day. This may reflect the impact that the candidate has on the network and may thereby give other users the idea that the candidate is being followed, either in absolute or physical terms.

This conclusion highlights character limitations that prevent candidates from conveying information fully or interacting substantially. Candidates tend to use convergent media, or multimedia, in their tweets to express more

complex messages, leading to social media serving only as a tool for broadcasting information rather than facilitating in-depth interactions. With its character limit, Twitter is better suited for referring users to other platforms, such as YouTube for videos, Instagram for images, and so on. This suggests that it may not be effective for supporting substantial political debate or building a constructive public sphere. Instead, it tends to be better suited to expressions of emotion, support, or criticism that do not necessarily contribute to improving the quality of political speech or citizen practices that build a healthy and productive public sphere. In this context, social media may be more effective as a tool for expressing opinions and demonstrating attitudes than for facilitating in-depth discussions or rational dialogue.

First of all, we can see that the internet has provided great opportunities to improve political communication and expand the public sphere. However, in a political context, there is a tendency that the internet has also spread negative attitudes and actions that affect politics and democracy. The candidates, although at times appearing to want to interact directly with the general public, often appeared more focused on maintaining their presence on social media than engaging substantially in other political activities. This shows that there is a gap between expectations for direct interaction with the public and the reality that candidates tend to use social media to maintain their presence without actually engaging in substantial dialogue. Thus, although the internet and social media have opened up new opportunities for political communication, there are also challenges in ensuring that these interactions are not just to maintain a political presence but also to build a healthy public space and have a positive impact on democracy.

The analysis reveals those interactions in a political context, particularly on social media platforms, typically revolve around reproduction schemes and national socio-political aspects. Posting content, such as close-up images of candidates or with children, reflects this, aiming to create a positive image and increase popularity without actually encouraging active participation or substantial dialogue with users. Candidates' hashtags are also more likely to create trends and presence than facilitate meaningful discussion or interaction. Candidates primarily use social media to enhance their image, not to foster an inclusive public sphere. Responses to comments or questions often consist simply of sending a link to the candidate's website, which does not create substantial dialogue or allow for the creation of a healthy model of the public sphere. As a result, there is a growing gap between the political class and citizens, which can hinder true participation and inclusion in the digital public sphere.

Analysis shows that users' attempts to approach candidates with their suggestions, opinions, or hopes are often ignored and sometimes even attacked or belittled by other users. This reflects the lack of space for constructive dialogue and mutual respect on social media during the presidential election. During previous elections, individuals used social media platforms like email and YouTube to disseminate black propaganda and content, which did not necessarily foster a healthy discourse. The same thing happens when users tend to ridicule and discredit candidates and other users without making a positive contribution to the formation of an inclusive public space. These findings indicate that the proposed public sphere model is challenging to realize in the context of social media, particularly presidential elections. This shows that there are significant obstacles to building a digital public space that allows rational and constructive discussions between citizens and political leaders.

Although public spaces on social media during presidential elections are often filled with insults and undemocratic practices, this does not mean that we should give up on the public space model on the Internet. There are some positive aspects that can still make us hopeful about seeing changes in political culture, such as increased political participation. To achieve this change, full practice and a focus on increasing the importance of political aspects among citizens, media, and political actors are required. It is also essential to overcome the digital divide and improve political aspects of education to train citizens who are able to think rationally and produce strong arguments to support their political participation. In addition, it is crucial to develop digital options that enable the participation of all political actors as well as change the attitudes and orientations of all citizens towards politics. Political actors must also be open to the possibility of changing their political outlook to be more open and interactive with other users and citizens. Thus, it is necessary to consider discussing the digital public sphere as an inseparable part of cyber politics and political culture, with the hope of bringing positive changes in political participation and the quality of democracy as a whole.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Presidential elections provide a valuable opportunity to investigate theoretical and methodological postulates related to political communication, especially in the context of a political culture that may not always support citizen participation in diverse aspects of electoral politics. Nevertheless, there are segments of society who are interested in political participation, opinions, and political considerations. In this context, digital media becomes important because of its openness, which allows interaction between candidates and citizens. However, we must approach concerns, whether naive or hopeful, about citizens' participation in the electoral process through digital media with a realistic understanding of the prevailing political and cultural conditions. In this project, it is

essential to analyze the digital context to understand the formation of the digital public sphere and the interactions between candidates and citizens on social media during elections. Thus, the findings from this project will reflect two essential aspects: use by users or political candidates, and interactions by general users. Equal internet access for all citizens is critical to creating a digital public space. However, in our country, there are still limitations in terms of infrastructure and economy that affect access. Despite efforts to overcome these limitations, as seen in interactions between candidates and their followers, the results have not fully allowed the general public to engage in substantial political conversations regarding the presidential election. Most users are simply spectators in conversations between candidates. Despite their inclusion in political discussions, the topics discussed have not yet reached the level of debate or dialogue necessary to be considered a genuine public sphere.

Digital public spaces also fail to fully achieve equality among participants. Candidates focus more on their political messages and interactions with the media and their own political platforms rather than interacting equally with other users. This makes the general user feel like they are just a spectator or trying to participate in the dialogue, even if it is sometimes done aggressively. In this digital context, we have yet to fully realize a climate of rational and respectful discussion that encourages participation. While there was deference in tweets from candidates to the recipients of their messages, it did not encourage substantial debate and participation. Instead, congratulations, welcomes, and formal support dominate the space. Social media actually allows users to access previously issued tweets, which should support continued discussion. However, in reality, this is not the case, at least in the period you are analyzing. Conversely, it fosters a political culture characterized by asymmetry and conflicting interests. In the digital public space, trolling poses a problem as it frequently targets both general users and candidates, potentially disrupting the atmosphere of healthy discussion and participation.

The role of participants in digital public spaces is very relevant. Although the Internet provides a wealth of information, users tend to be disseminators rather than conducting in-depth analysis. This can hinder the formation of independent opinions and meaningful participation in political discussions. In this context, commercialization and excessive information on the internet can be detrimental to the process of creating a healthy public space. As information overload and commercialization flood the media, users tend to become passive consumers rather than active participants in substantial political discussions. Apart from that, there is an optimistic myth about the internet as a tool that can automatically solve problems in public spaces. However, in reality, the internet has not been able to effectively overcome complex political challenges. In this context, it is important to develop a more critical understanding of the role of the internet in shaping the digital public sphere. This requires awareness of the challenges and complexities involved, as well as efforts to promote more active and educated participation in the digital public sphere.

This approach to forming public space in a digital context highlights the importance of overcoming the challenges and limitations faced by traditional media in presenting substantial discussions. It is important to shift attention to digital interactions and their potential to improve the quality of discussion in the public sphere. In this context, strengthening digital connectivity and reducing the digital divide are key. The promotion of civic and political values in education, along with media education that teaches wise internet usage, must accompany these efforts. By empowering citizens to actively participate in digital public spaces, we can foster meaningful discussions and critical thinking. In this context, it is important to strengthen people's digital skills so they can participate in digital public spaces. This not only creates opportunities to express and convey opinions but also to shape opinions, create communities, and encourage meaningful discussions. Thus, digital public space can be a means of reaching agreement and consolidating trials, as well as improving the quality of life in society. However, to achieve this goal, commitment from all actors is required to create a consolidative model of digital interaction or deliberation that allows for the improvement of society within a framework of rationality and respect. This way, digital public space can become a valuable forum for improving the deliberation process and enriching society's political and social life.

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